



## PLANNING SPARK PHYSICAL EDUCATION LESSONS

A typical 30-minute SPARK Physical Education class for upper-elementary (grades 3-6) students consists of two parts:

1. Introduction (warm-up) with a transition to a Type 1 activity (15 min.)
2. Type 2 activity with a transition to closure (cool-down) (15 min.)

### TYPE 1 ACTIVITY

This portion of the lesson focuses on developing health-related fitness and locomotor skills. Introductory activities to warm up all parts of the body are followed by more demanding activities. Progression is developed by modifying the intensity, duration, and complexity of the activities selected. Lessons include activities which develop cardiovascular endurance, rhythm and timing, abdominal and upper body strength, creative movement, non-locomotor skills, flexibility, balance, agility, and general coordination.

### TYPE 2 ACTIVITY

This part of the lesson focuses on helping children obtain skill-related fitness, particularly as it relates to the development of body/limb/object coordination and specialized sport skills (e.g., basketball, soccer). Specialized activities are organized into progressive units of approximately four weeks (twelve lessons).

Application and game play should be included in most lessons, and may be part of either the Type 1 and/or Type 2 segments. Games conducted in a fun, inclusive, and motivating environment provide children with opportunities to apply the skills they learn during practice periods.

During both Type 1 and Type 2 segments, students should also be presented with opportunities to develop social and personal skills through positive interactions. Students should be assisted in discovering what they can do, and learn to appreciate their own uniqueness as well as that of others. The enhancement of student self-perception and self-image should be an integral part of the physical education class.

### RECOMMENDED LESSON PLANS

A number of lesson plans are provided for each instructional unit. These have been designed to provide a progression in fitness development and skill learning, as well as to ensure a smooth integration between Type 1 and Type 2 activities. While these plans have been successfully implemented with third through sixth grade classes, teachers should modify lessons to meet the particular fitness or skill needs of their own students. Students enter into physical education with different experiences, and some progress at different rates; therefore, teachers must judge how rapidly to progress through the plans. Rather than moving on to an entirely new activity or unit, repeating lesson segments using slight modifications may be more helpful in getting children to master skills.

## PREPARING TO TEACH

The following preparatory steps are recommended before instructing a SPARK Physical Education class:

1. Refer to the yearly schedule to determine which Type 1 and 2 units are recommended. Field-testing and careful consideration went into the suggested order and pairing of units. However, environmental conditions, facilities, equipment, etc., may justify making changes.
2. Review the cover page of the Type 1 and 2 units to be instructed to properly prepare the necessary equipment. The bottom portion of the unit cover page indicates the "Equipment Needs" for the unit.
3. Review the lesson to be instructed. Plan for location, safety, and set-up. The text under "Organization" directs the instructor on how to organize the activities and manage students. "Teaching Cues" provide sequential instructions which may be given directly to the class.
4. Place the Type 1 and Type 2 lessons on a clipboard, and take to the instructional area.

### CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING CLASS ACTIVITIES

Each activity selected for a SPARK Physical Education lesson should provide:

1. A means for reaching valid educational (SPARK) objectives;
2. Maximum activity for each student (no elimination; sitting around, waiting in long lines);
3. Many opportunities for each student to be successful;
4. A supportive improvement-oriented environment;
5. Accommodation for various skill levels (individualization); and,
6. Opportunities for developing decision making skills.

### PERSONAL BEST DAY

Personal Best Day, scheduled approximately five times per school year, is designed to allow students to track their physical fitness over time. On that day, the SPARK class consists of a warm-up, three objective fitness tests (9-minute jog, modified curl-ups, and push-ups), and a brief cool-down. The activities are conducted in lieu of the normally scheduled Type 1 and Type 2 units, not in addition to them. Children can compare their results over time and to health-related standards. This program of regular testing directly assesses cardiovascular endurance, abdominal and upper body strength and endurance, and helps to promote goal setting and engagement in physical activities outside of class time. The Sample Yearly Plan (on page 9 in the Introduction section), provides suggested weeks to conduct a Personal Best Day.

## TYPE 2 ACTIVITY FORMAT

To reduce wasting valuable class time in transitions, Type 2 segments have been organized into three different formats: Individual, partner, or group. Once the Type 2 segment begins, the class remains in the same grouping for the remainder of the class. The top portion of each lesson plan indicates the organizational format for that day:

**INDIVIDUAL DAY:** Students participate in all drills and games as an individual, therefore, instructors need to provide 1 ball/piece of equipment for each child.

Transition suggestions: (Ways to move from Type 1 to Type 2 activities.)

1. As students return from their lap/circuit, they pick up a ball and begin self-practice.
2. Direct students to select equipment by birth date, clothing color, table groups, etc.

**PARTNER DAY:** Students participate in all drills and games in pairs. Teachers need to supply one or two pieces of equipment for each pair.

Transition suggestions:

1. To pair students play Back to Back; have one stand, one squat. Direct "squatters" or "standers" to get a ball.
2. As above, but children identify themselves by A or B, taller or shorter, youngest or oldest, etc.

**GROUP DAY:** Students participate in all drills and games as part of a group. Equipment needs depend upon the size of the group.

Transition suggestions:

1. Use pre-existing groups or combine partners from a previous day.
2. Play formation games such as Mingle, Mingle.
3. Number or letter individuals (count off A,B,C; A,B,C, or 1,2,3; 1,2,3). All children with the same number or letter are in one group.

## ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS

### To ensure a safe and efficient lesson teachers should:

1. Establish a system of helpers to set up and put away equipment.
2. Dress for movement, at least by wearing comfortable, safe, athletic shoes.
3. Be safety conscious! Examine the instructional area and equipment to assure that safe conditions exist. Be aware of drills or games that could be hazardous if not played properly.
4. Students excused from physical education for the day may be able to participate in low-intensity activities or help with management tasks.
5. Begin class with (brief) warm-up activities.
6. Demonstrate enthusiasm for physical activity.
7. Provide high rates of instructional and motivational feedback. Ensure positive student interactions outnumber corrective ones.
8. Speed the transition from a Type 1 to a Type 2 activity, by preparing the equipment in advance.
9. Ensure children have adequate amounts of equipment and it is ready for their use.
10. Be activity conscious! Avoid lengthy explanations, drills, and games that do not encourage movement.
11. Be line conscious! Be aware of how long children are waiting for a turn at bat, a chance at the pull-up bar, etc. Divide students into smaller groups, use more equipment, set up activity/drill stations.
12. Remember to give as much individual help to students as possible. A good time to do this is when students are working in small groups.
13. Before cooling down at the end of a lesson, have students put away all equipment. Students without equipment should walk immediately to designated cool down area.

## COMMON MANAGEMENT CONCERNS ADDRESSED

### CONCERN:

#### 1. **"I don't have time to set up before class."**

##### SUGGESTIONS:

- Have one or two students leave a few minutes early to set up for class.
- Set up after students are engaged in a Type 1 activity (e.g., while they are jogging for 7 minutes, you could be setting up for Frisbee).
- Have one or two students lead a warm-up routine for the class while you (and a helper?) set up for Type 1 and/or Type 2.
- Team teach: One instructor leads warm-up with both classes while the other sets up.

### CONCERN:

#### 2. **"Do I have to follow the SPARK Curriculum in order?"**

##### SUGGESTION:

- Because the SPARK Curriculum is written in a teaching progression, try to follow the order established. However, if repeating a lesson due to student need, or if playing "Target Frisbee" again sounds like a great idea, go ahead. Attempt to progress as far in sequence as possible within the weekly/monthly time frame, but don't feel pressured to finish the unit plan. Individual classes progress at different rates.

### CONCERN:

#### 3. **"I'm spending a lot of time prepping for SPARK."**

##### SUGGESTION:

- In conversations with hundreds of teachers (both classroom teachers and specialists) implementing SPARK, we have found that preparation time varies with the individual instructor. Speak with a SPARK Consultant: **(800) SPARK PE**. They will provide suggestions to "streamline" preparation.

### CONCERN:

#### 4. **"My class has some students that are very skilled and knowledgeable in the P.E. unit we're in now. How do I keep them on task and motivated?"**

##### SUGGESTION:

- Recruit highly skilled students to be helpers and/or assistants. Have these students give individual attention to those in need. Also, explain to this group that at all levels of sport, fundamentals and review are done repeatedly. The best coaches say, "You can never be too good at the fundamentals."

### CONCERN:

#### 5. **"How do I prevent students from complaining and arguing?"**

##### SUGGESTIONS:

- Ensure students know game rules. Appoint group leaders to briefly discuss any rule questions. No other students may intervene. If they cannot agree within 15 seconds, they should speak with the instructor.
- Be certain students have progressed through developmentally appropriate drills and lead-up activities before attempting game play. Participation in even a low-competition sport game, prior to proper student skill development, may cause frustration and lead to disagreements.
- Before introducing your class to games or drills that may raise the competitive level, speak with your students about good sporting behavior, reinforce it with praise when you observe it, and reward individuals or groups who demonstrate it.

## TEACHING THE "BASICS"

Every physical education class instructed should include these "BASICS:"

### **B BOUNDARIES AND ROUTINES**

"Boundaries" refer to the physical borders of the activity area. If no existing lines or clear area designations exist, cones or other objects may be used to identify perimeters. An example of a "Routine" may be allocating 2/3 minutes at the end of class for a cool-down/closure.

### **A ACTIVITY FROM THE GET-GO**

We want to see children arrive at class and get busy moving immediately. This is often referred to as "Instant Activity." An example of "Activity From The Get-Go:" "Pick up a jump rope, find your personal space, and start your warm-up."

### **S STOP AND START SIGNALS**

Children must be taught to respond quickly and consistently to start and stop signals. SPARK encourages using music whenever appropriate (e.g., music starts, children move/practice; music stops, children stop) although other sound producing objects (e.g., tambourine, chimes) and visual signals (e.g., hand, number of fingers) may be used. Whistle are discouraged and should only be used when necessary to hear over competing loud noises or when children are spread over a large area and nothing else could be heard.

### **I INVOLVEMENT BY ALL**

Are all children participating equally? Ensure your classes provide the same practice opportunities for every child -- regardless of size, gender, or ability.

### **C CONCISE INSTRUCTIONAL CUES**

How few words can you use to get your class moving? "The object of the game is \_\_\_\_\_; you do that by \_\_\_\_\_; ready, go!" Use the 80/20 rule. After instruction, assume 80% of your students "get it." Instead of using valuable time to answer student questions, get started. Be a "Plumber," move around and "fix leaks." Some individuals, pairs or groups, need more information, move and provide it for them.

### **S SUPERVISION**

Once children are moving, teachers have much to do. In addition to being "plumbers," instructors should keep their "Back to the Wall" inside (so they remain open and facing their class), and face the sun when giving instructions outside. Additionally, it is important to provide positive, specific feedback at least 3:1 over a corrective statement. See pages 14-15, "Increasing Appropriate Behavior" for more.

## ORGANIZING STUDENTS INTO GROUPS

1. When possible, use pre-existing groups to reduce inactive time and provide for a smooth transition.
2. If pre-existing groups don't exist, create your own. Do not let students choose teams. This takes time and causes many other problems. In order to organize groups quickly, use the following methods:
  - a. Play formation games such as Back to Back or Mingle, Mingle.
  - b. Number or letter individuals (count off A, B, A, B or 1, 2, 1,2). All children with the same letter or number are in the same group.
  - c. Hand out sticks or cards that have characteristics to identify different teams.
  - d. Use specific characteristics to determine groups:
    - 1) Hair/eyes: Blondes and red-heads vs brunettes; brown eyes vs blue and green
    - 2) Birthdays: January-June vs July-December
    - 3) Names: First or last names A-L vs M-Z
    - 4) Clothing: White tops vs colored tops
    - 5) Pets: Those with pets vs those without
  - e. Students select partners. One squats down, the other remains standing. Squatters go on one team, those standing are on the opposite team. (May also be done where one student identifies themselves as an "A," the other is a "B.")
  - f. Students pair up. Count off pairs (1's and 2's). Pairs stay on same team.



## MODIFYING CURRICULA AND INSTRUCTION TO RESPOND TO STUDENT NEEDS

An instructor of SPARK Physical Education should, on a daily basis, be aware of individual differences in student motor and fitness development. These may be influenced by the child's:

- age and grade level
- previous experiences in physical education
- physical and/or mental challenges
- availability/accessibility of after school recreation and sports programs
- cultural background of parents
- parental participation in physical activity
- parental availability to transport the child to places to be active

SPARK Physical Education curriculum is written to provide safe, enjoyable, active, and developmentally appropriate activities, games, and sports for children in grades three through six. However, the physical education teacher is responsible to modify lessons and instructional methodology to respond effectively to the needs of individual students.

### Considerations:

- The quantity of physical education provided (length and frequency of classes) will have a direct effect on how skilled and physically fit students become.
- The quality of physical education provided will also directly effect student performance and development. Teacher ability will influence the pace at which children progress through a unit. Teachers new to SPARK are likely to be less efficient in management and organization of students than those with experience. Furthermore, the instructor's professional preparation (prior course work, workshops, etc.) will also play a factor in how much can be accomplished within each physical education class.
- Proper scope and sequence is written into each SPARK instructional unit; that is, daily lesson plans become progressively more challenging as students skills improve.
- Fundamental movement and motor skills improve through repetition and practice, therefore, overlap among grades is important and necessary (e.g., throwing and catching a frisbee is introduced in third grade and repeated throughout their lives).
- Lessons and/or lesson options for advanced learners are provided towards the end of each unit.
- Repeating lessons or lesson segments is encouraged when appropriate-- regardless of grade level of students. Two indicators are:
  1. Too many students (over 30%) not demonstrating desired skill competency.
  2. Students not feeling successful at the end of practice time, and/or appearing discouraged, frustrated, or unhappy.

**Therefore, the SPARK authors make the following suggestions regarding grade level progressions for the Type 2 instructional units (skill/sport related fitness):**

*Note: All teachers, regardless of grade level, should not feel pressured to finish an instructional unit. Units include advanced activities and lessons to provide new material and challenges for advanced learners.*

- **Teachers of third grade students:** Advance through lessons and teaching progressions slowly. Repeat a lesson segment when appropriate. Attempt to provide as much individual help as possible to those in need. As students demonstrate improvement, begin combining skills and playing "lead-up" games in the unit.

It is not recommended that students advance to playing games of basketball, soccer, volleyball within the four week instructional unit. The emphasis should be placed on moving while practicing and learning fundamental skills which comprise those activities; not on the rules, strategies, and positions of players of the un-modified sport.

- **Teachers of fourth grade students:** Although students may have been introduced to the fundamentals of the sport in the previous year, begin instruction again at the beginning of the unit. Review the basics and allow children time to practice. Progress through the unit, providing additional challenge and new skills/drills as students demonstrate success. In a four-week sport skill unit, (Type 2 activity), it is recommended that if students are ready -- the instructor attempt to combine skills and progress to small-sided games by the beginning of the last week.

- **Teachers of fifth grade students:** Fifth grade students who have received sufficient minutes of physical education will move through lessons at the pace they are presented in the curricula; possibly a bit faster. However, start at the beginning of the unit to review and practice fundamentals.

Fifth grade classes may be ready for the modified sport games by the beginning of the third week of instruction if not sooner. At this level, low competition, non-eliminative, tournament play may be possible. Refer to the "Tournament" page in this section for information.

- **Teachers of sixth grade students:** Introduce each unit by reviewing and practicing the fundamentals. Observe and assess student skill levels specific to the sport. For example, in volleyball, students may not remember the proper way to forearm pass (bump) or overhead pass (set). It may be necessary to reference the first lesson in SPARK to "break the skill down" and instruct it using the "whole-part-whole" method.

Sixth grade classes should begin combining skills and playing modified sport games when ready. Furthermore, adding more actual sport rules (providing they promote student activity levels, not reduce them), and player position strategies is suggested. At this level, low competition, non-eliminative, tournament play is recommended. Refer to the "Tournament" page in this section for information.

#### **Suggestions pertinent to the SPARK Type 1 units (health related fitness):**

- **Teachers of students grades three-six:** Type 1 units attempt to enhance various fitness parameters (e.g., cardiovascular, muscular strength and endurance, etc.) through enjoyable methodology and techniques (disguising the fitness element). Instructors should give consideration to the FIT principle = frequency, intensity, and time. Gradual increases in each component of FIT will result in ongoing student improvement.

Personal improvement should be emphasized rather than competition among students.

## TEAM TEACHING

Team teaching can be a fun and efficient way to instruct SPARK Physical Education. One partner instructs the Type 1 activity, the other the Type 2. This reduces preparation time, set-up responsibility, and the peer support can be helpful in many ways. Additionally, teaming allows teachers to select units they feel most comfortable instructing. The following formats have been effective:

### TEAM TEACHING FORMATS

- Partner A sets up for class (with the assistance of student helpers) while partner B leads both classes in a brief warm-up.
- At the conclusion of the warm-up, partner A teaches a Type 1 activity with his/her class while partner B instructs a Type 2 with his/her students.
- After 15 minutes (on teacher cue) the children switch activities. Teachers stay to instruct the same lesson to the next group of students.
- Cool-down may be done separately (or together) just before the end of class.

Other teaming scenario's/modifications may be implemented. For example:

- Three teachers at a grade level: Each instructs a 15 min. segment of three different Type 1 and or Type 2 activities. Students rotate to a different teacher every 12-15 minutes.
- If two teachers want to team but wish to keep their own students with them, on the Type 1-Type 2 transition, each instructor moves with their class to the new activity. The station has already been set-up by their teaming partner.

While there are many advantages to teaming, there are also some disadvantages. Being aware of them can help make the teaming experience more enjoyable and worthwhile. Here are some issues teaching partners should discuss:

### TEAM TEACHING CONCERNS

- Will both of us always keep the same scheduled P.E. time?
- What will we do if one partner is out and there is a sub?
- How will we get to know the names of children in both classes?
- Will we share common discipline techniques?
- How will we cue each other when we're ready to go out for class? What happens if we're not both ready at the same time?
- How do we cue one another when we're ready to switch children? (Teaming requires accurate timing; students will let you know if "Ms. Smith's" class got three more minutes of frisbee than they did!)
- What criteria will we use to determine who teaches Type 1 and who teaches Type 2?
- When going from Type 1 to Type 2, will we move, or will our students move?
- If we do not know how our children are doing in class, how/when can we meet to discuss their progress?
- Will we team for all units or only some?
- How will we organize equipment set-up and collection?
- Teaming requires additional time to communicate and coordinate with a partner. Will we have the time to do this?

## LEVELS TEAM TEACHING MANAGEMENT HINTS

1. Have students help set up and collect equipment. Establish a system of rotation for helpers.
2. Individual groups should do their daily conditioning exercises and cool-down separately whenever possible.
3. To collect equipment quickly between transitions have:
  - a) ball bag(s) around perimeter of warm-up area
  - b) ball bag(s) in the middle of the warm-up area; or
  - c) designated area(s) for extra equipment
4. When the first group uses equipment for an activity first, make sure they leave it ready for the second group. (The second group puts the equipment away.) Give the first group directions such as:
  - a) "dribble ball to nearest ball bag"
  - b) "leave ball where you are"
  - c) "put all balls in the hoops near the tree"
5. To avoid transition problems at the end of a segment, make sure both teachers are aware of the time and have a "I'm ready to change" signal.
6. Encourage students to run to the second activity. Set a time limit for the transition e.g, "I would like to begin in 10 seconds" count down to 10, praise those who hustled over.
7. At the end of each lesson but before cooling down, have students put away all equipment. Students without equipment should walk immediately to a designated cool-down area.