

ARTICLE REVIEWED

Observed and Perceived Benefits of Providing Physical Activity Opportunities in Elementary Schools: A Qualitative Study

Walker, T. J., Craig, D. W., Pfledderer, C. D., Robertson, M. C., Cuccaro, P., Fumero, K., & Bartholomew, J. B. (2023). Observed and perceived benefits of providing physical activity opportunities in elementary schools: a qualitative study. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 5, 1240382.

THE PROBLEM

Schools are an important place for promoting physical activity for youth. However, opportunities for physical activity at school often end up competing with academic demands, and schools often have limited time and resources for physical activity opportunities. This is especially the case when schools cut back on physical activity to spend more time on academic instruction. To implement physical activity opportunities in schools, it is necessary to understand how educators view these opportunities. A lack of understanding from their perspective can result in less effective efforts to promote physical activity in the school settings.



Research Summary

This study examined elementary school teacher and staff perspectives on providing physical activity opportunities in schools. This qualitative research included 15 participants (four teachers, four physical education teachers, three assistant principals, and four principals) from a school district in Texas. The study explored their opinions and perceived benefits of providing physical activity opportunities, which emerged into four themes and subthemes. These included academic benefits, social-emotional benefits, physical benefits, and instructional benefits. Findings indicated that engaging students in physical activity at schools leads to numerous benefits including improvements in learning and social-emotional well-being.

Conclusion

Physical activity opportunities in schools play an important role in educational success, academic improvements and social-emotional outcomes and interpersonal skills. Empirical research highlights numerous benefits of school-based physical activity, suggesting that there is a need to consider physical activity programming as an integral and synergistic part of the school experience.

Key Takeaway

Physical activity opportunities in schools support students to develop interpersonal and social skills and it develops a more positive classroom environment. Providing physical activity opportunities also benefits teachers to improve quality teaching time and classroom management and strengthening the relationship with the students.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Szeszulski, J., Walker, T. J., Robertson, M. C., Cuccaro, P., & Fernandez, M. E. (2020). School staff's perspectives on the adoption of elementary-school physical activity approaches: a qualitative study. *American Journal of Health Education*, 51(6), 395-405.