

Movement in the Classroom for

ACADEMIC SUCCESS



A Note for Educators

Emphasis on the importance of incorporating physical activity into the classroom has spiked throughout the past few years. A number of studies have indicated that an increase in physical activity throughout the school day is associated with better academic performance and higher levels of on-task behavior. For example:

- A 2010 review found positive associations between classroom-based physical activity and indicators of cognitive skills and attitudes, academic behavior, and academic achievement; none of the studies found negative associations.¹
- A 2011 review found no evidence to support the claim that increasing the time allotted for physical activity during the school day results in decreased academic performance.²
- A 2005 review notes that physical activity improves general circulation, increases blood flow to the brain, and raises levels of norepinephrine and endorphins, having a calming effect on the body, and as a result could lead to improvements in academic achievement.³

Use movement in your classroom to help students succeed! Here are some tips for success:

- Find class-time opportunities that work for you. Consider subject transition periods or classroom activities that could easily be made “mobile.”
- Don’t be discouraged if students are unwilling at first. All changes, big or small, take some getting used to.
- Incorporate short exercises into transition periods. Activity for just 30 seconds can help get blood flowing to the brain and improve alertness. Let students choose the activity at the beginning of the day (this can be a reward).
- Pick natural student leaders to help encourage the class to participate – even if they’re simply leading by example.
- Express enthusiasm! Students are more likely to participate if you are role modeling with excitement.
- Make it fun and be creative! Play popular music and promote a light-hearted environment. Laughing is encouraged!



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¹Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The association between school based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services. 2010.

²Donnelly JE, Lambourne K. Classroom-based physical activity, cognition, and academic achievement. Preventive Medicine. 2011;52:S36-S42.

³Taras H. Physical activity and student performance at school. Journal of School Health. 2005;75(6):214-218.