

From March 2012 Newsletter

Staff / Parent Discussion re: GYM

Many parents have asked to learn more about our Gym program, so we are planning a Staff / Parent Discussion re: Gym on Friday, March 23rd from 9:30 to 11:00am in the West Wing Lounge. Preschool 4's and Kindergarten children will be in school, and child care will be provided in the Red Room for 3's and younger siblings. School will be in session; please park in the East Campus garage or at one of the metered spots near the school.



According to the **Active Start Guidelines for Preschoolers** (American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance), "*Preschoolers should accumulate at least 60 minutes of structured physical activity each day.*" We do provide weekly gym classes for all of our children, but families must also provide structured activities in order to meet the 60 minutes per day guideline. You can learn some yoga to do with your children at our March 1st Family Festival, as well as some techniques for practicing warm ups and other valuable skills at this Staff / Parent Discussion.

<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/nationalGuidelines/ActiveStart.cfm>

2012 Email Invitation

Fostering Physical Fitness in 3-5 Year Olds

As reinforcement of the key principles in our Whole School Unit on HEALTHY MINDS & BODIES, let's discuss how we can help children build healthy physical fitness habits for a lifetime.

Please join Ms. McMichael for a discussion of our Gym Program and ideas for family activities that will strengthen similar skills.

**CMU Children's School
Staff / Parent Discussion re: Gym & Physical Fitness**

Friday, March 23, 2012

9:30 – 11:00 AM, West Wing Lounge (the dorm between the Children's School and the track)

Preschool 4's and Kindergarten Children will be in school. Child Care will be provided for children 3 and under in the Red Room.

Because school will be in session, please park in the East Campus garage or at one of the metered spots near the school.

During the session, we will share

- an overview of our approach to gym class and other fitness activities at school,
- general tips for physical education,
- video clips of children of different ages learning similar skills in gym class,
- fitness activities for families at home, and
- ways that fitness activities can also strengthen skills in other developmental domains.

Please RSVP to this email, indicating how many adults will attend and the ages of children needing child care.

We look forward to our dialogue with you about gym class and physical fitness!!

Dr. Carver



Fostering physical fitness in 3-5 year olds

Beth McMichael, Gym & Extended Day Teacher
Prepared for the Staff / Parent Discussion on March 23, 2012

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Physical Fitness in Early Childhood Education

Developmentally appropriate curriculum

- is relevant, engaging, and meaningful to children,
- respects individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity,
- builds on what the children already know and are able to do,
- provides opportunities for rich conceptual development,
- engages children actively in the learning process,
- encourages exploration as well as learning established procedures,
- has intellectual integrity re: the relevant standards of the disciplines,
- addresses the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes,
- meets age-appropriate goals in all domains of development, and
- is flexible so that it can be adapted to the individual needs of the child.

[See Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1995). Reaching Potentials: Transforming Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment. NAEYC]

Integrating Physical Education into the Early Childhood Curriculum can be done in accordance with all of these principles to promote fitness!

Gym Class at the Children's School

Children ages 3-6 years

Gymnasium, tennis court or a large room

One teacher and one assistant teacher per 12 children

Weekly instructional time of 30 minutes, but need a full hour for travel to the gym

(Preschool and Kindergarten)

Includes: Warm ups, yoga, stretching and cool downs

Plus the structured physical education activity

Supplies

First aid kit with ice packs, Kleenex, Hand wipes, Cell Phone

Gym equipment for that day's activity/skill

Whistle for the teacher to get attention in gym

(1 blow means stop, look and listen)

Shoes and socks are available if child does not wear or bring appropriate footwear

Fitness Activities at Other Times

Circle Time Games

Large Motor Activities during Center Time

Rainy Day Activities

Outdoor Classroom

Practice skills introduced during Gym Class

Running, climbing, riding bikes & scooters, pulling wagons

Gardening

Physical Education Tips

1. The most important ingredient for a successful fitness program is a noncompetitive atmosphere. Make the students feel safe and secure with themselves and their own ability levels.
2. Take safety precautions to prevent injuries and accidents.
3. Establish daily routines – warm up exercises / aerobic activity / jogging / jumping jacks.
4. Keep directions simple. Use cues or key words in your verbal descriptions.
5. Provide demonstrations, as many young children are visual learners. Show children what you expect.
6. Allow maximum practice opportunity – provide equipment for everyone. When first learning skills, children do not profit from standing in line.
7. Avoid activities that are too difficult for the less skilled child. If a child feels confident about her abilities, she will be more inclined to participate actively.
8. Balance structured activities with creative movement to music.
9. Give continual positive feedback during every activity.
10. Praise and reward individuals for such things as teamwork, positive attitudes, good sportsmanship and effort, instead of acknowledging winning teams.
11. Limit competitiveness / limit team scorekeeping.
12. Physical education should be a positive experience for teacher and the students. The teacher should be enthusiastic about physical fitness. The teacher who gives students a love for physical activity and fitness will truly give them a gift for a lifetime.

How to Warm Up, Stretch and Cool Down

Warm Ups

- A warm-up is a low-level exercise, which gradually increases the heart rate. Walking, easy jogging and swinging the arms in circles are all examples of warm-ups. A good indicator of an adequate warm-up is light perspiration.
- Several minutes of warm-up activities should always come before stretching or other exercise. A warm-up will increase muscle elasticity and help prevent injury.

Stretches

- Stretching should be done several minutes before and after any physical activity.
- Stretching:
 - Decreases injuries by increasing the range of motion.
 - Lessens muscle soreness.
 - Improves performance.
 - Relieves tension.
- Remind children that stretching is not a contest to see how far they can go! Everyone has a different range of flexibility.
- Be sure to have children observe the following guidelines:
 - Don't bounce** back and forth trying to reach further.
 - Don't hurry!** Stretch very slowly and evenly.
 - Feel the muscles stretch and stop **before** it hurts.
 - Hold each position 30 to 60 seconds.

Cool Downs

After exercising, a 3- to 5- minute cool-down is important. Walking slowly and swinging the arms in circles are both examples of cool-downs. Cool-downs can help decrease muscle soreness and increase joint mobility.

Yoga for Young Children

Strengthens self-esteem and self-discipline.

Teaches you to relax and develop tools for coping with the pressures of school and life.

Improves the concentration and focus necessary for learning.

Builds a strong body, prepared for athletics.

Allows a child's natural creativity and imagination to flourish.

Butterfly Stretch (all ages appropriate)

Sit up straight, with the soles of your feet together. Pull your heels close to your body. Hold your knees and gently move them up and down like butterfly wings.

Tree (all ages appropriate)

Raise your right foot and place it high on your inner thigh, toes pointing down. Raise your arms. Bring your palms together or wave your fingers like the leaves of a tall strong tree. Imagine your roots extending into the earth, holding you steady.

Mountain Pose (all ages appropriate)

Stand with your feet together, arms at your sides. Lift your spine and relax your shoulders. Imagine you are a marionette and someone is pulling the string on top of your head to make you stand tall.

Appropriate Physical Movement Activities for Preschool & Kindergarten

There are many effective physical education activities that can help meet the full spectrum of developmental objectives in an age appropriate manner. Experiment to find what works for your group of children. Don't be afraid to introduce activities that take time to master. There is joy in mastery, especially when it takes practice.

Activity Dots / Fit Spot activities

- Teach all exercises to the group until everyone is comfortable.
- Interchange spots for all to have a turn at all ten exercises.

Balloons

- Striking and visual tracking
- Inexpensive and durable
- Intro to develop many skills required for major sports, such as volleyball, basketball, soccer, and baseball

Balloon Volleyball

- Eye-hand coordination game
- Teaches rotation and positions
- Progress to use of beach balls
- Sand box beach ball on playground
- Excellent preparation for volleyball

Balance Beam

- Balancing; control; strength
- Place mats at side and ends of beam
- Take turns at being a performer & spotter

Jump Rope

- Space and body awareness; balancing; listening
- Progress at individual rates while building strength and endurance
- Introduce via "jump hoops"
- Turning and walking, then eventually jumping
- Games –**Jump the River** and **Jumping Jingles**

Games

- Protect the Pin/Block and Bowl
- Steal the Bacon

Obstacle Course

- Provide exciting opportunities for students to participate in an endless array of fitness skill activities
- Arrange in any playing area and easily modify for any grade and skill level
- Equipment varies with each type of course design

Appropriate Physical Education Activities for Families at Home

There are many effective physical education activities that families can do at home to build both skills and confidence, as well as have fun together.

Ten Ideas for Bean Bags (one for each participant)

- Balance in hand, on back, on elbow, on shoulder, on head, etc.
- Walking on balance beam (or a curb or line) holding bean bag
- Throw bean bag up and catch it yourself with two hands
- Toss the bean bag back and forth from one hand to the other
- Toss and catch with a partner
- Put the beanbags on the floor and think of all the ways you can move over or around them (jump, leap, hop around, crawl around, make a bridge over ...)
- Walk holding bean bag between knees
- Walk with bean bag on shoe
- Run holding bean bag under arm
- Toss beanbags to target (in a box, at a spot on wall, through a hoop, etc.)

Ten Ideas for Hula Hoops (one for each participant)

- Place the hoop on the floor and jump in and out of it
- Balance it on your finger, knees, foot, etc.
- Roll the hoop like a tire
- Spin it on its axis
- Lie on your back and hold the hoop with both hands and feet
- Twirl it around one's neck
- Hold it above one's head and dropping it down one's body without touching
- Twirl it on one's waist
- Spin it around one's wrist
- Toss and catch hoops

Ten Ideas for Jump Ropes (best with two adults and the children)

- High water, low water
- Jump the river
- Snakes
- Waterfall
- Limbo
- Campfire – stop, drop and roll
- Rainbow (running under the rope when it is raised)
- Slowly swinging the jump rope back and forth
- Holding hands and running under a turning rope
- Partner jumps

Ways Physical Movement Activities Facilitate Developmental Progress

Self Esteem & Independence—encouraging each child’s pride in individual characteristics, families, experiences, and accomplishments and each child’s responsibility for personal care, actions, and words.

- State basic safety rules in gym
- Work independently using appropriate skills
- Follow basic physical education procedures
- Identify important steps for warm ups, stretches and cool downs
- Develop basics skills for throwing, catching, kicking and running
- Feel a sense of accomplishment/pride (re: square dancing and floor hockey)

Interaction & Cooperation—promoting children’s social skills for diverse adult and peer relations, including listening, turn-taking, following directions, rules and routines, group participation, care for shared materials and conflict resolution.

- Follow directions (re: obstacle course)
- Follow gym routines for warm ups, stretches, etc.
- Learn how to lead, take direction, listen and encourage one another
- Share equipment and take turns when working with peers
- Help peers when the need arises
- Use manners and polite talk
- Use words to resolve conflicts
- Respect differences in others when jumping, running, skipping and dancing
- Respond to correction respectfully
- Learn qualities behind a winning performance
- Experience teamwork, a strong sense of camaraderie, and team spirit
- Experience friendly competition and good sportsmanship

Communication—facilitating comprehension and expression skills beginning with oral and progressing to written language

- Learn vocabulary for exercising, games and sports
- Ask questions
- Answer questions
- Retell steps in a gym activity
- Feel confident in communicating during a game or sports activity
- Develop eye-hand coordination that will facilitate pre-reading and writing skills

Discovery & Exploration—fostering a positive attitude toward learning through questioning, observing and experimentation with various materials related to diverse themes.

- Take a positive approach to new situations
- View mistakes as a part of learning
- Review and record the steps in a new game or skill
- Initiate varied methods, ideas, etc.
- Practice counting and timing, etc. when playing a game, stretching, tagging
- Solve problems creatively to improve a game, find more effective ways to use the equipment, etc.

Physical Capabilities—giving children opportunities to use their growing bodies to develop small and large motor skills and coordination.

- Improve total fitness via exercise
- Learn motor skills (running, jumping, hopping, skipping, dancing, galloping, walking, etc.)
- Recognize appropriate way to hold balls, bats, paddles, beanbags, etc.
- Appreciate that practice will help improve skills
- Develop coordination, agility, speed and body control
- Improve dexterity
- Build endurance
- Promote rhythmic movement control

Artistic Expression and Appreciation—cultivating each child's ability to express ideas and emotions through art, music, movement and drama.

- Learn and participate in songs to help remember facts
- Associate colors, shapes and equipment to certain games (e.g. four corners, square dancing, crazy cones, etc.)
- Associate movements and rhythms to particular activities and skills
- Appreciate the creative movement efforts of others
- Value diverse ways of expressing ourselves through music and creative movement