

Physically Active Classrooms Equal Success

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RunningBrooke offers 5 Best Practices for how to implement effective physical activity into the school day and week. This is the second in a five-part series to explain these practices and show how to find small pockets of time to get Alexandria's youth moving to meet the CDC-recommended 60 minutes of daily activity.



Best Practice #2: Making our classrooms more physically active with short brain boosts of activity, adding movement into academic lessons and transition times.

Research shows that students who earn mostly A's are almost twice as likely to get regular physical activity as students who earn mostly D's and F's. One of the main reasons is that exercise affects us on a cel-

lular level: increasing alertness, attention, and motivation. Despite these benefits, only 45 percent of schools nationwide provide opportunities for students to participate in classroom physical activity boosts.

Brain boosts are not only good for students' academic achievement, they are easy to weave into class time, and teachers benefit from the effort, too. Active lessons help teachers better manage their classrooms, and help activate students' brains and improve their potential to process new information. Just incorporating a few short brain boosts in the classroom can make a big difference. In fact, one physically active lesson can create a 13 percent increase in students' physical activity for the week, and a 21 percent decrease in teachers' time

spent managing off-task behaviors.

So, what does a physically active classroom look like? For English, it might be having students jump as they spell vocabulary words or on each syllable. For Math, it could be jumping like a basketball player while counting to 10. During transitions, teachers could employ fitness dice for student-led activity, or have students to do lunges while crossing the classroom to pick up needed materials.

RunningBrooke has partnered with numerous teachers to provide Move2Learn toolkits and training that empower them to incorporate more activity into their classrooms. The toolkit includes age-appropriate supplies and information, like activity dots, fitness dice, and a classroom brain boost guide, to help get kids moving with brain boosting and heart-rate-elevating activity.

COMMENTARY

Alexandria elementary school teacher Brenda Tarquinio says, "I have learned to read my students and know when we all need a moment to get our bodies moving or stretch to refocus. These breaks have become seamless within my room because the expectations have been set and the procedures have been taught."

RunningBrooke is excited to partner with teachers and administrators throughout Alexandria. Together, we are working to make these programs available to all children across our community. If you are a parent or teacher who would like to see brain boosts added to your classrooms, resources are available at www.runningbrooke.org/move2learn. Please let us know how we can help.

Please look for next week's piece about Best Practice #3: Physical Education that is inclusive and gets everyone's heart rates up.