SPARK 3-6 PE (Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids Grades 3 to 6 Physical Education) Program

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is for children who are in 3rd through 6th grade.

SUMMARY

SPARK™ 3-6 PE (Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids Grades 3 to 6 Physical Education) Program, a school-based program, is designed to increase participants' physical activity during the school day.

EVIDENCE

In a randomized clinical trial, 4th graders received either the program delivered by PE Specialists, by nonspecialist teachers, or their typical school PE program (control). At the end of the 2-year observation period, students receiving the program spent more time in physical activity classes per week, spent more time performing moderate-to-vigorous physical activity during PE classes, expended more calories during PE classes, and showed greater improvements in throwing and catching skills than control students. This did not translate to measurable improvements in fitness for males, but it did for females. Outcomes were generally best for students receiving the program delivered by PE specialists.

COMPONENTS

The SPARK 3-6 PE Program curriculum can be used by classroom teachers and PE specialists to increase children's physical activity during regular classroom time and their active exercise time during PE classes. The program also intends to promote health and wellness. Lesson plans are aligned with the National Association for Sport and Physical Education National Standards and focus on the following two activity themes:

- **Focus on Fitness** - Develop and maintain health-related fitness.
- **Spotlight on Skills** - Foster sport-specific skills, dance, and social skills.

Ten health-related activity units are included in the curriculum, which teaches children activities such as aerobic dance, aerobic games, walking/jogging, and jumping rope. Nine sports units are implemented to develop children's skill-related fitness levels. The goal of these sports is to promote cardiovascular fitness. For sports like softball that are lower in activity, facilitators modify the game to ensure children are more active.

The program also includes self-management, which teaches children behavior change skills (i.e., self-monitoring and goal setting) to help them be more active outside of school. Students set goals and review their previous week's goals during the self-management portion of the program. In addition, students receive Home Play Activities on the first day of each new unit to promote physical activity outside of PE class. Parents are sent monthly newsletters to encourage parental support of physical activity at home. Families also receive access to SPARKfamily, a password-protected website where they can access videos, interactive tools, and activities to do at home.

PREVIOUS USE

SPARK has been available since 1989 and has been used in over 100,000 schools worldwide. The Department of Defense Education Activity has adopted SPARK PE programs for use in four of their PE courses, which include Comprehensive PE Grade Level K-8, Grades 9-12 Lifetime Sports, Personal Fitness Grade Level 9-12, and Grades 9-12 Physical Activity and Nutrition.
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TRAINING

Training is mandatory. SPARK 3-6 PE Program workshops are offered by SPARK staff to train teachers to facilitate the program. Options include Premium training, which lasts 12 hours over 2 days for $4,700, or Standard training, which lasts 6 hours over 1 day for $2,700. Individuals who complete the Premium training are eligible for a unit of credit from San Diego University. In addition, SPARK trainer travel costs are $1,000. Up to 40 people can attend each training. Multiple schools or other agencies can be trained together to share training costs. Site training coordination requires 8 weeks. SPARK 3-6 PE Institutes are also held annually in San Diego over 2 days. Costs to attend the institute range from $439 to $459 a person not including travel costs. For more information, please visit www.sparkpe.org/physical-education/3-6/training/

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for implementing this program include acquiring buy-in from school administration and teachers, understanding funding for the program and training could be necessary, ensuring teachers receive training, and finding time in an existing curriculum for teachers to prepare lessons and implement program activities.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

IMPLEMENTATION

If you are interested in implementing the SPARK 3-6 PE Program, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

TIME

The curriculum is designed to be implemented in 1 school year. The minimum time investment suggested is 30 minutes three times per week for PE classes with 15 minutes for Focus on Fitness and 15 minutes for Spotlight on Skills.

COST

Curriculum set options range from $200 to $400. The $200 digital edition set includes a complete e-manual, activity videos, music, assessment tools, and a 3 year membership to SPARKfamily.org. The $300 set includes everything in the first set plus a printed manual and music CD. The $400 set includes everything listed in the $300 set plus SPARKfolio. Please visit www.sparkpe.org/physical-education/3-6/curriculum/ for more information. Prices for sporting equipment vary and may be purchased from the program website.

EVALUATION PLAN

To move the SPARK 3-6 PE Program to the Effective category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence at least one external evaluation must be conducted that demonstrates sustained, positive outcomes. This study must be conducted independently of the program developer.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

CONTACT

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program. Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: Clearinghouse@psu.edu

You may also contact The SPARK Programs by mail 438 Camino Del Rio South, Suite 110, San Diego, CA 92108, phone 1-619-293-7990 or 1-800-SPARK PE, fax 1-619-293-7992, email spark@sparkpe.org, or visit www.sparkpe.org/about-us/contact-us/

SOURCE

www.sparkpe.org/physical-education/3-6/

www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu