



Integrating Physical Activity throughout the School Day

Active Kids Make Better Learners

Recess and physical education time has steadily decreased or been eliminated in school districts around the nation, displaced by more time focused on academics. However, research shows that exercise benefits the brain in numerous ways resulting in improved learning in children.

Understanding the relationship between physical activity, body weight and academic achievement can assist schools with the design of academic and physical activity programming. Evidence shows a positive relationship between physical activity and grade point average, rate of learning, classroom behavior, as well as cognitive, social and motor skill development (Chomitz, et al., 2009) It also reveals that the students who need the most help academically, gain the most by being physical activity (CDC). Simply put physically active students are better learners.

Evidenced Based Strategies for Physical Activity

- Physical education with at least 50% of class time spent doing moderate to vigorous activity
- Elementary school: daily recess with adult facilitated phys. activity
- Physical activity weaved into the classroom
- Before and after school physical activity opportunities
- Inclusive, intramural programs and physical activity clubs
- Walk/bike to school programs (Safe Routes to School)
(Information provided by U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention)

Proven Resources

www.spark.org
www.pecentral.com

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom

Finding time to fit one more thing into your already busy schedule can be difficult. But what if you could integrate into your academic lessons with physical activity or use it to transition to another classroom activity? Here are a few ideas to help you get you started.

- Play Simon Says and make the focus on physical movement.
- Reward students with extra recess time.
- Use stability balls instead of chairs in the classroom
- Set a class goal of walking across the state. Document collective miles.
- Provide "brain breaks" for movement. Allow students to be creative. For example, have younger students practice spelling or vocabulary words while walking around the room.
- Have students pair up and take a walking study break. They can quiz each other on classroom material as they walk the halls or outside before a test.
- Incorporate one to two minutes physical activity breaks into each class period. Have students take turns leading various movement activities.
- Use Geocaching equipment to promote problems solving, utilizing technology and physical activity into learning (Geography, Technology classes).
- Build nutritional and physical activity into Math, Science, and FACS. Determine the amount of exercise time necessary to burn off calories associated with certain foods like a candy bar and then do the exercise required.

Many children do not get the recommended **60 minutes** of physical activity per day but you can help.

Additional Resources: JAMmin' Minute: A one-minute fitness routines. www.jamschoolprogram.com/

Take 10 www.take10.net Grades K-5 integrates academic learning objectives with physical activity.

GeoMotion www.geomotiongroup.com Linking academic lessons using movement based products.

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation- <http://healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx?id=3302> Includes tips to integrate physical activity before, during, and after school as well motivating movement in the classroom.

Brain Gym www.braingym.com Classroom techniques to enhance learning through the science of movement.

