

Physical Wellness: Recommendations and Key Points

Remote Learning Task Force Expert Advisory Panel 2:

Support to Address the Whole Child Experience

June 30, 2020

Recommendations

- 1) Consider providing an at-home PE kit for all children**, with different versions by age group, containing basic PE equipment such as a noodle, a ball, a yoga mat, etc. This would allow PE teachers to have more effective remote lessons built around that at-home equipment. This kit would be used by children who are in remote learning all year, and also would mean we were prepared to flexibly shift to effective at-home PE curriculum any time during the school year that children are learning from home, such as if school close due to an outbreak.
- 2) Maximize outdoor space wherever possible**, such as by holding recess or PE at local parks, to allow for social distancing and possible mask breaks during PE or recess
- 3) Incorporate movement throughout the day, both in-school and at-home.** This can include movement breaks on Zoom lessons via classroom teachers and/or drop-ins from PE teachers.
- 4) Remote learners need more frequent PE.** They are at risk for poor physical wellness and also social isolation. Children in remote learning would benefit from starting every day with brief PE or movement activity on Zoom led by PE teachers, to have a sense of community and healthy start to the day.

Key points

- Physical wellness is deeply connected to emotional wellness, attention regulation, and academic achievement.
- Physical wellness can be a protective factor both for mental health and for academic performance. Physical wellness is even more important now, given increased risk for mental health symptoms due to pandemic-related stresses and disruptions, and social isolation.
- The upheaval of the pandemic necessitates adjustments to PSB's approach to physical wellness. This need for changes in response to remote learning and social distancing can be seen as an opportunity to redesign PSB's approach to physical wellness and give children lifelong skills in caring for, improving, and maintaining their bodies.
- Physical wellness is not just about exercise. Frequent movement throughout the day is very important to well-being. It is easy to be sedentary at home, and safety measures at school that keep children in their classrooms will reduce natural opportunities for movement (e.g. if children are no longer walking to the cafeteria, library, etc.). This can be accomplished by movement breaks during academic subjects and by incorporating movement into other subject areas.
- For in-person PE, there is a need to think creatively about how to meet skills goals but with a shift away from team sports and shared equipment.
- For remote learning this spring, it was challenging in part because PE teachers were limited to activities that required no equipment or items everyone would have at home
- Children in remote learning in the fall for whatever reason will need extra support around physical wellness and movement.