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Learning In Motion - Using Movement Activities During the School Day

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Children are always moving. They wiggle, they fidget, and they squirm. As a result, teachers can spend a lot of time telling students, "Sit still." "Stop moving." "Stay in your seat." "Don't budge." However, sitting still might not be the best answer in the classroom all of the time. Allowing students to have scheduled "movement breaks" throughout the school day can actually be beneficial.

How Can Movement Be Helpful For Learning?

There are many benefits associated with using movement alongside of learning. Students can participate in physical activity before and during instructional times. Benefits of incorporating movement into learning tasks include the following:



- **Movement increases alertness** - Movement increases the flow of blood and oxygen to our brains, which makes us more alert.



- **Movement decreases stress** - Just as with any type of exercise, as students participate in movement activities, stress is reduced.



- **Movement prepares our brains to learn** - When we have less stress and are more alert, we are able to focus better and our brains are more prepared to accept new information.



- **Movement develops motor skills** - As students participate in movement activities, they become more aware of their bodies and strengthen muscles and improve coordination used in the movements.



- **Movement promotes positive behavior** - When students are allowed to move at regular intervals, they have less of a need to move during the school day, therefore causing distractions at other times.





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Movement Activities to Use with Students



Here are some fun and simple movement activities to use with your students during the school day:



- **Toss a ball** - Toss a ball back and forth as your students practice their speech words, vocabulary, grammar skills, asking/answering questions, etc. Tossing a ball also reinforces turn-taking skills, promotes social interaction, and develops hand-eye coordination.



- **Strike a pose** - Using yoga exercises, have your students hold a pose while practicing their targeted skills.



- **Play charades** - Let your students act out a word or phrase from the targeted skill. Let the other students guess what is being portrayed. Have them take turns acting and guessing.



- **March in place** - Have students march in place while they practice their targeted skills. Marching in place can help students stay alert and focused.



- **Stretch it out** - Have students stretch before or during activities. Stretching between activities is another great way to help students relax and improve attention for a task.



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