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Should Elementary Physical Education Be Mandatory for the Children in Alabama?

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Many have posed the question of whether physical education is a necessity in school today. This question has been asked about physical education in elementary, junior high, and high school. Physical education is a must in school today. The following information will explain why continuing to offer and require physical education in Alabama schools is necessary for all students especially elementary students.

In recent years, thirty minutes of physical education was required for elementary students. Sometimes, in high school, students do not always have a physical education class. This is true due to children needing to take other necessary credit hours. However, elementary school students are expected to receive thirty minutes of physical education a day. The activity can be structured or the occasional freeplay time. This type of physical activity is important. Many children in Alabama are suffering from obesity. Skolnikoff says (2016), “How children develop attitudes and habits related to physical activity is a function of various genetic, behavioral, and

environmental factors” (48). The physical education classroom requires these students to get up and be active.

Some have asked how does this help the children. The students learn about sporting activities. Although some children are not interested in sports, it gives them an opportunity to learn how to play given sports. It builds muscles. It helps with social skills as well. The students must learn to cooperate with others. The physical education classroom is also a place to learn about health. Physical education teachers should spend times teaching students about their health. This can be done by learning about muscles, bones, etc. This can also be done by showing the students ways

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to stay healthy. Teaching the children to be healthy eaters and to continue doing physical activities will help children in the future. Students can learn about the food pyramid as well.

Many subjects can be taught within the physical education classroom. Science, math, reading, spelling, and health can all be part of physical education classes. Beyond that, children usually just love the physical education classroom time. Granero-Gallegos, Baena-Extremera, Pérez-Quero, Ortiz-Camacho, & Bracho-Amador’s study states that (2012) “the correlations showed a

high positive correlation with extrinsic motivation, fun, task- orientation and the importance and usefulness of PE” (616). One teacher from Delaware had a climbing wall installed. Children are required to answer other subject questions while climbing. Vail states (2006), "They are solving 20 to 30 problems as they climb across the wall," he observes. "It occupies their minds while they are getting strong" (13).

Unlike Illinois, Alabama only has a requirement for some students to experience physical education classes every day. Even leaders from Washington agree in the importance of physical education as stated by Manzo (1997),"We're not meeting the call for having quality physical education across all school levels," said NASPE Executive Director Judith C. Young. "We have so many things to do in education that people tend to think that physical education is not as much of a priority as other things.... But it is just as important and can actually improve achievement." (14).

The above information should relay how important physical education is for elementary students. It gives these students a head start on learning the importance of physical activity. It also gives these students the opportunity to learn about sporting activities and being healthy.

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