

## *Michigan*

# Expanding the Knowledge Base for Using Effective Physical Education Curricula

### Problem Overview

Overweight and physical inactivity are common among youth in Michigan. According to the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, among high school students in the state

- 12% were obese and 16% were overweight.
- 56% did not meet recommended levels of physical activity.
- 15% did not participate in 60 minutes or more of physical activity any day during the past week.

Increasingly, researchers are learning that regular physical activity is critical to sustained good health.

### Program/Activity Description

To address these problems, the Michigan Departments of Education and Health have supported development of the Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum (EPEC) as part of the state's coordinated school health program. EPEC is a K–12 program designed to enhance physical activity knowledge, personal and social skills, motor skills, and physical activity and fitness levels to equip students to be active for life. Over time, increased competence in these skills may lead to improved confidence and fitness levels.

The Michigan Department of Education, with the support of CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, participated in an evaluation of EPEC to measure its effectiveness in improving motor skills, physical activity levels, fitness, and attitudes toward and confidence in one's ability to engage in physical activity among fourth and fifth grade students. The evaluation followed 1,464 students who received EPEC and who received physical education curricula other than EPEC in 16 Michigan schools from fall 2004 through spring 2006.

### Program/Activity Outcomes

Compared with same-grade students receiving alternate physical education curricula, among students exposed to EPEC:

- Fourth-grade students reported more total minutes of physical activity and more energy during physical activity.
- Fourth-grade students had greater levels of confidence in their ability to perform motor skills.
- Fifth-grade students had greater levels of physical activity knowledge.

Evaluation of EPEC provided valuable data to inform decision makers' ongoing efforts to increase healthy behaviors among Michigan students. EPEC represents a new generation of curricula focused on learning and performing motor skills through individual and team physical activities. In addition to being used by teachers for grades K–5 in more than 80% of Michigan's school districts, 42 schools in other states are using EPEC.



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