

Healthy living means daily physical education for students at The Children's House

TRAVERSE CITY, MI — While physical education in many schools has been scaled back or cut from the curriculum entirely, The Children's House is the only elementary school in the Traverse City region that incorporates **physical education** for all students—from kindergarten through sixth grade—into the curriculum **every single day**.

"Our physical education program is integral to our "Healthy Living" program," says Michele Shane, Head of School at The Children's House. "It's part of our commitment to helping parents raise well-rounded, exceptional children."

While the average time spent on physical education in schools is just two days for a total of 60 minutes per week, The Children's House meets the National Association for Sports and Physical Education's goal of **150 minutes each week for the entire school year**.

Studies show there are twice as many overweight teens as there were a decade ago. Childhood obesity and diabetes in America is on the rise. Reversing this trend means addressing the problem where children spend a majority of their waking moments—in school.

But for Steve Maas, physical education teacher at The Children's House, it's about more than keeping children active.

Regular physical education, says Maas, not only **bolsters a child's health and confidence but also opens their minds**.

"Scientists are telling us that the mind can actually be made stronger through physical education—that certain types of exercise actually enhance brain development in children," says Maas, who was first introduced to the idea of brain-based PE by Eric Jensen, the renowned educator and author.

In addition to traditional gym activities both in and outdoors, Maas' fun and fresh approach to physical education also incorporates **balancing activities and cross-lateral movement/exercises** proven to strengthen neuro connections between both the left and right side of the brain. Getting both sides of the brain working together in children enhances learning and problem-solving abilities by better incorporating both creative and analytical thinking.

Since Maas' started his new physical education program three years ago, parents and teachers at The Children's House have seen positive results in students—increased self-confidence, greater focus and direction when it comes to accomplishing difficult tasks, and higher overall enthusiasm for learning both in and out of the classroom.

For more information and/or interviews with Steve Maas, TCH parents, and teachers, please contact Michele Shane, Head of School at The Children House by phone 231.929.9325 or via email at michele@traversechildrenshouse.org