‘Best Practices’ for Physical Educators

‘Best practices’ are guidelines for teaching developmentally appropriate physical education.

**APPROPRIATE PRACTICES**  (in the best interest of students for their development)  

- Curriculum is based on national and/or state standards for physical development and health
- Curriculum has designed progressions that allow students to build on and practice previously taught content and skills by focusing on ‘lifetime’ activities
- Lessons are planned so that students revisit and practice skills and concepts previously
- Assessments, formative and summative, are an ongoing integral part of the learning process for all students
- Fitness tests are used as a part of an ongoing process to help students enjoy, improve and/or maintain their physical fitness and well-being
- Programs and curricula promote exercise and activity for its contribution to a healthy lifestyle
- Programs encourage physical activity and exercise outside of the physical education setting for health reasons, skill development and enjoyment
- Activities are selected carefully to ensure that they match students’ ability levels and are also safe for all students
- Physical educators form groups, teams or pairs in ways that preserve every student’s dignity and self-respect
- Physical educators seek professional development to ‘stay up to date’ on current trends, ‘best practices’ and information pertinent to their field and education in general

**INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES**  (counterproductive or harmful practices that limit development)

- Curriculum is based on season, facilities and/or teacher preferences
- Curriculum has no regard for student abilities, interests or development
- The same games and activities are used for all grade levels
- Focus is on full-scale competition and limited skill instruction and practice
- Students are placed directly into game situations without the skills necessary to participate successfully and enjoyably
- Assessments are rarely used or only occur in the context of grading (dress, attendance)
- Teachers use fitness test scores to assign a grade
- Teachers use activities / exercise to punish misbehavior (e.g. running laps, push-ups)
- Teachers allow or ignore unsafe practices (e.g. pushing, shoving, tackling)
- Human-target games (dodge ball type activities) and drills that allow aggressive behaviors toward other are permitted
- Teachers inadvertently promote exclusion by allowing student captains to pick teams or by separating teams arbitrarily by gender or skill-level
- Teacher rarely reads professional literature nor does he/she attend conferences, conventions or in-services
- Educator is not a member of their professional association(s)

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