

Movement

Within the Classroom



Mild Disabilities that benefit from movement

- ADHD** Helps regain focus and get blood flowing throughout their body.
- EBD** Give them something to channel their extra energy into to minimize outbursts.
- Autism** Helps regain focus and get blood flowing through their body. Increases locomotor skills.
- ESL** Teaches new vocabulary terms and places of the body.



Rationale

Movement has been shown through tons of research to be one of the best ways to get all children, typical and special needs, to gain control over their behavior and to engage with and retain what is being taught to them. Regularly-scheduled movement breaks throughout the day and movement used within and between lessons, help all children regulate themselves, which leads to better-behaved, more engaged students who can more easily focus on and retain what they are supposed to be learning. Incorporating movement in directly after a lesson can help students absorb and retain the information a lot better than moving from one lesson directly into another. Spending more time teaching is not always better, especially if the lesson is not being absorbed and retained. Incorporating movement within your lessons has also shown to increase student's retention and interest within the lesson. The students are using their bodies and become immersed within the learning, which makes the mind more likely to retain the information for later because they have physical movement and hands on memory to recall back on. Studies show that recess, or any form of movement, is incredibly important to children's development of executive functioning and coping skills they will need in order to be successful adults, such as negotiating, planning, and coordinating with peers, making decisions on their own, and overall executive functioning and coping skills.



Implementing Movement

There are many ways of incorporating movement within your classroom and none of them take up a whole lot of time. So brain breaks can be quick, easy, fun, and most importantly- efficient!! Research suggests incorporating movement in-between lessons; a good way to do this would be to have a 30-45 minutes lesson and immediately follow it with a 10-15 minute movement break.

- Basic jumping jacks, running in place, lunges, etc. behind the desk are very effective in helping students get the movement their bodies and brains need in order to perform at their very best.
- Slow breathing exercises while incorporating stretches are great ways to get blood and oxygen pumping throughout the brain and body. Best when done at the start of the day when students are usually still groggy and fatigued.
- Websites such as GoNoodle or YouTube have great brain break videos to get students moving around to music to help relieve that built up energy that students experience midway through their day. These also work their rhythmic, balancing, and locomotor skills!
- Pinterest and online blogs are great resources for brain break/movement ideas!

Encourage students to keep a re-sealable bottle of water at their desks so they have quick access to water after a movement exercise or just for them to be drinking throughout the day! This way, as soon as the movement exercise is over, you can start transitioning into the next lesson.

References

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