

Movement in the Classrooms

In addition to a quality physical education program, there are also many ways to get kids moving WHILE they are in the classroom. Children spend over 1,000 hours in school each year. So where could be a better place to encourage kids to eat right and get moving? Studies show that physical activity increases brain activity. A short movement activity allows students to let out some extra energy, and also increases their ability to focus on the next lesson. The more they burn, the better they learn!

“Through procedural memory, by doing, you learn. How does this work? The body is full of peptides and cells throughout that become engaged and have a memory of their own. Once it’s in your body, you don’t forget it! When kids learn about verbs by moving to the action word, hearing the music, and acting out the word with their bodies, they get it!”

-Using Movement in the Classroom , www.corwin.com

Even as adults, we have a limited attention span when it comes to sitting still and listening. Our brains and bodies need breaks to boost oxygen levels and for us to reset and recharge. Taking a quick break to do jumping jacks, a few minutes of yoga or a couple of jogging laps around the room, allows us enough of a change of pace to reset and “wake our brains up” by pushing some additional blood and oxygen throughout our body, including our brains. This win-win situation applies to children and adults alike. Teachers who use movement strategies in their classrooms are giving their students the chance to increase their physical activity levels and recharge their brains all while increasing their chances of learning and retaining. The teachers also reap the same benefits by getting their own brains and bodies moving with their students.

“Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results.” – John Dewey

Schools cannot leave the physical activity requirements and needs up to the physical education teachers in the school. There are many opportunities throughout the day to help the students to get their heart rates up and their bodies moving. Healthy children have fewer absences and better focus while in school because their basic needs are met. This also decreases distractions and behavior issues in the classroom.

“A study showed that between the ages 9 and 15, physical activity among American kids dropped by 75 percent.” – Designedtomove.org

“The body learns ten times faster than the brain and forgets ten times slower. If you want to change the brain, change the body.” – Modified from talk given by Dr. David Richo



Classroom Movement Ideas

- Take it outside! No one wants to be stuck inside on a beautiful day. On a sunny day, take the kids outside for an authentic, memorable, and fun learning experience.
 - Bring book boxes/carpet squares outside and have children independently read or buddy read.
 - Allow free writing time in journals.
 - Pick something to observe in nature and descriptively write about it.
 - Practice math facts/skills with sidewalk chalk
 - Draw shapes, patterns, and symmetrical objects observed on a nature walk
 - Observe items in nature with a magnifying glass
 - Reenact a historical event
 - Go on a treasure hunt while reinforcing cardinal directions
- Brain Breaks such as dances (Cupid Shuffle, Continental Drift, etc.) and exercises
- Yoga
- Movement videos made by the school with students and teachers
- Write a different movement activity on decorated popsicle sticks and place them in a mug, draw one out as breaks are needed.
- Keep it up- toss around a beach ball without letting it hit the ground
- Simon Says
- Turn some music on and just dance!
- Scarf Juggling
- Drawing letters in the air with different parts of the body (Draw an "A" with your foot)
- Animal Pretend
- Math facts with exercises ($4 + 4 = 8$ Push-ups; $5 \times 5 = 25$ Jumping Jacks)
- Find it Fast – call out a trait and the students have to find something in the room with that trait and bring it back to their desk quickly (something wooden, something that floats, something square)



Movement in the Classroom Resources

Using Movement in the Classroom http://www.corwin.com/upm-data/27287_Summerford_Action_Packed_Classrooms_2e_Chapter_1.pdf

Indoor Movement Ideas

Alliance for a Healthier Generation:

<https://www.healthiergeneration.org/>

Kelly Bear (2 pages of ideas):

<http://www.kellybear.com/TeacherArticles/TeacherTip69.html>

PE Central:

<http://www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/pelessonplans.html>

Subtraction Bowling from "What the Teacher Wants":

http://whattheteacherwants.blogspot.com/2012/11/subtraction-bowling_5.html

Brain Breaks

Video Clips from Teach, Train, Love:

<http://teachtrainlove.com/20-brain-break-clips-fight-the-fidgeting/>

The Happy Teacher Blogspot:

<http://thehappyteachertpt.blogspot.com/2012/08/brain-breaks.html>

Outdoor Learning

Teach, Train, Love:

<http://teachtrainlove.com/outdoor-learning-lets-take-it-outside/>