

Spark Active Recreation Curriculum Introduction, Overview, Objectives

The focus of SPARK is the development of motor skills, movement knowledge, and social and personal skills. It is our hope that physically educated children and adolescents become lifelong movers and model the behaviors necessary to achieve a healthy lifestyle.



It is expected that SPARK AR participants will:

- Enjoy and seek out physical activity.
- Develop a variety of basic movement and manipulative skills so they will experience success and feel comfortable during present and future physical activity pursuits.
- Develop and maintain acceptable levels of physical fitness.
- Develop the ability to get along with others in movement environments (e.g., share space and equipment, employ the ‘golden rule’ of competition – be a good sport, and demonstrate cooperative behavior).

When the SPARK Self-Management (SM) program accompanies SPARK AR, leaders learn concepts and methods that teach youth:

- Self-responsibility for physical activity programs.
- Goal setting for physical activity and healthy food choices.
- Behavior change techniques and other psychological strategies related to movement experiences and the development of a healthy lifestyle.
- Basic injury prevention and safety during physical activity.
- Strategies for fostering family and peer support for activity programs.
- Strategies for decreasing sedentary behavior
- The relationship between physical activity, food intake, and body composition.
- Application for basic biochemical and exercise physiology principles.

Rationale for Spark Objectives

1. Why help youth develop and maintain acceptable levels of physical fitness?

Individuals who are physically fit and who engage in physical activity on a regular basis generally:

- a) enjoy better health
- b) have more energy to devote to activities of daily life; and
- c) learn physical skills easier, are more successful at them, and thus have greater opportunities for social interaction and personal meaning through physical activity and sport.

2. Why help youth develop a variety of basic movement and manipulative skills that are necessary to enjoy success (feel comfortable) in physical activity settings?

Individuals who are skilled and enjoy success in movement activities are more likely to:

- a) have a wide choice of activities to pursue for exercise and personal employment.
- b) Lead active lives and maintain acceptable levels of fitness.
- c) Have access to active situations for social interaction and personal meaning that these situations bring about.

3. Why help youth develop the ability to get along with others in a movement environment?

Individuals who are able to get along with others in an active environment are more likely to:

- a) have reasons, other than physical ones, for active participation;
- b) enjoy participating;
- c) be invited to participate; and
- d) make active participation enjoyable for others

4. Why help youth enjoy and seek out physical activity?

Individuals who enjoy physical activity are more likely to be active and thus:

- a) develop and maintain acceptable levels of fitness
- b) develop and maintain their physical skills;
- c) have increased opportunities for social interaction through movement experiences; and
- d) have increased opportunities for experiencing personal meaning through physical activity.

SPARK ACTIVE RECREATION CURRICULUM DESIGN

The SPARK AR program promotes quality, daily physical activity for youth. National guidelines recommend that young people accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Some children may participate in PE classes irregularly and/or choose to be inactive during recess or lunch breaks. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that children receive their recommended dose of daily activity in school. Out-of-school programs have an opportunity to help children and adolescents obtain the physical activity they need for proper growth and development and overall health. Therefore SPARK suggests the following minimum for AR sessions: at least 30 minutes of organized activity daily.

SPARK AR emphasizes health-related fitness activities. The focus during the sessions is on youth being actively engaged in developmentally appropriate movement. However, SPARK AR is also designed to reach other outcomes, including the attainment of motor skills and knowledge, and social values.

SPARK AR offers instruction and practice in a realistic number of diverse skills and activities appropriate for young people ages 5-14. The program is designed to provide activities without overwhelming youth or their leaders. Repetition within sessions allows children to develop sufficient skills so they become comfortable with an activity.

SPARK AR includes only activities that can be realistically implemented in a variety of settings, including those with limited space, equipments, and supplies. Only activities that are manageable in diverse settings and produce substantial opportunities for youth to actively engage in moving and learning sports, games, activities, and dance skills are included. Inactive games and drills, as well as activities requiring specialized equipment (e.g., gymnastics), have been modified, minimized, or deleted.

Activity sessions are designed to be approximately 15 minutes long, not including warm-up and cool-down. However, some sessions, particularly sport activities, may be played for longer duration.

Warm-up and cool-down activities that require little explanation should be integrated into the session if activities are rigorous. For example, children can warm up for a tag game by walking, then progress to running. In this manner, SPARK reduces both the number of different activities a leader needs to plan, and the possibility of child inactivity due to necessary transitions.

Sample activity areas and the major physical parameters emphasized are:

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Parameter Developed</u>
Group fitness	rhythm, balance, flexibility, cardiovascular, fitness, strength
Jump rope	balance, hand-eye coordination, rhythm, strength, endurance
Walk, jog, running	pacing, gait, cardiovascular fitness
Obstacle courses	agility, coordination, strength, general coordination
Fitness circuits	strength, agility, balance, flexibility
Parachute play	locomotor skills, rhythm, strength, creative movement
Aerobic games	agility, locomotor skills, fleeing, chasing, grasping
Dance	rhythm, locomotor skills, coordination creative movement
Cooperative games	aerobic and anaerobic conditioning, agility

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Sports Skills Developed</u>
Soccer	dribbling, passing, trapping, shooting, foot-eye coordination
Basketball	dribbling, passing, catching, shooting
Frisbee	throwing, catching, passing, pivoting
Softball	striking, catching, throwing

Field games	throwing, catching, passing, pivoting
Volleyball	serving, passing, setting, striking
Handball	striking, serving, catching
Hockey	agility, passing, shooting

In order to promote generalization to other environments, the following game/sport skills are taught during activities:

- sending, receiving, propelling, and dodging
- offensive skills and strategies (feinting; communicating; moving to ball and to open space playing a position; receiving passes on the move; passing to moving targets; passing to open space)
- defensive skills and strategies (defending a ball; intercepting; guarding one player; guarding two or more players; defending an area)