

Why Movement?

**BRAIN
BREAKS**

Ways students benefit when movement is incorporated into classroom activities.

- **Increases learning and attention.** “Activity stimulates more blood vessels in the brain to support more brain cells. There is evidence that active kids do better on standardized tests and pay attention more in school” (*Sallis, 2015*).
- **Improves standardized test scores.** Children who are more active “show greater attention, have faster cognitive processing speed and perform better on standardized tests than children who are less active” (*Institute of Medicine, 2013*).
- **Enhances school performance.** International studies show students, especially boys, participating in daily physical activity did better in school (*Fritz, 2017*).
- **Reduces behavior challenges.** A meta-analysis including 10,000 students concluded physical activity “improves classroom behaviors and benefits several aspects of academic achievement, especially mathematics-related skills, reading, and composite scores” (*Alvarez-Bueno, 2017*).
- **Prepares the brain for learning.** “Movement activates all of the brain cells kids are using to learn; it wakes up the brain. Plus, it makes kids want to come to school more” (*Ratey, 2017*).
- **Increases their amount of daily physical activity.** Children should participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily. Only 21.6% of students meet that 60-minute goal at least 5 days per week. (*US Department of Health and Human Services, 2018*).
- **Improves physical health.** Regular physical activity can help children improve cardiorespiratory fitness, and build strong bones and muscles (*CDC, 2018*).
- **Improves mental health.** Physical activity in children can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression (*US Department of Health and Human Services, 2018*).
- **Increases opportunities for a healthier adulthood.** Building routines for physical activity promotes lifelong health and can reduce the risk of developing health conditions such as heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, and obesity (*CDC, 2018*).
- **Improves memory, executive function, processing speed, and attention.** Evidence indicates that short or prolonged periods of physical activity in children improves their cognitive functions and self-regulatory processes such as planning, organizing, abstract problem-solving, working memory, and overall academic performance (*CDC, 2018*).
- **Reduces fidgeting.** Participating in physical activity improves concentration and the ability to stay on task, while decreasing disruptive behavior, including fidgeting (*Baker, 2017; Watson, 2017; Kibbe, 2011*).
- **Benefits students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.** Physical activity has been associated with reduced use of medications (*Cornelius, 2017; Katz, 2018*).
- **Improves the ability to stay on-task.** Regular physical activity improves concentration and the ability to stay on-task in the classroom (*Donnelly, 2015; Mahar, 2011*).
- **Increases motivation.** Physical activity improves engagement in the learning process (*Institute of Medicine, 2013; Martin, 2017; Kuczala 2018*).

Learn more: https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/pdf/ClassroomPAStrategies_508.pdf

