



Physical Activity in the Classroom

Wellness Policy, Guidelines and Expectations:

Physical Activity: Research shows that physical activity positively impacts cognitive skills, focus, and on-task classroom behavior. In addition, students who are physically fit have been shown to have fewer discipline problems, stronger academic performance and better school attendance. Short bursts of physical activity several times a day or incorporated in academics is encouraged in the classroom. Withholding recess or other opportunities for physical activity from children as a punishment for poor behavior is strongly discouraged.

Brain Breaks: Brain Breaks are encouraged as they are great ways to re-energize your students, to get their blood pumping and their brains re-charged. It allows kids to get their “wiggles” out, which will, in turn, help them to stay focused on the next task. Brain breaks can be used before, during, after a lessons, or incorporating the educational component into physical movement.

Why? U.S. Department of Health recommends that young people ages 6 – 17 years participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily. PE may not be offered each day for every student. Recess can be short or not physically active for every student. The CDC states “... physical activity can have an impact on cognitive skills and attitudes and academic behavior, all of which are important components of improved academic performance”.

- Helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles so student can learn.
- Helps reduce the risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases, (diabetes, cardiovascular disease, colon cancer...)
- Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety and promotes psychological well-being.
- May help improve academic behavior, such as time on task
- May enhance concentration and attentiveness
- Less absenteeism, drop-out rates, and social connectedness
- Affects executive functioning:
 - Increased oxygen flow to the brain
 - Increased brain neurotransmitters

Challenges with Classroom Physical Activity:

Limited classroom space or no option of rearranging desks:

- Have children stand behind desk.
- Run around building on nice days.
- Walk down hallways quietly with alternating high knees.
- Set up four stations in each corner of the room with a different physical activity. Groups of four. Switch every minute.

Time:

- The amount of time it takes to calm/discipline “energetic” children is basically the amount of time it takes to have the children perform a burst of activity.
- If several short activities seem like too much, vary the number and length of bursts.

Student's reluctance to participate:

- Some individual students may be reluctant to participate due to lethargy, shyness, or feeling self-conscious.
- Do not punish these students or bring undue attention to them. Encourage students to stand and stretch. Over time, they may become more involved in the bursts.

Transitioning back to learning:

- If the class takes a while to settle down, try these suggestions:
 - End with a silent activity
 - Mindful breathing
 - Relaxation, Mindful Movement, Core Practices
 - End with a variation of "Simon Says" such as "Do as I'm doing, follow me; walk back to your seats slowly, follow me."
 - Turn the lights down after the activity
 - A consistent signal should be established for stopping physical activity.
 - Audio signal – a whistle; saying "freeze"
 - Visual signal such as flipping the light switch, raising a hand
 - A rhythmic 1, 2, 3, 123 Clap
 - Hold up one finger to stop
 - Two fingers point to eyes to indicate eyes on you.
 - Three fingers over mouth to indicate to keep mouth shut
 - Four fingers shown is hands off neighbor
 - Five fingers raised with thumb pointing to ear indicates ready to listen
 - You are focused on me in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Student boredom:

- Vary the stretches and activities.
- Have students take turns leading the activities.
- Add music, or vary music.

Finding a partner: Using walking, skipping, hopping, etc., in a defined area, students "mingle, mingle" in a random order, to form groups of two or more. When teacher says "go" students walk, possibly to music, until they hear the word "freeze." Students place hands on their knees and look at teacher. Instruct students to find another student wearing the same color, same color eyes, same color hair, with a birthday during the same month, etc. When you say "go", they stand toe to toe or elbow to elbow or back to back. Students without partners go to the teacher to "lost and found." Teach students in groups to encourage the student without a group to join them and reward positive behavior with drinks of water or verbal praise.

Undesirable behavior: Use a consistent approach for dealing with undesirable behavior that occurs randomly with an individual student. Remember, if students don't enjoy being in class, time-out doesn't work. Set of consequences for unacceptable behavior might be:

- First misbehavior: student is warned quietly on a personal basis to avoid embarrassment.
- Second misbehavior: The student is told to go to a pre-determined time-out "cooling off" area which should communicate to students that they have disrupted the class. It is acceptable for

the student to go to the area and immediately return to activity if it is agreed to terminate the misbehavior.

- Third misbehavior: The student goes to time-out for the remainder of the period.
- Fourth misbehavior: Remove privileges

Resolving Disputes - Rock, Paper, Scissors:

Teaching students to resolve arguments with “Rock, Paper, Scissors” can reduce conflicts but the approach should be taught and reinforced in the entire school. Rock breaks scissors; scissors cuts paper; and paper covers rock.



High Five Principals:



1. I will be positive.
2. I will be engaged.
3. I will show respect to others & equipment.
4. I will participate.
5. My actions = My outcome.

Resources:

Classroom Activity Ideas:

- Classroom Yoga: [Click Here Classroom Yoga](#)
- Brain Breaks: [Click Here Brain Breaks](#)

Chimes – MindUP:

Woodstock Zenenergy Chime; Solo, Silver can be purchased by contacting sales rep:

- Beth Carestia 800-950-2754 bethc@chimes.com
- Ask for free shipping on orders over \$75
- May receive 10% - 20% discount off \$10.95 purchase price

Student expectations to post in the classroom: Printable [Behavior charts](#) can be found at this website but four simple rules that can be posted:

1. Follow directions.
2. Raise your hand before speaking or leaving your desk.
3. Respect your classmates and your teacher.
4. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.

Classroom Tips: To get you started, here is a list of simple classroom management strategies anyone can do. They're sure to make your life easier and allow you to teach effectively.

1. *Slow Down:* Excitability is a major cause of misbehavior. And here's the thing: teachers create most of it by rushing around, talking a mile a minute, and blazing through their lessons. The solution is to simply take a deep breath and slow down.

Taking your time has a calming effect on students. It also results in better learning, improved attentiveness, and fewer behavior problems.

2. *Pause Often:* Most teachers talk over their students. In other words, they begin—or continue—speaking without having everyone’s attention. This encourages students to tune you out, start their own conversations, or do something they shouldn’t.

The solution is to pause frequently during instruction. This rhythm of speech is a subtle accountability measure that causes students to be attentive and focus on you and your lesson, rather than distractions around them.

3. *Take A Break:* I don’t care how dynamic you are, if your students sit too long, they’re going to grow restless and become less attentive and more apt to misbehave. It’s only natural.

To keep them from climbing the walls, be proactive and give them an occasional break. Get them up out of their seats for some exercise, light stretching, or a chance to say hello to their classmates. It will do them, and you, a lot of good.

4. *One-Minute of Silence:* If at any time you feel your control slipping away, stop your students and ask for one-minute of silence. This 60-second strategy has a way of rebooting an unruly classroom, allowing you to start fresh on the other side.

It’s also a great way to begin transitions, calm down from an exciting lesson, or end the school day.

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