

If elementary, middle and high school students only got half of the daily science, math or language arts instruction that's recommended, parents, teachers and school board members would be outraged. But that's exactly what's happening when it comes to the physical education courses they receive in school.

The latest [physical activity guidelines](#) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommend that children receive one hour of physical activity a day; however, [only about half of youth](#) meet that recommendation.

During the school year, students spend the majority of their waking hours at school, so physical education programs can play an [integral role](#) in helping students get enough physical activity, which in turn will decrease their risk for heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure later in life.

Physical education guidelines can vary greatly by state and even by school district. Is **[School District Name]** setting **[county/city name]**'s children up for success when it comes to physical activity? Is their physical education plan available online and easily or accessible? Are school officials able to provide this information if you call?

Some important factors to consider:

- Does our school system meet all of the state PE standards?<sup>1</sup>
- Is PE taught by a certified Health Educator?
- How much PE do our students receive per day? Per week?
- Is PE taught in every grade?
- Are waivers, substitutions, or exemptions accepted for PE? If so, can the school provide a list of what waivers are accepted?

Once you have an idea of our school's physical education plan, I encourage you to compare it to other schools in our state and across the nation. To find data specific to **[insert state]**, you can access a state fact sheet released by the Society of Health and Physical Educators' [SHAPE of the Nation Report](#). Select **[STATE]** in the drop-down menu and then open the fact sheet linked on the right-hand side.

To compare **[School District Name]**'s PE policies nationally, consult the Centers for Disease Control's [School Health Policies and Practices Study](#) which provides information on physical education collected from school districts across the country.

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<sup>1</sup> To find your data points on your state's PE guidelines visit <https://www.shapeamerica.org/advocacy/son/> and select your state under the dropdown menu under "Choose Your State Profile." Then select either the HPE Fact Sheet or the PE State Standards on the right sidebar.