

Web Resource 4.1
Position Statement
on the Use of Physical Activity as Punishment
By California Association for Health, Physical Education,
Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD)

The California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance is committed to the development of positive attitudes toward activity and active lifestyle habits in children and adults.

One of the prime goals of physical education programs is to provide students with positive experiences that will motivate them to pursue and develop active lifestyles. CAHPERD supports the California Physical and Health-Related Fitness Test and the objectives of teaching youth about the importance of fitness and active lifestyles to their health.

The practice of using physical activity (running laps and doing calisthenics) as punishment promotes student attitudes that are contrary to the stated objectives of CAHPERD.

Teachers do not punish children with reading and then expect them to develop a joy for reading. Neither should teachers punish with exercise and expect children to develop a love of activity.

Not only is the use of physical activity as punishment contrary to the philosophy of CAHPERD, but it is also illegal. The California State Education Code states that "No person employed or engaged in a public school shall inflict, or cause to be inflicted corporal punishment upon a pupil." The code defines corporal punishment as "the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain in a pupil." Punishing a child with lap running or push-ups imposes both physical and mental stress on a person. The physical and psychological damage is immeasurable.

Therefore, CAHPERD takes a position opposing the use of any form of physical activity as punishment in school and recreational programs.

1 From B.W. Lavay, R. French, and H.L. Henderson. 2016, *Positive behavior management in physical activity settings web resource*, 3rd ed. (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).