
A PARENT'S GUIDE

TO THE REVISED HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM, GRADES 1 TO 12

In Ontario, the curriculum identifies what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade or course.

The curriculum supports students to develop the skills and knowledge to:



Understand themselves and others



Think critically, and make and promote healthy choices



Develop and maintain healthy relationships



Be safe, physically and emotionally



Be physically active for life and thrive

Helping students develop the knowledge and skills to be safe and healthy is part of *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*. Learn more at ontario.ca/eduvision.

WHAT ARE STUDENTS LEARNING AND DOING IN HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION?



STUDENTS ARE LEARNING TO UNDERSTAND THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

Younger students learn about:

- What makes them unique and how important it is to respect and understand differences in others
- Identifying, setting, keeping track of and adjusting personal fitness goals.

Older students learn about:

- Building their understanding of mental health, and dealing with challenges they may face
- Working with others to find solutions to current health and safety issues (e.g., the dangers of texting while driving).

The curriculum doesn't mandate how an educator is supposed to teach course content to their students. Educators make those decisions based on the needs of students.



STUDENTS ARE LEARNING TO THINK CRITICALLY, AND MAKE AND PROMOTE HEALTHY CHOICES

Younger students learn about:

- The benefits of less screen time and more outdoor time
- Hygiene practices, like hand-washing, to prevent the spread of diseases.

Older students learn about:

- Making healthy food choices, taking into account things like cost, availability, nutrition and other issues
- Understanding the effects that using alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs and prescription medication can have on them, and on other people.

The wide-scale use of the Internet, social media and smart phones means that students are constantly connected – to information, to their peers, to the world.



STUDENTS ARE LEARNING TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Younger students learn about:

- Teamwork and communication skills through physical activities
- What it looks, sounds and feels like to be a good friend and to participate in ongoing, respectful, two-way communication with other people.

Older students learn about:

- Sexual consent, and that consent requires clear and intentional communication that only comes from knowing their own boundaries and having respect for other people's boundaries
- The importance of respecting themselves and other people, in all their diversity – including people of all gender identities, sexual orientations, mental and physical abilities, and social and cultural backgrounds.

Human development and sexual health is one part of overall health and well-being. It involves learning about oneself and others, about relationships and about social and emotional skills.



STUDENTS ARE LEARNING TO BE SAFE, PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY

Younger students learn about:

- Listening and showing respect when others ask them to stop doing something
- Making safe choices, like wearing a helmet to protect their head, when riding a bike.

Older students learn about:

- The social, emotional and legal implications of posting or forwarding sexually explicit photos (sexting)
- Watching for hazards when they are active in outdoor spaces.

Parents, students, teachers and the community working together, make a difference for student learning and well-being.



STUDENTS ARE LEARNING TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE FOR LIFE AND THRIVE

Younger students learn about:

- Moving with confidence and skill in a variety of physical activities
- Being physically active to contribute to their health and well-being, have fun, make friends and cope with stress.

Older students learn about:

- Choosing daily physical activities they enjoy that suit their abilities, fit into their daily lives, and help them meet their fitness goals
- Using what they know, in order to be healthy and active, and to be role models for others.

THE HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM: A CLOSER LOOK

The Health and Physical Education curriculum guides teachers as they help all students gain the skills and knowledge they need to lead healthy, active lives. The development of this curriculum has been informed by research, advice from academics and experts in many fields of study (including mental health, public health, sexual health, physical education, kinesiology) and discussions with parents, teachers and students.

The curriculum includes:

- An **introductory section**, with information about the curriculum itself, assessing student learning and program planning.
- **Learning expectations**, the knowledge and skills that students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of a grade or course.
- **Optional “Prompts”** (e.g., sample teacher questions, student responses) and **examples** that teachers can use in planning lessons and teaching, and tailoring learning to meet individual student’s learning needs. These sample dialogues help with answering questions, prompt thinking about different perspectives and provide further examples of what students could be learning.
- **“Living Skills”** incorporated throughout the whole curriculum. These include learning about self-awareness and coping skills; social skills and communication skills for healthy relationships; and ways to solve problems, set goals and make decisions. In this example, the tag, [CT] indicates that the teacher could focus specifically on helping students develop critical thinking skills as they are learning about factors that motivate participation in physical activity.
- **Division Overviews** for grades 1-3, 4-6 and 7 & 8 which provide information about the developmental needs of students and summaries of learning expectations.
- **Appendices** which include charts that summarize the learning and a glossary with research-based definitions of terms.



For example, in Grade 6, students will:

- A1.3** describe factors that motivate them to participate in physical activity every day, at school and during leisure time, and that influence their choice of activities (e.g., *influence of friends, enthusiasm for the outdoors, a preference for either team or individual activities, encouragement from others, increased time with friends, availability and affordability of a program, enjoyment of healthy competition, influence of media role models*) [CT]

Teacher prompt: “How do the things that motivate you to be active affect what you choose to do?”

Students: “I really like being outdoors, so I will pick activities that give me a chance to be outside. There is a new hiking and outdoor activities club being started at lunch. None of my friends are joining, but I think it sounds interesting, and I might meet someone new.” “I am learning traditional dancing because I want to learn about something that has a connection to my culture.” “I love competing and I love team sports and activities. Lots of team sports, like soccer, are available in my community.” “I do not like team sports, but I do like being active with other people. I kayak with my aunt on the weekends and, whenever I can, I go to the skateboard park with my friends.”

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING AND WELL-BEING

Both families and the school have important roles in supporting students' learning and well-being. The following considerations have been adapted from resources developed by parents (See Additional Resources below).

Being involved

- Consider what you can do together that is fun and also supports health (e.g., physical activity, making meals).
- Listen with full attention.
- Answer questions in a factual, straightforward way.

Being a learner

- Ask your child and your child's teachers about what they are learning at school.
- Learn the basics about staying safe online, especially when using social media.
- Find out about community services and resources that are available locally (e.g., recreation, mental health services).

Being a role model

- Think about your own viewpoints and ask your children questions to share their perspectives.
- Consider your influence on your children (e.g., when crossing the road, driving, making food choices).

Being a guide

- Help your child understand their strengths and set goals.
- Encourage active transportation, where possible (e.g., walking, riding a bicycle).
- Help your child to recognize their feelings and what is stressful for them, and help them to find ways to manage them.



RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

For more information about how you can support your child's learning:

- See the Parent section in the Health and Physical Education curriculum.
 - » Elementary curriculum: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/health.html
 - » Secondary curriculum: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/health.html
- For more information about child and youth development (social, emotional, physical, mental) and what adults can do to support young people, see:
 - » *Early Learning Framework Full Report* (for children from birth to 8 years of age) www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/oelf
 - » *Stepping Stones, a resource on youth development* (for youth, ages 12 to 25) www.ontario.ca/steppingstones
- With the Health and Physical Education curriculum on the Ministry Education website find links to:
 - » *A Parent's Guide: Human Development and Sexual Health in the Health and Physical Education curriculum, Grades 1–6 and 7–12*
 - » Quick Facts for parents
- Additional Resources
 - » *Building Healthy Relationships and Building Parent Engagement*, available from www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement.html
 - » People for Education www.peopleforeducation.ca
 - » Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education www.oapce.on.ca/oapce
 - » Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations www.ofhsa.on.ca
 - » Parents partenaires en éducation www.reseauppe.ca