



PE by Design

For Elementary Schools

MEDIA KIT

Introducing PE by Design, the physical education program for elementary school classroom teachers, and their students.

PE by Design has launched its website, PEbyDesign.com, on September 1st, 2017. The site, a physical education resource for classroom teachers in grades K–5, offers free downloads of more than 70 fitness activities from the PE by Design program. Credentialed PE teacher Matt Gardner created the PE by Design program and website in response to the current childhood-obesity epidemic and the scarcity of funding for PE in many schools.



Contact

To Learn more about PE by Design, please visit: PEbyDesign.com, or contact Matt Gardner by email at info@studentoneeducation.com, or by telephone at 415-497-8488.

FAQs

The United States is currently experiencing an epidemic of childhood obesity, which makes it important that young students get appropriate amounts of physical activity. Most states mandate that elementary schools provide a certain level of physical education for their students, but these goals can be hard to meet in an era of shrinking budgets.

Matt Gardner has been teaching PE in elementary schools for 16 years. He developed the PE by Design program to help elementary school teachers—even those with no fitness background—teach physical education. The program’s easy-to-use materials give classroom teachers the confidence and resources they need to help their schools meet important physical education goals. He shares his insights below.

*The **PE by Design** online program is free and tailored to the needs of classroom teachers.*

What is the childhood obesity epidemic?

Children in the United States are not as healthy today as they used to be, and body weight plays a part in this change. According to the Centers for Disease Control ([CDC](#)), obesity rates have more than doubled in children, and quadrupled in adolescents, in the past 30 years.

Obesity in children has been linked with increased risk for cardiovascular disease, prediabetes, bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and poor self-esteem. When overweight children become adults, they are at greater risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancers, and osteoarthritis ([CDC](#)).

There is concern that, due to obesity, life expectancy could decrease in the United States ([National Institutes of Health](#)).

Physical activity improves fitness levels and reduces disease risk factors.

What factors contribute to childhood obesity?

Today, many children eat a high calorie diet and get too little physical activity. This can result in a body weight that is too high.

How much physical activity do children need?

The [CDC](#) recommends that children receive at least 1 hour of physical activity per day.



Are elementary schools required to teach physical education?

According to nonprofit SHAPE America's most recent [national survey](#), 44 states require elementary schools to provide physical education. Of those 44 states, 19 require a specific number of minutes of PE instruction per week. (California, for example, calls for students in grades 1–5 to receive 200 minutes every 10 school days.)

What role should elementary schools play in combating the childhood obesity epidemic?

Lowering the childhood obesity rate will require children to develop a healthier lifestyle. Elementary schools can help shape children's health habits in positive ways. A healthy life includes good habits of physical fitness. By creating positive PE experiences that emphasize physical activity, elementary schools encourage kids to embrace fitness as a lifelong practice. Schools can also provide information about nutrition and other healthy lifestyle choices.

Awareness of the obesity epidemic, and the role fitness plays in children's health, has pushed elementary schools to make physical education a priority. But helping students get more activity during the school day can be difficult.



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Are there enough elementary school PE teachers to meet children's fitness needs?

Unfortunately, due to funding constraints, many elementary schools have no PE teacher, or they employ a PE teacher on a reduced schedule of classes. Schools must find creative ways to provide physical education. Some hire substitute teachers. Other schools pay for PE teachers themselves rather than relying on their districts. [There are over 1.7 million public elementary school teachers in the United States.](#) Increasingly, classroom teachers are being asked to step up and teach physical education, in part to meet their state's PE obligations.



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How do classroom teachers feel about being asked to help meet physical education goals for their students?

In my experience, classroom teachers are largely uneasy about teaching physical education. They feel overwhelmed by an increased workload overall. While they recognize the importance of physical education, they often feel poorly equipped to teach the subject.

What challenges do classroom teachers face in teaching physical education?

I've worked alongside classroom teachers for 16 years, and they express a variety of concerns about teaching physical education.

- Teaching PE without a fitness background—will I foster bad habits or contribute to injuries?
- Getting PE training—where can I find it, and who'll pay for it?
- Dealing with class-management challenges—will my skills transfer to the outdoor setting?
- Monitoring the location of students—will they sneak to the bathroom?
- Finding quality resources for activities—what to teach?
- Finding the time—there's so much else to teach.
- Dealing with equipment—bringing it out, setting it up, breaking it down, putting it away.
- Making the transition from indoors to outdoors—and back again.



What types of assistance do classroom teachers need for teaching PE?

Through the years, I've asked classroom teachers, "What type of assistance are you looking for to help you teach PE?" Here are some common responses.

- A program that's easy to implement. Teachers often say, "I don't want to spend more time than I have to considering choices of activities."
- A program that emphasizes fitness and gets my students moving.
- A program that requires minimal equipment.
- Curriculum materials that are clear and easy to understand, with diagrams and photographs.
- Fitness activities that help students to be more focused academically.



How does the PE by Design program meet the needs of classroom teachers?

PE by Design recognizes the need to get elementary school classroom teachers involved in teaching physical education. Our program gives them the tools and encouragement they need. PE by Design sets realistic goals for classroom teachers and takes their needs into account. Our program features three components: a softcover manual for teaching PE, a web-based source of PE activities, and in-person training.

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PE by Design: The Classroom Teacher's Physical Education Program, Grades K–5

This 300 + page, colorful PE manual gives classroom teachers everything they need to give their students positive PE experiences. Part 1, "The Five Elements of Fitness for Children," provides background information on fitness and instructions for basic fitness activities. Part 2, "40 Fitness Lessons," features scripted fitness lessons, with fun themes. Teachers simply bring their students outside and read the lesson out loud. Part 3, "Games and Activities," presents dozens of activities in an illustrated format, with easy-to-follow instructions. The manual offers classroom management strategies for outdoor PE sessions. There is also a general overview of state-mandated physical education standards.

The PE by Design website (PEbyDesign.com)

This online resource features dozens of free K–5 PE activities. Teachers who visit the website can view, download, and print activities from a computer, or view activities on a mobile device.

Staff-Development Presentations

PE by Design also provides in-person PE training for classroom teachers. The presentation provides a background in health concepts. Our goal is to motivate teachers to add physical activities to their classes and to adopt healthy habits in their own lives, discussing and modeling them with their students.



Bio



Matt Gardner is an elementary school PE teacher, author, and presenter, based in Northern California. A graduate of the teaching credential program at Dominican University in San Rafael, California, Matt currently holds credentials in physical education, social science, and elementary education.

Creator of PE by Design

In 2006, Matt's principal asked him to prepare some PE lessons for the classroom teachers at his school. The principal and Matt both realized that it was essential to get the other teachers involved in teaching physical education. But the classroom teachers often mentioned how difficult it was for them to teach PE. Matt approached his colleagues with the details of his task and asked for their input.

PE Lessons for Elementary School Teachers

With their feedback in hand, Matt began working on a series of lessons. He realized that classroom teachers everywhere faced the same situation as the staff at his school. Teachers were being asked to teach physical education, and they needed help.

PE by Design, A Complete Lesson Book & Program

Thus began an amazing writing and publishing journey. Over the next 7 years, with the help of an editor and designer, Matt produced the book, *PE by Design—The Classroom Teacher's Physical Education Program, Grades K–5*, published in 2014 by Student One Education.

PE by Design, The Free Online Resource

With the book complete, Matt decided to do something for classroom teachers who spend a lot of time searching the internet for good PE resources. In 2015, he began work on the PEbyDesign website. In September of 2017, PEbyDesign.com launched as a free, PE activities resource. Featuring dozens of games and activities, the website lets K–5 classroom teachers view and download easy-to-use, fitness-based activities.

Matt enjoys reaching out to classroom teachers. He is a regular speaker in the elementary school credential program at Dominican University. He also devotes time to organizing school events, such as field days and fundraisers.