

## Fitness Overview

Quality physical education can and should play an important role in fighting the obesity epidemic. Childhood obesity is a major concern in the United States today. Poor nutrition, inadequate physical education, and sedentary lifestyles have led to the obesity epidemic. As children enter into adolescence their physical activity levels are dropping dramatically (Corbin & Lindsey, 2007). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2008), "The prevalence of overweight children aged 6-11 years has more than doubled in the past 20 years and among adolescents aged 12-19 has more than tripled." In fact, nearly one in three children between the ages of 12-19 are considered overweight or obese (CDC, 2008).

The unfortunate reality is that overweight children are extremely susceptible to becoming overweight and obese adults. Results from the 2003-2004 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey show that in adults 20 years or older, two in three are overweight, and of this group half are considered obese (CDC, 2008).

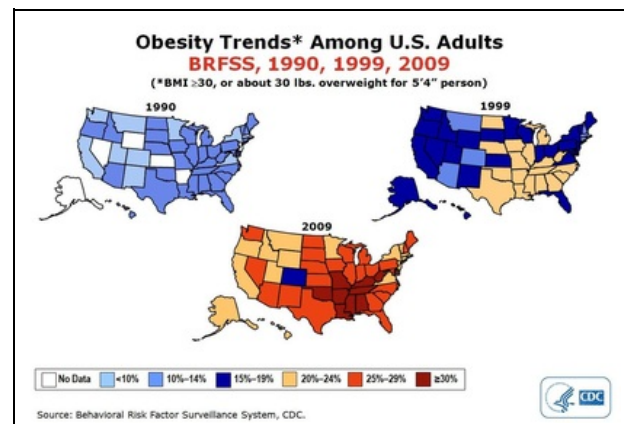
The role of physical education is to provide appropriate opportunities for students to gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that promote regular physical activity and fitness throughout a lifetime. Quality physical education is the logical and practical solution to the obesity epidemic.

### Obesity Trends Among in the United States

**The Future Costs of Obesity: National and State Estimates of the Impact of Obesity on Direct Health Care Expenses** (November 2009). United Health Foundation & the American Public Health Association and Partnership for Prevention.

- "Obesity is growing faster than any previous public health issue our nation has faced. If current trends continue, 103 million American adults will be considered obese by 2018."
- "The U.S. is expected to spend \$344 billion on health care costs attributable to obesity in 2018 if rates continue to increase at their current levels."
- "Obesity-related direct expenditures are expected to account for more than 21 percent of the nation's direct health care spending in 2018."

[Click Here for a Link to the Article](#)



Click on the Picture to Zoom

[Click Here for a Link to CDC's "Overweight and Obesity" webpage](#)

### Effects of Physical Activity on the Brain

Over ten years of research has shown that physical activity and exercise is "Miracle Gro for the brain" (Ratey, 2008). Exercise and physical activity relieves stress, improves mood, reduces incidences of depression, reduces anxiety, and best of all, in the school setting it helps children learn and improve overall academic achievement.

**CBS Video: Pumping of the Brain:** "Researchers are finding that exercise can not only keep you fit, but make you smarter. A school in Illinois has developed a program that gets students moving and learning. Debbye Turner Bell reports for CBS news."

Read more or watch the video

at: <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=4764808n#ixzz0wo0YQW3n>

[Watch CBS Videos Online](#)

### Using Activity in the Classroom

Schilling, DL, Washington, K, Billingsley, FF, & Deitz, J. (2003). **Classroom Seating for Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Therapy Balls Versus Chairs.** *American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 57*(5), 534-541.

"The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of therapy balls as seating on in-seat behavior and legible word productivity of students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Additionally, social validity was assessed to evaluate teacher and student opinions regarding the intervention.

Results demonstrated increases in in-seat behavior and legible word productivity for the students with ADHD when seated on therapy balls. Social validity findings indicated that generally the teacher and students preferred therapy balls."

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Kilbourne, J. (2009). **Sharpening the Mind Through Movement: Using Exercise Balls as Chairs in a University Class.** *National Association for Kinesiology & Physical Education in Higher Education, 20*(1), 10-15.

"The objective of this project was to explore the use of UltiFit Antiburst Stability Balls (exercise balls) as seats for students in lecture classes at Grand Valley State University.

The student's responses to the questionnaires clearly demonstrated an excitement and enthusiasm for having the option to use an exercise ball for a seat in a lecture class. Responses to each question, from students' ability to pay attention, take notes, engage in classroom discussions, and take exams, were all positive."

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## Responsible Educators Accountable for Learning



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