

Classroom Physical Activity

Intervention Overview

To help students reach the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2019) advocate for integrated classroom physical activity, in addition to daily recess and physical education classes. Classroom physical activity includes taking short, dedicated physical activity/movement breaks. Teachers can also incorporate physical activity into academic instruction, whether as part of a lesson activity or to teach a concept. Not only does classroom physical activity increase student motivation and academic achievement, it encourages students to be more physically active. Regular physical activity benefits strength and endurance, healthy bone and muscle development, and weight control. The CDC (2018) have provided some tools that school leaders and teachers can use to integrate physical activity in their classrooms. One recommended step is providing teachers with professional development on physical activity integration. A physical education teacher may also model to other teachers how to safely and correctly do a list of simple stretches and physical activities, such as jumping jacks, squats, etc.

Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	None required. The CDC includes some additional resources that may be helpful for different activities and programs.
Duration:	At least 3-5 minutes daily, per class period. It is recommended that elementary classrooms take frequent activity breaks throughout the day.
Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take a dedicated 3-5 minute movement/dance break. Play music and guide students in a set of exercises/dance moves.• Have students perform simple activities near their desk such as: jumping jacks, chair squats, arm circles, neck/head rotations, shoulder shrugs/rolls, etc.• Encourage students to be physically active (in a safe manner) as they move between activities and classrooms.• Visit the CDC resources listed below for additional ideas for classroom physical activity.

Does it work?

One study found that with the implementation of daily 10-minute physical activity breaks in the classroom, students were 75% more likely to meet the recommended amount of 30 minutes of physical activity during the school day (Carlson et al., 2015). In another study, it was recommended to incorporate physical activity with learning (Donnelly & Lambourne, 2011). Suggested activities for elementary school classrooms include having a floor mat with alphabet letters written on it and encouraging students to hop on the right letters during a spelling lesson. It was found that integrated classroom activity led to reduced BMI over a three year period, improved physical activity, and increased academic achievement (Donnelly & Lambourne, 2011).

References:

Carlson, J.A., Engelberg, J.K., Cain, K.L., Conway, T.L., Mignano, A.M., Bonilla, E.A., Geremia, C. & Sallis, J.F. (2015). Implementing classroom physical activity breaks: Associations with student physical activity and classroom behavior. *Preventive Medicine*, 81, 67-72.

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). *Strategies for classroom physical activity in schools*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Dept of Health and Human Services. <https://edtechbooks.org/-HRIM>

Donnelly, J.E. & Lambourne, K (2011). Classroom-based physical activity, cognition, and academic achievement. *Preventive Medicine*, 52(1), S36-S42. <https://edtechbooks.org/-ZyXD>

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