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Active students, healthy learners

“My favorite is the crab walk! It’s just so funny,” 4-year-old Norah exclaims. Her classmate Titan jumps to the floor to demonstrate just how funny the crab walk is. The students just finished an obstacle course in PE class that included a somersault, log roll, crab walk on a balance beam and a lizard walk on a balance beam.

“I love interacting with my students,” says Coach David Platt, the preschool through 1st grade PE teacher at TIS. **“They are so open and eager to learn. I can show them a new jump or throw and they have a wonderful sense of accomplishment when they do it.”**

Coach David, who joined TIS in 2005, has developed an Early Childhood physical education (PE) curriculum around skills that are both challenging and attainable. All activities improve gross motor development and hand-eye/foot coordination. Each class

includes a warm-up activity, a circle of stretches and calisthenics, a new skill, and a game.

Mastering the skills learned in PE is not easy for all students. **“The important part is trying out the task and not necessarily accomplishing it,”** David stresses. “With a little practice, everyone can have some degree of success with the skills I teach. I want my students to feel confident and capable. I want them to understand what it is to be part of a group and how to treat others as they would want to be treated.”

By the end of the year the students have matured immensely in PE class. “Some changes involve learning to be a part of a group and sharing space,” David says. “Other changes have to do with moving their bodies and acquiring skills or understanding concepts and connecting different ideas.”

The skills and concepts developed

during Early Childhood form the foundation for PE during the elementary school years. Together Coach David and Coach Robert (grades 2-5) encourage the students to develop a lifelong love of being active. The students continually strive for their best and feel proud of their accomplishments.

“Keeping students active, allowing them to move and play, is an important part of our program,” TIS Principal Ron Young says. **“Early Childhood PE allows students to learn important motor skills as well as cooperation, problem solving, and determination. The benefits transfer to the classroom where students are energized and eager to learn.”**

To learn more about the TIS Physical Education program, visit: intlschool.org/pe-ec/ or intlschool.org/pe-elementary/

When fourth grader Ruby signed-up to run a one mile race last summer her mother attributed her determination and success to Coach Robert's PE class. **“She had the confidence to run the race. She pushed herself and she was so proud,”** Ruby's mother exclaimed. “This is a skill and mindset that I think will keep her healthy throughout her life.”

