

# New to Teaching Physical and Health Education?

Please note: This resource is meant to complement and enhance the recommendations and guidelines provided by Public Health. If you are unsure about any situation, please contact your public health unit for specific guidance.

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If you have not taught physical education before, it may feel daunting to try it for the first time this year. Below you will find an introduction to the subject areas and some ideas to base your lessons in. PHE Canada knows that all subjects will have to be taught differently this year and wants to make sure everyone feels comfortable teaching physical and health education (PHE). PHE equips your students with the skills and knowledge required to be well and healthy, especially in a pandemic. This document is just a starting point. If you are able, we strongly recommend you seek support from a mentor within PHE, or contact us for additional connections at [info@phecanada.ca](mailto:info@phecanada.ca).

## INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH LITERACY & PHYSICAL LITERACY

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It is probably safe to say that in the education world, we are all familiar with a basic definition of literacy - reading and writing. But what if literacy was something more? Consider this statement from the United Nations (2002):



*"Literacy is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of **essential life skills** that enable them to **address the challenges** they can face in life, and represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for **effective participation** in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century."*

Education involves acquiring skills and competencies to address life challenges and enable participation in society. Therefore, a more holistic view of education than the '3 Rs' is needed - now more than ever! Let's talk about two forms of literacy you may not be as familiar with, but are **essential to the development of the whole child** and a complete education.

## PHYSICAL LITERACY

So what IS physical literacy? Consider this definition:

*"In short, as appropriate to each individual's endowment, physical literacy can be described as a disposition in which individuals have: the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for maintaining purposeful physical pursuits/activities throughout the life-course." (Whitehead, 2010)*

As such, physical education is an important part of a child's physical literacy journey. School can be a place that provides enriching and enhancing environments in which students can have positive educational experiences. Consider these key points (adapted from Whitehead, 2013) as you support the development of physical literacy in physical education and beyond:

- Design experiences that are **rewarding and enjoyable** to foster motivation
- Consider how you can positively affect the self-confidence and self-worth of students
- Enable individual progress and **encourage success** in a wide range of pursuits
- **Empower students** to make decisions and take ownership of their learning
- Foster in students an appreciation of life-course physical activity
- Energize students for **proactive participation**

## HEALTH LITERACY

So what IS health literacy? Consider this definition:

*"Health Literacy refers, broadly, to the ability of individuals to gain access to, understand and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health for themselves, their families, and their communities." (World Health Organization, 2016)*

Health education provides students with health literacy related skills, such as the ability to read and **understand health information, access valid sources and implement information in health enhancing ways**. In this way, even a time of pandemic can become a valuable learning experience. Nutbeam (2000) provides a framework of health literacy that reflects the core business of schools and provides a whole child focused way of **infusing health literacy across the school community**:

- Increase knowledge of the factors that inhibit and enhance health
- Improve student's capacity to be independent and **take care of their own health** as developmentally appropriate
- Teach students to **access local health information** and services
- Increase students' capacity to bring about health improvement for disadvantaged groups

## HOW TO TEACH QUALITY PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

**Physical education** is an embodied, experiential subject. It is not just about the study of movement, it also involves learning in and through movement. The results of **quality physical education** leave us with **capable, competent, and confident** individuals who are empowered to take their skills and apply them in a multitude of physical activity environments, from sport to personal fitness to recreational pursuits.

As a result of the altered class times and schedules that you are likely dealing with, be sure to cover the overarching/main ideas of the course first. Don't try to fit too many skills in, students will need time to process and practice what they have learned.

When planning your lessons/units, keep the following in mind:

01. PE should be delivered in an **age appropriate way, with appropriate equipment**. Using adult equipment or fields/spaces for young children will lead to the development of poor or improper technique.
02. Be organized, know what skills you are focussing on, and a **clear plan** of how to teach those skills.
03. Place the priority on **inclusive engagement**. Competition has a place in PE, but should not be the main focus of all classes.
04. Break your activities up into **small groups** that allow the activity to function and have all students actively participating. At times you may need to modify the activity to increase the participation. There should be little to no "waiting in lines" for the students. Focus on **small-sided games** (games with a small number of players on each side).
05. Emphasize personal improvements - empower students to set their own goals and encourage them to **keep a journal or log** of their personal improvements/learnings. Never post results publicly.
06. **Plan smooth transitions** between activities to limit waiting time for students. Lessons should flow into the next activity quickly with limited disruption as much as possible.
07. Consider using the **Teaching Games for Understanding** model - where students learn sports by playing sports, not focusing on individual skill development. Links for additional information are provided in the additional resources section below.

**Health education** enables students to **make well-informed choices** and to **experience behaviors** and attitudes that **contribute to their own health and that of others**. When preparing to teach HE, keep the following things in mind:

- 01.** Create an open, inclusive, and **positive space**. Students will come to class with very different experiences, knowledge, and comfort with the subject material.
- 02.** Keep mutual respect as the core value for everyone in the class.
- 03.** Incorporate **self-reflection** in teaching, so students are able to personalize each lesson.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE) AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (PA)

The following is an excerpt from a blog on the PHE Canada website. You can view the complete blog [here](#).

The difference between PE and PA involves purposeful movement that activates growth in all aspects of a young person's life - physical (move), cognitive (think), emotive (feel) affective (act). [For example](#):

Skill	What it looks like in Physical Activity:	What it looks like in Physical Education
Running	Free play games like tag, running within a sport, run for fitness, active transportation.	Understanding <b>how your body feels</b> while running (mechanics of heel to toe, leg kick, arm action) and the long term impact this has on your life.
Playing Volleyball	Organized group sport event, passing time at the beach/park.	Learning <b>how to work as a team</b> , how to prepare and respond to different environments and situations, the proper way to send and receive an object safely and effectively.
Group Fitness Activities - Zumba/Pump/Steps/Yoga	Organized fitness class, online video, do it yourself creative home experience, sport specific training.	Learning <b>types of balance</b> (dynamic/static), level the body can move in, application of speed on the body, heart rates, movement sequencing, body coordination.
Playing Badminton	Competitive or recreational sport event, backyard play, independent rallying.	Learning <b>how to strike an object</b> with an implement, how to adapt the rules for your environment (playing over a bush or with outdoor boundaries).
Riding a Bike	Competitive or recreational sport event in an on road/off road setting, active transportation.	Gaining a <b>better understanding that regular cycling stimulates and improves your heart, lungs, and circulation</b> , reducing your risk of cardiovascular diseases. Cycling strengthens your heart muscles, lowers resting pulse, and reduces blood fat levels. Improves mental well-being, balance, and coordination.
Playing Basketball	Competitive or recreational sport events, pick up games, low organized games (around the world, knock out etc.)	Teamwork, cooperation, communication, and positive emotional support. Students <b>develop fundamental movement skills</b> , object manipulation, and transferrable gameplay strategies (e.g. defending and attacking a goal).
Bowling	Competitive or recreational events, variations of lawn bowling and bocce.	<b>Sending an object through space</b> , transfer skills to different sporting activities e.g. soft ball pitch, basic underhand throw has similar mechanics and teaching cues that students can connect as part of their prior knowledge when learning a new sport/skill.

## CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Get creative and **build movement into other subjects**. This will support students' ability to focus, their retention of the subject matter, and their overall well-being. Below are some examples of different movement activities that can be completed using core concepts of different subjects. Review the curriculum in your province or territory to consider how you can build movement throughout the school day.

### 01

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- Use an outdoor space and create groups of 4-5 students providing each group with a soccer ball. Challenge students to create a story as they pass the soccer ball amongst their group. One student in each group starts with the ball. They share a few sentences to start the story and then pass the ball to another group member. That group member must add a few sentences to the story before passing the ball on to another group member. Students continue until each student has added to the story at least two times and a logical ending to the story has shared.
- Recall information related to spelling, grammar, or texts studied by writing multiple choice questions on different pieces of paper and place them around the space. With each answer option, include a different type of movement (e.g., run on the spot, jump to the sky, demonstrate a tree pose, etc.). Students move around the space at a safe distance from each other, reading the questions and performing the associated movement.
- Invite students to pick a movement skill or activity that they can either share with the class or in a small group of classmates. Each student presents their movement skill or activity focusing on their tone of voice, facial expression, and gestures. Students answer questions from their classmates and practice the movement skill or activity.
- Read a story such as [Boogie Monster](#) by Josie Bissett or [Jazz Baby](#) by Lisa Wheeler to students. Encourage students to stand a safe distance away from each other and perform different actions throughout the story. **Encourage students to move their bodies in ways that are high or low, fast or slow, or smooth or sharp.**

## 02

## MATHEMATICS

- Create a grid on pavement and encourage students to use small objects (e.g. bean bags, etc.) to create a shape on the grid. Ask students to use the grid to demonstrate geometric transformations to the shape (e.g., translation, rotation, dilation, reflection). For each type of transformation, challenge students to create an associated movement with their bodies (e.g., use their arms to create a reflective movement, etc.).
- Students **collect natural materials in the schoolyard or in a greenspace nearby and create different patterns with the materials**. Create a different movement for each type of material (e.g. hop for each twig, skip for each leaf, etc.) and ask students to demonstrate their pattern using their body. For older students, ask them to share the type of pattern they created as well as the pattern rule.
- Practice different types of measurements by setting up stations that students can visit that have a material to be measured and an associated movement. Once students measure the material, they perform the associated movement that many times (e.g., A book has a perimeter of 12 centimetres with an associated movement of high knees. The student performs 12 high knees.).

## 03

## SCIENCE

- Explore the laws of motion by having students push, pull, roll, drop, and bounce various types of balls. Visit [Dropping Balls](#) at Science World for a detailed activity plan idea. Modify the activity as necessary to follow **physical distancing guidelines**.
- Engage students in different types of physical activity (e.g., walking, sprinting, etc.) and have them observe and record how the different types of movement affects their heart rate, breathing, and other parts of their body. Discuss which organs and systems of the body are involved and why physical activity is important for overall health.
- Provide each student with a bean bag and ask them to find space at a safe distance from others. Read out different multiple choice questions related to the scientific topic of study and ask students to perform an associated movement to indicate which answer they think is correct (e.g. A = throw and catch, B = pass the bean bag in a figure eight pattern between your legs, C = walk in place with the bean bag on your head, etc.).

# 04

## SECOND LANGUAGE STUDIES

(e.g., French, Cree, Mi'kmaw, Ojibwe, Gaelic, Mandarin, Spanish, Ukrainian, etc.)

- Ask students to find a safe space, away from others. Call out different fundamental movements (e.g., jump, hop, skip, dodge, run, etc.) **in the second language** and ask students to demonstrate the movements. Invite different students to take turns being the person to call out the different movements in the second language.
- Play **traditional or cultural games** that relate to the history or culture of where the second language originates. Choose games where students can learn about the history and culture, practice the second language, and engage in physical activity.
- Divide students into pairs and ask each to stand a safe distance from each other. Provide pairs with a soccer ball and a topic of conversation. Ask each pair to pass the ball back and forth to each other using only their feet. Before they can pass the ball to their partner, they must **share something related to the topic of conversation using the second language**. If full sentences are too challenging, students can share vocabulary words.
- Provide each student a bean bag and ask them to find a safe space, away from others. **Call out different body parts (e.g., head, shoulder, elbow, foot, hand, etc.) in the second language** and have students balance the bean bag on that body part while they walk around the space.
- Provide students with a short story to read in the second language. After they have read the story, ask students to stand in a safe space, away from others. Ask students true/false questions about the story orally or display them visually. To indicate their answer, students perform a yoga pose to indicate a true answer and a different yoga pose to indicate a false answer (e.g. tree pose for true, warrior pose for false). Ask students to hold the pose after they have selected it and discuss the question.

## 05

### SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY

- Introduce students to **dances from different cultures**. Ensure each dance is not sacred and all are welcome to learn them. Discuss with students how dance is important for various reasons including celebrations, traditions, and making meaning of the world.
- Explore diversity by **playing games that originate from around the world modifying them to follow physical distancing guidelines**. Discuss with students how the games may have originated in other parts of the world but are important to many Canadians.
- Have students practice their latitude and longitude skills by going on a scavenger hunt or GeoCaching.

## 06

### THE ARTS

- Ask students to research the work of a Canadian artist such as Emily Carr, The Indigenous Group of Seven, or Esmaa Mohamoud. Invite students to create movements to **represent how they interpret the artwork**. Ask students to include different elements of dance such as shape, level, pathway, force, etc.
- Invite students to find a safe space where they can move freely away from others. Play music with different tempos, pitches, and rhythms. Ask students to **perform different movements to represent the different elements of music they hear** (e.g., walk on the spot very slow for a slow tempo, large and sharp movements for loud music, etc.).
- Ask students to move around a large space ensuring they keep a safe physical distance from each other. As students move around, ask them to change their pace and direction frequently and call out different body parts to guide their movement. Ask them to follow their pinkie finger, their knee, their stomach, or their nose. Ask students what they noticed about the different types of movements they made when they were being led by different parts of their body.
- Beat a **drum at different tempos** and ask students to follow the beat with different movements. Students can choose their own movements or they can be determined by the educator. Sample movements include jumping jacks, hopping on the spot, punching the air, or scissor kicks.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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- PHE Learning Centre: <https://phecanada.ca/activate/phe-home-learning-centre>
- Spotlight Series: <https://phecanada.ca/connecting/events/phe-spotlight-series>
- Models Based Practice: <https://phecanada.ca/activate/models-based-practice>
- Teaching Games for Understanding - Tim Hopper:  
<http://blogs.ubc.ca/ubcpe/teaching-games-for-understanding-tgfu-approach/>
- Physical Literacy - PHE Canada:  
<https://phecanada.ca/activate/qdpe/physical-literacy-educational-strategies>
- Physical Literacy Checklist - PHE Canada: [shorturl.at/lqEN3](https://shorturl.at/lqEN3)
- PHE Canada - Always Changing: <https://phecanada.ca/programs/always-changing>
- Provincial and Territorial Return to School Guidelines: <https://phecanada.ca/activate/return-school-phe/provincial-and-territorial-return-school-guidelines>
- National Sport Organization Recommendations\*:  
<https://phecanada.ca/activate/return-school-phe/national-sport-organization-recommendations>  
*\*NOTE: These are not written for an educational context, but do contain valuable insights into how to run different sports in a safe way.*
- Ophea: <https://www.ophea.net/teaching-tools>
- Ever Active Schools - Recipe Card Lesson Plans:  
<https://everactive.org/product/recipe-card-lesson-plans/>
- Sport for Life - PlayBuilder: <http://getplaybuilder.com/ourcontent.html>
- Participaction: <https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/resources/physical-literacy>
- Active for Life: <https://activeforlife.com/elementary/>



## CONTACT US



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*With respectful acknowledgement that the land where PHE Canada's National Office is located is on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg People.*