

NASPE's Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Responsible Behavior

Appropriate Practices related to responsible personal and social behavior while engaged in physical activity are fundamental concepts found in NYS Learning Standard 2

To set a context for the responsible personal and social behavior component of the Learning Standard, it is helpful to review what is considered appropriate professional practice. NASPE has authored publications for high school, middle school, and elementary school levels that explain appropriate and inappropriate practice on a variety of topics including personal and social behavior while engaged in physical activity. These identify key aspects of professional practice for curricula, instruction, and assessment and are presented to provide specific guidelines for instructional practices that support maximum opportunities for student achievement that are developmentally appropriate. Inappropriate practices identify common practices that are counterproductive or even harmful to the physical, mental, social, and emotional development of children and adolescents, and they should be avoided or changed.

NASPE Appropriate Practices for Personal and Social Responsibility

Social Interaction

Appropriate Practice

Teachers reinforce positive social experiences through challenging activities and competition that require student cooperation and shared planning to reach a desirable outcome. Teachers engage students in learning the importance of rules and require compliance with them to make a game safe, fair, and fun. Teachers make connections from games to the rules found in a society. Teachers monitor qualities of leadership, communication, responsibility, trust, and cooperation among students and employ strategies to enhance student growth. Experiences taught contribute to building each individual's confidence.

Inappropriate Practice

Teachers direct activities with no consideration of student input. Rules for activities are not explained or are not given any context. Teachers randomly group students or let students self-select without direction. Teachers assume students will automatically pick up valuable social attributes by being in a physical activity setting.

Learning Environment - Climate

Appropriate Practice

Teachers establish a positive learning environment to support student learning. Teachers use verbal and non-verbal behaviors to promote a positive climate and to encourage student effort. Teachers provide a positive climate that acknowledges success of all students who are moving toward personal goals and who are making individual improvements in skill, understanding, and fitness. Teachers seek to promote enjoyment in physical activity, class participation, and interest in motor skills and personal fitness. Teachers acknowledge effort, treat students with respect, and recognize individual accomplishments. Teachers maintain high expectations for student achievement, challenging all students to perform to their full potential.

Teachers continuously reinforce a positive environment among students where they can learn to recognize peer effort, demonstrate mutual respect for everyone, and acknowledge individual accomplishments. Fair and consistent classroom management practices encourage student responsibility for positive personal and group behavior. Teachers monitor both the physical and psychological atmosphere to ensure safety and security, physically and social-emotionally. Personal communication between student and teacher about lesson content or personal experiences is available through journal writings and direct dialogue on a regular basis.

Inappropriate Practice

Teachers have low expectations of students and set minimal goals for student achievement. Compliance with classroom policies is a major expectation instead of learning. The class atmosphere is stressful due to pressure to perform skills with inadequate preparation in a situation where all attention is on the performer. Teachers use exercise to punish students (i.e., run a mile) rather than for their educational value.

The climate is unfriendly, punitive, or apathetic. Teachers use only corrective or negative interactions concerning skill and/or behavior. Students do not feel support from the teacher. Students are sometimes ridiculed after making mistakes. The rules are unclear and may vary from day to day. The students may have very limited personal communication with the teacher. Teachers do not establish high expectations relative to respect, support, and positive peer interactions.

Promoting Respect for Self and Others

Appropriate Practice

Teachers foster self-awareness, leadership, caring for self, respect for others, and other components associated with the affective domain. Students learn to encourage each other and show support through positive reinforcement statements. Students have opportunities to participate in decision-making, and teachers consider what students are saying. Students are willing to share, take turns, and help others.

Inappropriate Practice

Teacher-led activities provide little opportunity for student growth in the affective domain. Students have little or no input into decisions concerning the class. Class members may make negative or sarcastic comments about individuals or groups in the class. Students sense that their opinions are not valued when offered nor does the teacher make an attempt to solicit them.

Forming Groups

Appropriate Practice

Teachers form teams and squads in ways that preserve the dignity and self-respect of every student. If levels of ability or fitness will be factors in the outcome of the activity/task to be performed, groups are selected prior to the lesson by the teacher. If skill/fitness levels are not an issue, then some random selection item such as birth month, day of the month born, color of clothing, alphabetical according to first names, etc., is appropriate. When students self-select partners or groups, strategies are used to ensure quick, inclusive pairings.

Inappropriate Practice

Teachers form groups by: allowing student “captains” to publicly select one student at a time, separating by gender, according to fitness levels, or using other ways that alienate or embarrass individuals. Teachers form or allow students to form groups that are of unequal ability and skill, leading to poor learning opportunities for one or more of the groups.

See the following publications for additional information.

Appropriate Practices for Elementary School Physical Education. National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) 2000.

Appropriate Practices for Middle School Physical Education. National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) 2001.

Appropriate Practices for High School Physical Education. National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) 2004.