

# TEACHING SPARK PE

## Planning Ahead

### \* Schedule Physical Education Class

SPARK advocates for and strongly encourages daily physical education. However, there are several variables that may impact the frequency with which you teach SPARK PE (e.g., if you are a classroom teacher or PE specialist, the number of PE minutes mandated by your state, class size, available facilities, team teaching possibilities, etc.).

With this in mind, create a PE schedule for the entire school. It is important to note when others are teaching to coordinate sharing facilities and equipment. Once all have signed up for specific days, times and facilities, teachers should adhere to the schedule as closely as possible.

### \* Select and Pair Units

A typical 30-minute SPARK PE class consists of a warm-up, a fitness activity (*Focus on Fitness*), a skill activity (*Spotlight on Skills*), and a cool-down. Refer to the *SPARK Sample Yearly Plan* (page 13) for SPARK's recommendation on how to pair *Focus on Fitness* and *Spotlight on Skills* lesson components. Modify as needed to respond to site-specific environmental conditions, facilities, equipment, etc. Select a unit from each component to teach for 1 month/4-week period, and post the schedule in the gym, classroom, office, equipment storage area, etc. If PE is instructed (or supplemented) by classroom teachers, "SPARK Stars" should change the equipment monthly (i.e., place the upcoming month's equipment in the ball cart) to facilitate instruction.



### \* Read the Introductory Pages

The *Introductory Pages* of each respective unit provides useful information specific to the unit. Read them prior to teaching the first time, and find teaching strategies, safety tips, and information on equipment/materials needed.

### \* Select Activities

Use the sample *SPARK's Sample Unit Plans* (in the *Introductory Pages* of each unit) as written or as a guide to adjust and create a unit plan that meets your particular instructional requirements. Consider grade, fitness, and skill level of students, equipment and facilities needed for each unit, amount of time you have scheduled for PE, etc.

### \* Prepare Equipment and Materials

Use the *What You Need* page located in the *Introductory Pages* of the unit to ensure all the equipment/music you will need is available. Prepare a cart or bag with the items needed for the unit. If inventory is low, see *Limited Equipment/Large Class Ideas* () for creative equipment strategies. The *What You Need* page also lists instructional materials needed for the unit. Print these from the  in the recommended quantities to have on-hand before teaching the unit.

## Before each Lesson

### \* Read

Read and familiarize yourself with each activity prior to teaching. Place them on a clipboard, and take them with you to your instructional area.

### \* Ready...

Gather equipment/materials needed to teach the activities for the lesson from your prepared cart/bag or equipment room. Recruit student assistants (i.e., equipment managers) to bring equipment to the activity area.

### \* Set...

Preparing the activity area beforehand helps engage students in the lesson, minimizes lost activity time, and decreases inappropriate behavior. Some options to expedite set-up are:

- Have 3-4 students leave a few minutes early to set up.
- Assign and rotate regular set-up duties (e.g., this week, Kareem takes out equipment, and Francisco brings it in; Mari and Sang will set up the area, etc.).
- Prompt students to walk and talk with a friend within boundaries while the music plays. While students are moving, set up for class. When music plays, stop, call students in (SPARK cue for this is 2 claps or 2 whistles), and begin instruction.
- Start with an *ASAP activity* (*Active, Soon As Possible*) which uses little or no equipment and involves all students in activity the instant they arrive at the instructional area (or on their way there). While the class is engaged in the *ASAP*, recruit a few students to help you with set-up.

## Teaching the Lesson

### \* GO!

A typical 30+ minute SPARK lesson includes:

#### **Warm Up**

2-3 minutes – Incorporate a warm-up into the first activity you teach. Use this time to note lesson standard/objectives, and prepare students for moderate-vigorous movement to follow. If time allows, use a favorite *ASAP* as a warm-up.

#### **Focus On Fitness Activity**

10-15 minutes – Teach an activity from the *Focus on Fitness* unit of the month.

#### **Spotlight On Skills Activity**



10-15 minutes – Lead an active transition followed by an activity from the *Spotlight on Skills* unit of the month.

#### **Cool Down/Closure**

3-5 minutes – Students return equipment, and the lesson ends with a cool-down/closure. Tapering from vigorous activity helps students' bodies return to normal functioning levels and fosters easier transitions to the classroom. Use this time to review key learning points, reinforce home practice and health knowledge, or have students enter assessment data. Read the *Integration* on the backside of the activity. Return equipment to storage, if needed, using student helpers.

## Following the Lesson

Write any comments you have regarding the activities taught in the “Notes” section on the backside of each activity. What worked? What could be improved? Do you have any comments on the equipment? Make a note here, so next time you teach that activity you will remember.

Use *Lesson Quality Checklists* (  ) periodically to reflect on the effectiveness of a lesson and monitor progress over time. SPARK provides 2 levels of self-assessments on the .

## Grade Level Modifications


SPARK provides 2 methods to differentiate content for students in grades 3-6:


1. Unit Plans - Some unit plans are outlined across grade levels, thus providing a simple way to meet the challenges of students as they develop year to year.
2. SPARK It Up! - Where unit plans remain the same from 3rd through 6th grade, use *SPARK It Up!* variations (found on the backside of each activity) to modify the activity and challenge learners of different skills and grade levels. The higher the number on the star, the greater the level of difficulty and challenge for students.

Use the following guide for grade level differentiation:

- \* **Teachers of 3rd grade students** - Progress through activities at an appropriate pace, repeating lesson components as needed for student success and enjoyment. Use *Skill Builders* daily and as skill levels improve, use the first *SPARK IT Up!* variation on *Activities* to further challenge students. It is not recommended students play traditional games of basketball, soccer, volleyball, etc. Rather, place emphasis on learning the fundamental skills essential to being successful playing those sports.
- \* **Teachers of 4th grade students** - Although students may have been introduced to the fundamentals of a sport in the previous year, revisit the basics at the beginning of the unit. Review and practice using *Skill Builders*, then teach activities using *Spark It Up!* variations (the first two variations are probably most appropriate). If teaching 10 or more lessons per unit, students will most likely be ready to progress to small-sided games.
- \* **Teachers of 5th grade students** - Many students at this level have extensive prior experience with the subject matter, either through PE class or youth sports. Therefore, they may progress through the unit quickly. However, it is still important to review and practice fundamentals. Use *Skill Builders* to assess the overall skill level of the class and to help your students continue to improve their basic skills. The third *Spark It Up!* variations provide additional challenges and activity modifications. Fifth grade classes may be ready for modified sport games earlier in the instructional unit. At this level, challenge-by-choice competition, and non-eliminative tournament play may be appropriate toward the end of the unit. See the *SPARKfamily.org* website for age-appropriate tournament styles.
- \* **Teachers of 6th grade students** (for those elementary schools that include 6th grade) - If 6th graders have participated in SPARK PE for the past 3 years, they will likely be ready to begin using the *SPARK It Up!* variations immediately. Use more *PACE* activities, and allow students to create their own versions of activities they are already familiar with. Sixth grade classes should begin to combine skills and play modified sport games. Add more actual sport rules (providing they promote student activity levels, not reduce them) and player position strategies. Again, at this level, challenge-by-choice competition and non-eliminative tournament play is recommended.

## The BASICS

Although additional teaching strategies can be found on the , SPARK believes emphasizing the BASICS is a great start to organizing and managing students:

<b>B</b>	<b>BOUNDARIES AND ROUTINES</b> “Boundaries” refer to the physical borders of the activity area. If there are no existing lines, use cones or other objects to identify perimeters. Establish and reinforce routines for everything from equipment distribution and collection to getting a drink of water. Routines decrease management time and increase activity time.
<b>A</b>	<b>ACTIVITY FROM THE GET-GO</b> Incorporate a warm-up into your first activity, so students move as soon as they arrive to class (e.g., “Select a beanbag, find your personal space, self toss and catch while the music plays.”), and/or use an <i>ASAP (Active, Soon As Possible)</i> .
<b>S</b>	<b>START AND STOP SIGNALS</b> Teach students to respond quickly and consistently to start and stop signals. SPARK encourages using music whenever possible, although other sounds (whistles, claps, etc.) and visual signals may be used.
<b>I</b>	<b>INVOLVEMENT BY ALL</b> Ensure SPARK PE classes provide ample practice opportunities for everyone – regardless of size, gender, or ability. Use <i>SPARK It Up!</i> variations to increase challenges for those who need it and <i>Inclusionary Strategies</i> , found on the  , to adapt for students with special needs.
<b>C</b>	<b>CONCISE INSTRUCTIONAL CUES</b> How few words can you use to prompt activity? “The object of the game is _____; you do that by _____. Ready, go!” Use the 80/20 rule. After instruction, assume 80% of children understand. Instead of losing valuable time answering questions, get started. Once all are active, be a “plumber”; move and “fix leaks.”
<b>S</b>	<b>SUPERVISION AND FEEDBACK</b> Once instruction has been given and children are moving, your role shifts to supervision and feedback. Move throughout class to see all children, all the time. Provide positive-specific feedback at least 3 times more often than corrective statements.

## **Physical Education Equipment**

### **\* Packages**

SPARK recommended equipment sets, Standard and Premium, are provided on the Web for easy reference. Visit [www.sparkpe.org](http://www.sparkpe.org) to view complete lists with item numbers, descriptions, and current prices.

### **\* Ordering**

Placing an equipment order with SPARK is easy; phone, email, fax, or online.

Contact the SPARK office – call (800) SPARK PE (800-772-7573), or email: [spark@schoolspecialty.com](mailto:spark@schoolspecialty.com) – when ready to order. The SPARK staff is happy to offer expert consultation (e.g., age appropriateness, alternative choices, curricular application, etc.), modify packages to meet your specific needs, then place and track your order. SPARK accepts purchase orders, checks, or credit cards.

If you know the items you need and you are ready to purchase, visit the SPARKstore and order quickly and easily online.

### **\* Recommended Equipment**

As a member of the School Specialty family, SPARK can fulfill all of your equipment needs. SPARK has been utilizing innovative SPORTIME equipment since 1989. Innovative equipment fosters SPARK educational goals by offering more opportunities for children to benefit from physical activity (i.e., a variety of sizes, shapes, textures, and playability) as well as stimulating greater levels of participation and activity.

Contact SPARK at (800) 772-7573 or [www.sparkpe.org](http://www.sparkpe.org) to place an order or request a catalog.

## SPARK Recommended Equipment List

The following list includes all the equipment and music needed to teach the SPARK 3-6 Physical Education curriculum. Items used in just a single unit have been noted in the *Description* column with that unit's name. This will help you when making decisions about prioritizing your equipment purchases.

Item	Description	Quantity
<b>Management</b>		
Cones	9"-12" lightweight For boundaries, stations, etc.	1 per student
	18"-26" heavyweight For goals and tees	4 per 6 students
Directional Arrows	<i>Stunts and Tumbling Unit</i>	8-12
Flag Belts (or Yarn Strips)		1 per student
Pinnies	3-4 different colors	1 per student
Spot Markers		1 per student
<b>Manipulatives</b>		
Basketballs (optional)	<i>Basketball Unit</i>	
Bats	Plastic or foam-covered for safety <i>Softball Unit</i>	1 per 4 students
Beachballs/Balloons	Medium-large size <i>Volleyball Unit</i>	1 per student (or pair)
Beanbags	5 different colors or types	1 per student
Fluffballs/Scarves	<i>Chasing and Fleeing Unit</i>	1 per 5 students
Flying Discs	<i>Flying Disc Unit</i>	1 per student
Foam Balls	8" coated	1 per 10 students
Foam Balls	3"	1 per 10 students
Footballs	Soft or coated foam <i>Football Unit</i>	1 per 2 students
Hockey Balls	<i>Hockey Unit</i>	1 per student
Hockey Sticks	Safe-type <i>Hockey Unit</i>	1 per student
Hoops	30"-36"	1 per 2 students
Parachutes (or Scarves)	Small 6' Dancing Color 54" square <i>Cooperative Unit</i>	1 per 6 students



## SPARK Recommended Equipment List (continued)

Item	Description	Quantity
Racquets or Paddles	Short-handled <i>Racquets and Paddles Unit</i>	1 per student
Scoops (optional)	For easy catching	1 per 4 students
Soccer Balls (optional)	<i>Soccer Unit</i>	1 per student
Softballs/Ragballs	<i>Softball Unit</i>	1 per 2 students
Super Bouncy Balls	Small-medium size <i>Aerobic Games Unit</i>	1 per 10 students
Tennis balls		1 per 2 students
Tetherballs (and poles)	Training-type <i>Recess Activities Unit</i>	1 per 4 students
Tossables	A variety of things to throw and catch. Koosh® balls, beanbags, rubber chickens, foam balls, yarn balls, etc.	1 per 2 students
Utility Balls	8 1/2" nylon wound	1 per student
Volleyballs	Volley trainers or foam balls <i>Volleyball Unit</i>	1 per student (or pair)
Wiffle Balls	Baseball and/or softball size	1 per 5 students
Fitness Equipment		
Bench Steps	<i>Group Fitness Unit</i>	1 per student
Carpet Squares (or Small Yoga Mats)		1 per 2-4 students
Jump Ropes Individual Partner	8'-10' 10'-12'	1 per student 1 per 2 students
Medicine Balls	2-5 pounds <i>Group Fitness Unit</i>	1 per student
Movement Bands	1" wide elastic bands	1 set of 2 per 3-4 students
Pedometers (optional)	To measure number of steps	1 per 3-4 students
Plyometric Box/Step (optional—can use bleachers or stairs)	<i>Fitness Circuits Unit</i>	2-4
Resistance Bands	<i>Group Fitness Unit</i>	1 per student
Stability Balls	<i>Group Fitness Unit</i>	1 per student



## SPARK Recommended Equipment List (continued)

Item	Description	Quantity
<b>Non-Manipulatives</b>		
Base Sets (optional—can use spot markers)	<i>Softball Unit</i>	1 per 5 students
Batting Tees (optional—can use 18"-26" cones)	<i>Softball Unit</i>	1 per 4 students
Bowling Pins (optional—can use cones)	<i>Aerobic Games Unit</i>	1 per 2 students
Gymnastic Mats (optional—can use carpet squares or avoid stunts needing mats)	4'X8' <i>Stunts and Tumbling Unit</i>	8-12 mats
Nets (optional—can use rope)	<i>Volleyball Unit</i>	1 per 6-8 students
Rhythm Sticks (optional)	<i>Movement Bands Unit</i>	1 set of 2 per 3-4 students
Safety Goggles	<i>Hockey Unit</i>	1 per student
<b>Teaching Aids</b>		
Measuring Device (measuring wheel, rope, etc.)	To create a track	1
Music Player	Loud enough for all to hear Consider AC versus DC	1
Stopwatch	Digital is best	1
Wireless Microphone (optional)		1
<b>Odds and Ends</b>		
Paper Plates	Large size <i>Group Fitness Unit</i>	2 per student
Clothespins	4 colors <i>Chasing and Fleeing Unit</i>	1 per student
Pool Noodles	Cut in half or thirds <i>Aerobic Games Unit</i>	1 per 2 students

## SPARK Recommended Music

<b>MUSIC ALBUM</b>	<b>Artist/ Producer/ Where to Buy</b>	<b>Song</b>	<b>Dance/ Use</b>
<b>Jock Jams Volume 1</b>	<b>Various/ ESPN Presents/ Sportime</b>	“Are You Ready to Rumble?” And more!	For back-ground music and <i>Group Fitness</i> .
<b>Christy Lane’s Complete Party Dance Music</b>	<b>Various/ Christy Lane/ Sportime</b>	“The Electric Slide”	The Electric Slide
		“80s Dance Medley”	Whomp It Up
		“Hot, Hot, Hot”	California Strut
		“Cotton-Eyed Joe”	Cotton-Eyed Joe
<b>Christy Lane’s Line Dancing Music</b>	<b>Various/ Christy Lane/ Sportime</b>	“Achy Breaky Heart”	Achy Breaky Heart
		“Wild, Wild, West”	Jekyll Island Stomp
<b>Christy Lane’s Multicultural Folk Dance Volume 1</b>	<b>Various/ Christy Lane/ Sportime</b>	“Alunelul”	Alunelul
		“American Folk Dance Medley”	The Virginia Reel
		“American Folk Dance Medley”	Scatter Square Dance
		“American Folk Dance Medley”	Hot Time
<b>Christy Lane’s Multicultural Folk Dance Volume 2</b>	<b>Various/ Christy Lane/ Sportime</b>	“Irish Jig Medley”	Irish Jig


## SPARK Recommended Music

<b>MUSIC ALBUM</b>	<b>Artist/ Producer/ Where to Buy</b>	<b>Song</b>	<b>Dance/ Use</b>
<b>Radio Disney: Ultimate Jams, Greatest Hits from Volumes 1-6</b>	<b>Lou Bega/ Radio Disney/ Sportime</b>	Disney version of “Mambo #5”	Mambo #5
<b>Best Of Steps</b>	<b>Steps//Jive/iTunes</b>	“5-6-7-8”	5-6-7-8
<b>Pata Pata</b>	<b>Miriam Makeba/ iTunes</b>	“Pata Pata”	Pata Pata
Any version E.g., <b>That’s All Right Mama</b>	e.g., <b>Albert Lee/ iTunes</b>	“Rocky Top”	Rocky Top Tennessee
<b>Karaoke Classic Male Country Volume 29</b>	<b>Mel McDaniel/ iTunes</b>	Karaoke version of “Louisiana Saturday Night”	Louisiana Saturday Night
<b>Country Dance Super Hits (optional)</b>	<b>Mary Chapin Carpenter/ iTunes</b>	“Achy Breaky Heart”	Louisiana Saturday Night
<b>Square Dancing Made Easy (optional)</b>	<b>Various/ Del Casher/ Sportime</b>	“Wild, Wild, West”	Jekyll Island Stomp

Use the above individual CDs, or purchase the *SPARK 3-6 PE Music CD*. This CD includes all of the above music, as well as music for general use and 2 interval tracks. Use the interval tracks for hassle-free rotational cues when teaching with circuits. Students are active at a station when the music is on, and they rotate to the next station when music is off.

Dances are also available on video through Human Kinetics ([www.humankinetics.com](http://www.humankinetics.com)).

## Yearly Plans

SPARK offers a sample yearly plan for 3rd-6th grade classes. Use it as written, or as a guide to craft a yearly plan better aligned to your needs and resources. This sample yearly plan is based on a teacher(s) providing PE instruction 3-5 days per week and teaching 1 unit each from the *Focus on Fitness* and the *Spotlight on Skills* sections per 4-week period or month. (See the  for samples in a weekly format.)

### Considerations for developing yearly plans

- \* At the beginning of every school year, take the first week or longer to establish a positive learning environment (and continue to build on this foundation all year). SPARK offers sample *Introductory Lessons* entitled, “*The First 3 Lessons*” (See the tab of the same name). After each break during the year, reflect on the quality of the learning environment. If there is a need to review/re-establish protocols, reinforce a social skill(s), and/or inject activities that promote cooperation and trust (*Cooperatives*) amend your yearly plan accordingly.
- \* Teach the *Cooperatives Unit* at the beginning of the school year to establish an atmosphere of cooperation and trust.
- \* Sequence units giving consideration to climate changes and sport seasons (e.g., group most outdoor activities toward the beginning and end of the school year; schedule softball in spring, etc.)
- \* Pair activities using similar facilities. For example, *Jump Rope* and *Dance* work well together, because they can be taught indoors and/or on smooth surfaces, and are strongly enhanced with music.
- \* Pair higher intensity *Focus on Fitness* units (e.g., *Fitness Challenges*) with lower intensity *Spotlight on Skills* units (e.g., *Softball*) and vice versa to create an effective balance.
- \* *Recess Activities* and *ASAP's* are not found in the *Sample Yearly Plan*. SPARK recommends *ASAP* activities be introduced as the first *Focus on Fitness* unit taught in 3rd grade so they may be used as warm-ups for the rest of the year. SPARK also recommends teaching *Recess Activities* as the initial *Spotlight on Skills* unit in 3rd grade to increase student activity levels outside of PE class all year. During 4th-6th grades, you may teach these activities anytime during the year.

## SPARK Sample Yearly Plan

<b>4-Week Period/ Month</b>	<b>Focus on Fitness</b>	<b>Spotlight on Skills</b>	<b>Personal Best Day</b>
<b>1 September</b>	<i>Fitness Circuits</i>	<i>Cooperatives</i>	
<b>2 October</b>	<i>Chasing and Fleeing</i>	<i>Flying Disc</i>	X
<b>3 November</b>	<i>Jump Rope</i>	<i>Dance</i>	
<b>4 December</b>	<i>Map Challenges</i>	<i>Volleyball</i>	X
<b>5 January</b>	<i>Daily Dozen (Stunts Unit)</i>	<i>Stunts and Tumbling</i>	
<b>6 February</b>	<i>Movement Bands</i>	<i>Basketball</i>	X
<b>7 March</b>	<i>Group Fitness</i>	<i>Hockey or Racquets and Paddles</i> 	
<b>8 April</b>	<i>Aerobic Games</i>	<i>Soccer</i>	X
<b>9 May</b>	<i>Walk/Jog/Run</i>	<i>Softball</i>	
<b>10 June</b>	<i>Fitness Challenges</i>	<i>Football or Racquets and Paddles</i> 	X