

Schoolkids in Georgia get exercise every day

By Journal-Constitution, adapted by Newsela staff on 09.25.13

Word Count **386**



Fourth-graders (from left) Makenzie Thompson, Reagan Lloyd and Jayda Smith use exercise bands in a program after school at Stonewall Tell Elementary School, Sept. 9, 2013, in College Park, Ga. Stonewall's exercise program is not new, but it just won a gold award from the state for its efforts to get kids moving and be healthy. Photo: Kent D. Johnson/Atlanta Journal-Constitution/MCT

ATLANTA — Last April, the state of Georgia asked schools to do something important. It told the schools to add 30 minutes of exercise a day.

The state was worried. Georgia's students aren't in very good shape. Kids had been given five gym tests. They didn't do well at all.

The tests measured how well students run. They also tested how many push-ups and curl-ups students can do. They also weighed the students.

One in five students couldn't pass a single test. Only one in six passed all of them.

Many children in the state are [too fat \(https://www.newsela.com/?tag=obesity\)](https://www.newsela.com/?tag=obesity). They are also weak. So the message was simple. Schools must find a way to get kids moving more. Regular gym classes aren't enough.

"Walking Wednesdays"

Georgia schools got the message. More than 100 have added new exercises. There are yoga classes before school starts. There are also running and walking clubs after school. There are even 10-minute exercise breaks. Students do the exercises right at their desks.

Huntley Hills Elementary is one school that's added new exercises. Kids can play in the gym before class starts. They use everything from hula hoops to plastic balls.

Then there are "Walking Wednesdays." On those days students walk laps to music.

They even have an after-school bike program on Thursdays. It is the most popular thing to do. Kids ask "is it Thursday yet?" They ask this every day.

Some kids bring their bikes to school. Others use the school's bikes. Kids ride around an empty parking lot. Or they ride in a field by the school.

"Diary Of A Wimpy Kid Tag"

Stonewall Tell Elementary is adding new exercises too.

Lisa Sinon is a gym teacher there. She lets kids make up their own games.

Kids invented a game called "Diary of a Wimpy Kid tag." They named it after the popular children's books. Now they play the game at recess.

Doing Better In School

Exercise is a way to lose weight. But there's something else good about it. It can help you do better in school.

Just ask Makenzie Thompson. She's a fourth-grader at Stonewall Tell. Makenzie says exercising makes a difference.

On days she exercises it only takes her 30 minutes to do her homework. "But if I don't exercise," she said, "it takes me an hour."

Quiz

- 1 What is the main idea of the article?
 - (A) Kids in Georgia are riding their bikes to school to lose weight.
 - (B) Georgia schools are adding fitness wherever they can.
 - (C) Many children in Georgia schools are out of shape.
 - (D) Georgia students enjoy hula hooping at school.

- 2 Which sentence is LEAST important to the main idea of the article?
 - (A) One in five students couldn't pass a single test.
 - (B) Schools must find a way to get kids moving more.
 - (C) More than 100 have added new exercises.
 - (D) Lisa Sinon is a gym teacher there.

- 3 Select the paragraph that shows that things are getting better at Georgia schools.

- 4 What is another good title for this article?
 - (A) Diary of a Fit Kid
 - (B) Georgia Students Are Overweight
 - (C) Georgia Schools Get Kids Moving
 - (D) Exercise Helps Students With Schoolwork