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Get Moving: Active Kids in Alexandria: 5 Best Practices

By Brooke Sydnor Curran

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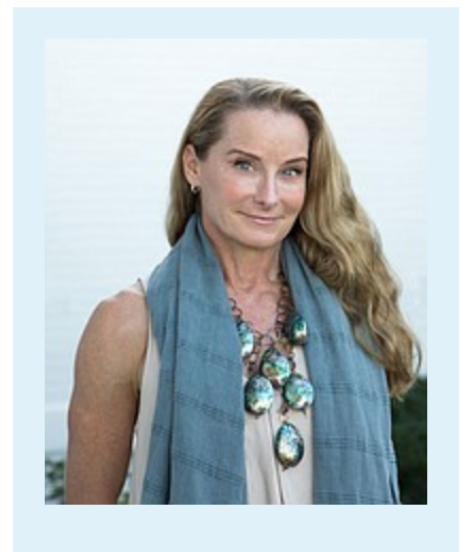
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Did you know that studies strongly correlate active kids with improved scholastic performance? That's right — active kids outperform their less active peers in school.

When we compare brain scans of students, we see that the brain scan of the physically active student has practically all synapses sparking, while the brain scan of the physically inactive student has substantially less activity. Being active literally makes our brains work better, and prepares students to learn and perform at their best.

Kids who are more active during the school day show:

- Improved performance, focus, and memory,
- Better behaviors and ability to stay on-task,
- Higher academic achievement and higher scores both in the classroom and on standardized tests.



It is clear that physical activity gives students an academic advantage, yet many of our kids are not getting the CDC-recommended 60 minutes of activity per day. Fortunately, there are simple and effective solutions that can be easily implemented during the school week to creatively help get Alexandria's kids moving.

Increasing physical activity has numerous health benefits, like helping to prevent and reduce obesity, lowering stress-levels, and elevating moods. There are specific recommendations that have been found to be most beneficial when working with students to improve their academic performance.

Based on this information and experience working with educators, national experts, and other like-minded programs over the past 9 years, RunningBrooke would like to share these 5 Best Practices for how to implement effective physical activity into the school day and week. Here are recommendations on how to

squeeze in the CDC-recommended 60 minutes of daily activity:

- Best Practice 1: Promotion of before, during and after school programs: the use of sports, activity programs, and clubs.
- Best Practice 2: Physically active classrooms: adding movement into academic lessons, short bursts (brain boosts) at every opportunity before, during or between classes, and lessons that require outdoor activity.
- Best Practice 3: P.E. Time: A P.E. that's inclusive and gets everyone's heart rates up.
- Best Practice 4: Making the most out of recess: an inclusive and active recess with a variety of activities and an encouragement of free play.
- Best Practice 5: City-wide promotion of safe routes to school.

Over the next 5 weeks, we will share information about each of these practices, ways to incorporate them into the day, and what parents, teachers, and others can do to help give Alexandria's youth an academic boost through increased physical activity. Please join us for our first Best Practice next week: Promotion of Before and After School Programs.

Brooke Sydnor Curran is the Founder & CEO of RunningBrooke, a twice Iron(WO)man, an ultra-marathoner, and a finisher of more than 115 marathons. Through her work with RunningBrooke, ten of thousands of students across Alexandria have benefited from adding more movement and physical activity into their day. RunningBrooke won't stop until all children in Alexandria have access to programs, teachers, schools, and program leaders that embrace physical activity and spark student's best self.