

# 2-Active Classrooms

## OVERVIEW

**The goal** is to have schools build into their daily schedule at least two 10-minute physical activity breaks (not including PE or recess) that are led by the classroom teacher.

**Resources Needed:**

- Classroom teacher in-service to provide training.
- Resource books / videos / web links with appropriate activities.
- Two 10-minute activity classroom breaks integrated into the school day.

**Facilities and Equipment Needed:**

- Dependent on type of activity breaks and whether they require specific equipment.

**Evaluation:**

- Wellness breaks, energy breaks, and academic integrated movement activities are present in the daily schedule.

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**Active classrooms** means integrating movement breaks, also known as energizing breaks or brain breaks, outside of physical education and recess, into the school day. If shorter time periods (3-5 minutes) work better in your setting, that's fine. Although a total of 20 minutes is the goal, 5, 10 or 15 minutes is better than none, so do what works for you. Regular breaks improve learning because they give students time to make sense of information. In the classroom, children need breaks for learning to be effective. <sup>1</sup>

Think you don't have time for classroom breaks? Think of it as a better way to do class management without the problematic disruption.

Scenario A- Class Disruption	Scenario B- Activity Breaks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class is in session for 15-20 minutes</li> <li>• Students start to display subtle signs of distraction (glazed eyes etc.) (2 mins)</li> <li>• Students start to display more obvious signs of distraction (fidgeting, talking, etc) (2 mins)</li> <li>• Teacher stops teaching, addresses behavior (1-2 mins)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class is in session for 15-20 minutes</li> <li>• Teacher stops students and does a five minute movement activity</li> <li>• Class restarts, students are engaged and alert</li> <li>• Repeat for each class period</li> </ul>
Total Time: 5-6 minutes	Total Time: 5 minutes

## ACTION STEPS



- ☐ Talk with school administration regarding what a movement (brain or energizing) break is and how to implement them in the classroom.
- ☐ Purchase or develop a document that has numerous movement break strategies and give it to every teacher.
- ☐ Train staff on when and how to do these breaks in a staff development session.
- ☐ Have staff implement one strategy per week until every staff member feels comfortable with the practice.
- ☐ At staff meetings, periodically share movement break ideas.
- ☐ Place movement break time slots in the school schedule as appropriate.
- ☐ Develop grade level movement break booklets to be used each year.



Active classrooms helps meet Wisconsin State Physical Education Standard 3:  
Participates regularly in physical activity.

## EXAMPLES



### Physical Activity Breaks across the Nation

Members can access Fit for Healthier Generation Video Collection: 3-5 minute physical activity break videos led by celebrity fitness experts <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx?id=3459>

Free Wellness toolkits for Elementary, Middle and High School Levels:

[https://schools.healthiergeneration.org/wellness\\_categories/student\\_wellness/why\\_student\\_wellness/](https://schools.healthiergeneration.org/wellness_categories/student_wellness/why_student_wellness/)

### Yoga as a School-Wide Intervention

Hawley Environmental School, a K-5 Milwaukee Public School serving about 330 children, provides mental health services, which are part of a larger health initiative. Survey results from staff, students, and parents about mental health concerns indicated that it would be a priority to provide a stress reduction intervention. After some research and discussion with staff, we decided to pursue yoga as a primary prevention strategy. A local program called YogaKids provided training to three school staff to teach yoga to school-aged children. Teachers provide yoga in grades K4-second, fourth, and fifth grades. Third grade will be added later. For more information, contact Patriq DuSaint, PhD.

## RESOURCES



- **JAMmin' Minutes:** a free resource that is emailed to the teacher each week. The JAMmin' Minute is a series of five exercises that take only a minute to do. Teachers or students can lead these energizing breaks. <http://healthetips.com/archive.php>
- **Brain Breaks, Instant Recess and Energizers,** Action for Healthy Kids: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools-for-schools/game-on/about-game-on/get-involved//640-brain-breaks-and-energizers>
- **Adventure to Fitness** is an interactive video adventure with built-in activity periods. <http://adventuretofitness.com/>
- **SHAPE America:** Examples of how to integrate physical activity into the complete school day. <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/teachingTools/uploadPA-During-School-Day.pdf>
- **Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program Guide:** [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/pdf/13\\_242620-A\\_CSPAP\\_SchoolPhysActivityPrograms\\_Final\\_508\\_12192013.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/pdf/13_242620-A_CSPAP_SchoolPhysActivityPrograms_Final_508_12192013.pdf)

## POLICY SAMPLES



### **Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.**

For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e., at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

From Model School Wellness Policies at: <http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/WellnessPolicies.html#opportunities>

**Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program Guide:** [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/pdf/13\\_242620-A\\_CSPAP\\_SchoolPhysActivityPrograms\\_Final\\_508\\_12192013.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/pdf/13_242620-A_CSPAP_SchoolPhysActivityPrograms_Final_508_12192013.pdf)

<sup>1</sup>Lamprecht, Clinton. 2004. Teaching Expertise. Optimus Professional Publishing.