

Differentiation of instruction might include offering choices from options (using the bean bag or a ball to throw into the target), grouping children with similar needs (working with a group learning to throw and catch), or providing different ways to process information (showing the child who is having difficulty cutting how to turn the paper).

The skills learned in the gym with another educator can be connected to the classroom and outdoor experiences. For example, as the gym teacher was focusing on having the children move throughout the gym, the educator followed through with similar experiences in the classroom and in the outdoor space.

Planning also includes selecting or making decisions about:

- the routines that will support good health practices and safety;
- music that will evoke movement responses and engage children in physical activity;
- chants and rhymes that may be used for transitions or as part of movement that encourage different ways to move, present vocabulary related to movement or encourage movement transitions;
- materials that are needed to develop skills based on the needs of the children;
- non-fiction books that present information related to health in a simple visual way, including video and DVDs, and books that use vocabulary related to spatial awareness;
- trips and visitors (the fire personnel and fire safety, a visit to a health facility or a visit from a health professional).

Learning is about making connections. As topics or concepts are chosen for study and as they evolve, it is important to plan for connections to health and physical activity in a natural way. For example, the study of plants can be connected to good health and nutrition, lines

and boundaries in mathematics and in visual arts can be connected to movement along pathways, animals and their movements can be compared to physical movements, weather can be connected to its effect on physical activity and safety.

There will also be events that present opportunities for learning (track and field is about body, speed, direction, force, and energy; a mishap or accident teaches the need for safety procedures).

Conclusion

Health and safety are more than topics. They are an integral part of the life of the classroom. They are part of the fabric of the school, the community and daily life. As such, partnerships with parents and outside agencies not only provide support, but also strengthen the messages.

Interestingly, it is not wealth, but equality, that produces healthy populations. Consistently countries demonstrating high health and literacy outcomes show a fairly flat socioeconomic gradient. Countries with healthy, more literate populations invest heavily in young children and their families.¹¹

Physical activity is more than a time slot in the schedule and more than an 'add on' to an already busy day. It is a way of being that supports young children's healthy development. The skills and habits of physical activity will remain with children as they progress into adult life.