



Do what
MOVES you.



Dear Educator

As a physical education teacher, what you do every day helps develop healthier children — and this shows how much you care about kids! Since your students spend more time at school than any place else, it is the natural environment for them to develop physical activity skills, increase their knowledge of various activities and gain the self-confidence that is helpful in leading a healthy life.

The average amount of time per week that American children ages two to 17 spend watching television is an astounding 19 hours and 40 minutes.¹ The impact of this and other habits is frighteningly evident. The percentage of overweight children ages six to 15 has tripled since 1980 (or in the past 23 years).² Physical activity can help displace this unhealthy trend.

The benefits of physical activity are numerous and vital, as you already know — in the long-term it can reduce the risk of dying from heart disease; and reduces the risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure and colon cancer. More immediately, regular physical activity helps control weight and build healthy bones, muscles and joints; and may reduce feelings of depression and anxiety while promoting psychological well-being. Recent research has also shown a possible correlation between higher levels of fitness and higher academic achievement in reading and math.³

To assist in your efforts to encourage daily participation in physical activity among your students, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created the **VERB™** campaign. In support of this initiative and your commitment to promoting active lifestyles for your students, the CDC and Weekly Reader created this free educational program, **VERB. It's what you do.** Do what moves you. The VERB campaign is not a grammar lesson — you'll find nothing about nouns or adjectives in here! Rather, it is a tool for helping you convey the excitement, variety and fun of physical activity.

Pre-teen years are often the time when youth decide what hobbies and activities they will carry through to high school, and perhaps for a lifetime. The VERB campaign is intended for tweens, youth ages nine to 13, to help them find activities that encourage healthy behaviors.

We hope these materials help to motivate your students toward healthy, active lifestyles. We urge you to communicate the importance of the VERB initiative with parents and administrators at your school. The more support and safe opportunities made available for tweens to regularly participate in physical activity, the sooner they will start to develop habits of regular physical activity. Please feel free to share these materials with your colleagues. Although they are copyrighted, they may be reproduced for educational purposes.

Sincerely,

Katy Dobbs
Editorial Director
Lifetime Learning Systems®, Inc.
A Division of Weekly Reader



To help us prepare future educational materials that best suit your needs, please complete and return the enclosed educator feedback form and reply card.

¹ Nielsen, 2000.

² "Prevalence of Overweight Among Children and Adolescents: United States, 1999-2000." National Center for Health Statistics. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/overwght99.htm>

³ "State Study Proves Physically Fit Kids Perform Better Academically." California Department of Education. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/news/releases2002/re137.asp>

Target Audience

Students in grades 4 through 8

Program Objectives

- Motivate tweens (ages 9-13) in grades 4 through 8 to believe regular physical activity is valuable, possible and fun
- Encourage tweens to participate in physical activity at least 60 minutes per day, every day
- Heighten awareness among tweens of options and opportunities for their participation in physical activity

Teacher Objectives

- Support and encourage tween participation in physical activity at least 60 minutes per day, every day
- Communicate to tweens the options and opportunities available for them to participate in physical activity

Standards Link

This program meets the following National Physical Education Standards according to the National Association for Sport and

Physical Education:

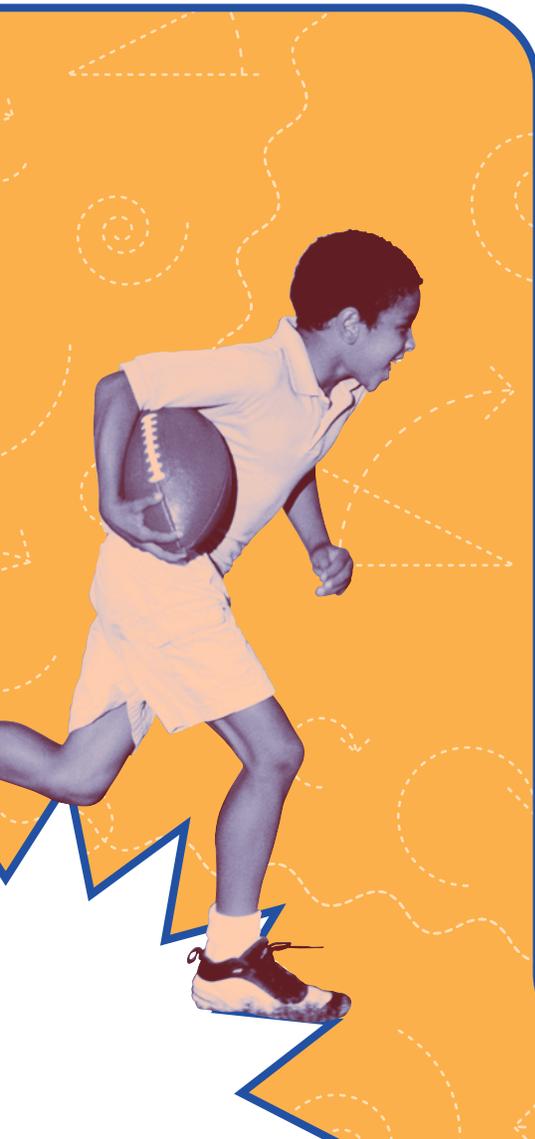
- Understands proper warm-up and cool-down techniques and reasons for using them
- Understands the benefits and costs associated with participation in physical activity
- Understands how to monitor and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness
- Understands the origins of different sports and how they have evolved
- Understands physical activity as a vehicle for self-expression

Program Components

- This four-page teacher's guide, with activity ideas to incorporate into your physical education classes
- Four reproducible student pages
- A wall poster to hang in the gymnasium or hallway
- A 5-minute video, *Make Your Own Action*
- One sheet of 30 stickers
- 30 VERB Trackers (small booklets) to share with your students
- A teacher feedback form and reply card

Getting Started

- To generate excitement with your classes, watch the **video** *Make Your Own Action* with your students. Then, photocopy the four student pages, which outline an **A-Z VERB activity guide** to get students interested in popular activities and sports. To build enthusiasm, you may wish to pass out the pages in installments. For instance, distribute only one page per week, or every two weeks, so that students look forward to the next set of VERBs. After giving out one of the pages, spend the next several classes exploring the activities on the page, developing skills and coming up with variations on the activities.
- As students become more and more interested in the options to be active, distribute the **VERB Trackers** (enclosed small booklets). These have a blank calendar for students to track when they're active and what VERB they are using.
- Keep students apprised of events in your school and community that offer safe opportunities for participation in physical activity. On a bulletin board inside the gymnasium, or outside in the hallway, hang up the **VERB wall poster** and use it as a centerpiece for announcing upcoming events. Encourage kids, parents, the PTA and colleagues to keep their eyes open for these opportunities (or organize their own!) and invite them to post announcements on the wall. Organize after school clubs where students can jog with an adult or ride bikes or inline skates around the parking lot while supervised. Post sign up sheets for these VERB clubs on the bulletin board.
- Use the **VERB stickers**, which feature a VERB for every letter of the alphabet, to encourage students to be active and explore activities that they may not have tried before. The stickers can be used as you see fit for the age level of your students. One idea is to place each of the stickers on a large index card. Brainstorm with your class at least one activity for each letter (or use the activities on the reproducible pages as a starting point), and write them on the cards. At the start of each class, ask someone to pick a card from a stack or a bowl and use that as your opening activity for class. Or, the person who picked the card could make up or think of a different activity starting with that letter and add it to the card. Spend the class period doing those VERBs and the related activity. Eventually, the cards will become full of activities that your students will enjoy!



VERB of the Week

Get your students excited about all the new things in store for them in class by highlighting a *VERB of the Week*! Each week, try out all the ways students can bounce, jump, run, dive, etc. Use these ideas to get you started.

- **Run** Hold a "Jump-Start Jog." To introduce fun ways to jog laps, have tweens jog the "straight-aways" of the lanes and then choose alternate activities to perform at each of the "turns" such as walking, skipping, hopping, tiptoeing, clapping over head and jumping rope. For another class, focus on Track and Field events and set up low hurdles and short sprints. At the start of the week, chart three running courses – short-, middle- and long-distance. Challenge students to run all three courses this week, gradually increasing the distance to the longest course. For more ideas, visit www.americanrunning.org.
- **Juggle** Practice the soccer skill of juggling by doing drills with your students in which they keep the ball in the air for as long as possible without hitting the floor or using their hands. Ask kids to work in pairs and first pass the ball to each other using only their heads (first show them proper technique). Then, tell them to use just their feet and then just their thighs. Combine two pairs of students and allow them to use any part of their body (excluding hands) to pass the ball to one another.
- **Dance** When people think of physical activity and physical education class, dancing may not come to mind. Dance is a great cardiovascular exercise and helps tone muscles and increase flexibility. The only way kids will make physical activity part of their daily lifestyle is if they find something they really enjoy doing. Expose the girls *and boys* in your class to various kinds of dance. Set up stations or focus on one type of dance for each class. Invite volunteers who are professional dancers or teach dance classes to talk about the culture and basic steps of various dances.
- **Pitch** Teach your students pitching, catching and fielding tips for baseball and softball. Once they develop their skills, play a "Backwards Baseball" game for a fun twist! Ask "hitters" to stand on the pitcher's mound and "runners" to run the bases in the opposite direction (3-2-1). They can also skip, hop or shuffle from base to base.
- **Swing** Set up stations around the gym all week for students to experience different ways to *swing*. Have stations for baseball, swing dancing, tennis and golf! Make sure kids make the rounds and move to all of the stations throughout the week.
- **Toss** Have a "Frisbee® Toss" be the center of your week! Play "Ultimate Frisbee," which is like a football game where points are scored when Frisbees are caught beyond a goal line. Players can guard each other, but players cannot run with the disk. Or, play "Disk Golf" by tossing a disk in the least number of throws. Use targets like plastic garbage cans instead of "holes." Ask a local sporting goods store if they'd like to donate Frisbees to get kids excited about this fun activity. Visit www.VERBnow.com for more instructions on how to play Disk Golf.
- **Jump** Organize stations to teach the art of basketball jump shots and jump rope games. Also set up a station with a coordination game called "Escape the Shape!" by designing a variety of shapes on the floor or ground using masking tape. Ask tweens to stand in the center of the shapes. Blow a whistle and have them jump as follows: forward out of the shape, back to the center, backwards out of the shape, to the center,

right out of the shape, to the center, left out of the shape and finally back to the center. Remember to expose all students to all stations during the week.

- **Kick** Spend this week practicing soccer skills like passing and dribbling. Ask tweens to bring in their Hackey Sacks®, or footbags, and set up a five-foot tall net or string where students play "soccer volleyball." They can use any part of their body, except hands, to get the footbag over the net. Also, invite a martial arts instructor from a local school or community organization into your classes to talk about various styles of martial arts and teach kids some basic moves. Visit www.VERBnow.com for other footbag games.

Other Ideas to Keep Your Students on the Go

- **Keep it Moving** Set up stations around the gym for different VERBs (i.e., a station for RUN would have three activities – one for R, U and N). At the start of class, divide kids into groups and assign them to different stations. Ask them to change stations every three-to-five minutes during class to keep them moving and having fun.
- **Put the Fun in Jogging** When offering students a variety of stations or activities to choose from, include jogging! Many Americans see the benefits of this endurance-building activity. On a nice day, take a jog with your students around the grounds. Better yet, start a jogging club after school and take a jog around the building or to the local park and back. You'll get in your physical activity for the day, and provide your students with a safe environment. Create a schedule with other interested teachers to keep the club going.
- **Warm Up, Cool Down** Talk to your students about these important aspects of being physically active. Make sure you put them into practice by allowing five-to-ten minutes before and after each class to warm up and cool down.





- **Hoops For Heart** Hoops For Heart is a fund-raising program co-sponsored by the American Heart Association and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. As a physical education teacher, you can register with the American Heart Association, and you will receive materials to conduct a Hoops For Heart event – a coordinator’s guide, complimentary basketball, skills and team game activity outline, and other promotional materials. Go to www.americanheart.org/hoops for more information.
- **Track It!** Ask students to log how many hours a day they are active and how many hours a day they are inactive. How does this tally up at the end of the week and the end of the month? Do they see any patterns or room for improvement? If so, what goals will they set for themselves? Encourage students to use the online VERB Recorder at www.VERBnow.com.
- **Get in Gear** Invite a volunteer from a local community organization, police officer or fire fighter to talk about safety equipment and practices for riding bikes, skateboarding and inline skating.
- **Circle Workout** Organize students into groups, forming a circle. Place a ball in each circle and have tweens kick it to any person opposite to them. Alter the game by adding a second and then third ball.
- **Stretching Your Limits** Explore with your class the benefits of performing proper stretches for flexibility and possible prevention of injury. Demonstrate how to work every muscle by holding each stretch for about 15 seconds, two times. Remind students never to bounce while stretching. Form a circle to perform head-to-toe stretches including arm circles, neck stretches, side bends and hip twists. Have groups of students form circles and ask one tween to make the first stretch, another to make the first stretch and then one of their own, a third student to make the first and second stretches and then one of their own, and so on. Also spend some time this week exploring various poses and breathing techniques of yoga. See www.VERBnow.com for other yoga ideas for this age range.
- **Now That’s an Obstacle** Create an obstacle course for students to complete by running and dribbling a ball. Use cones, chairs and other easy-to-acquire items. For the next class, increase the difficulty level by including more obstacles. Conduct this exercise for basketball, soccer, etc.

Helpful Resources*

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance – www.aahperd.org

America’s Athletes With Disabilities, Inc. – www.americasathletes.org

BAM! Body and Mind Teacher’s Corner – www.bam.gov/teachers

CDC’s VERB. It what you do. campaign page – www.cdc.gov/VERB

Disabled Sports USA – www.dsusa.org

The First Tee, an initiative of the World Golf Foundation – www.thefirsttee.org

Games Kids Play – www.gameskidsplay.net

International Inline Skating Association – www.iisa.org

International Mountain Bicycling Association – www.imba.com

Little League Baseball® – www.littleleague.org

Medical Network Inc’s Health A to Z site – www.healthatoz.com

National Association of Professional Martial Artists – www.napma.com

The Official NFL Site for Kids – www.playfootball.com

PE Central – www.pecentral.com

P.E. 4 Life – www.pe4life.com

The President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports – www.fitness.gov

United States Tennis Association – www.usta.com

USA Gymnastics Online – www.usa-gymnastics.org

USA Hockey InLine – www.usahockey.com/inline

USA Jump Rope – www.usajrf.org

USA Track & Field – www.usatf.org/youth

US Youth Soccer – www.usysa.org

VERB’s site for kids – see what they’re up to! The site also inventories activity cards with instructions for various games and physical activities. – www.VERBnow.com

Volleyball.Com – www.volleyball.com

* Disclaimer: These Web resources are provided solely as a service to you as an educator. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these organizations or their programs by CDC or the federal government, and none should be inferred. CDC is not responsible for the content of the individual organization Web pages found at these links.

©2003 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Created by Lifetime Learning Systems®, Inc., a division of Weekly Reader.