



STAFF

Active students learn better. Schools that promote physical activity see improvements in academic success, behavior, physical and mental health, and overall well-being. As educators and school staff, you have a powerful role in creating a culture where movement is valued, supported, and modeled every day.

Why Physical Activity Matters in Schools

Movement Boosts Learning

- Physical activity improves focus, memory, and behavior in the classroom
- Even short movement breaks can improve on-task behavior by up to 20%
- Students who are physically active have better attendance and higher test scores

Kids Aren't Moving Enough

- Only 36% of children in the US currently achieve the recommended 60 min of daily physical activity
- Preschoolers (ages 3–5) should be active throughout the day
- Children ages 6–17 need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity daily



Fact: Many students get most of their movement during the school day—with up to 60–70% of their waking hours spent at school, educators have a powerful opportunity to change the narrative and make physical activity a natural part of the learning environment.





An Active School Culture

Creating an active school culture means movement isn't limited to PE or recess — it's part of the entire school day.

What It Looks Like

- Valuing physical activity alongside academic learning
- Modeling movement as staff and school leaders
- Offering frequent and inclusive opportunities to move
- Establishing policies and routines that support activity
- Creating spaces where students are encouraged to move safely and regularly

The Power of Staff Participation

School staff can play a transformative role by:

- Integrating physical activity into academic instruction and classroom transitions
- Supporting recess, intramurals, and before/after-school programs
- Role modeling active lifestyle choices—students are watching!

Benefits of Being Active With Students

- Builds stronger relationships
- Boosts student motivation and participation
- Reinforces healthy behaviors in a positive way

Easy Ways to Incorporate Movement

Creating opportunities for movement doesn't have to be complicated. Small, intentional actions throughout the day can lead to big benefits for students and staff alike.

In the Classroom

- **Start Lessons with Brain Boosts or Stretch Breaks:** Use quick, energizing activities (like jumping, dancing, or stretching) to help students refocus and improve behavior—great for transitions or between subjects.
- **Use Academic Movement Integration:** Make learning active by turning content into movement—try math relays, vocabulary charades, acting out science concepts, or walking to different corners for discussion prompts. Bonus: incorporate classroom-friendly equipment like beachballs, balloons, foam dice, and bean bags to make movement even more fun and engaging.
- **Offer Flexible Seating or Standing Options:** Give students opportunities to stand, shift, or stretch throughout the day with wobble stools, standing desks, a wiggles mat in the back of the classroom, or movement breaks at their seats.
- **Try Walk-and-Talk Partner Discussions:** Take learning on the move by encouraging students to walk with a partner as they discuss academic topics or review materials.
- **Use Digital Tools for Quick Activity Breaks:** Platforms like GoNoodle or similar resources provide short, fun movement activities that are classroom-ready and student-approved.



Throughout the School

- **Encourage Active Transitions:** Add visual prompts or cues in hallways (like steppers, hopscotch, or hallway trails) to get students moving between classes.
- **Add “Drop-In Recess” Opportunities:** Create excitement and model active play by having principals or staff join students on the playground.
- **Incorporate Movement in Morning Announcements:** Kick off the school day with a community-wide stretch, movement challenge, or short exercise.
- **Create Active Hallway Routes or Movement Stations:** Post fun physical prompts throughout the school—like wall pushups, toe touches, or balance challenges.
- **Support Broader Wellness Across the Day:** Encourage participation in before/after-school physical activity clubs, promote walking/biking to school, and integrate staff wellness challenges or movement-friendly meetings.



May Classroom Brain Breaks (Monday–Friday)

Quick, energizing, and low-prep movement ideas for every school day!

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--|--|---|--|---|
|  | | | May 1 Follow the Leader (student-led movement line) | May 2 Jump & Freeze |
| May 5 Dance Party Friday (2 minutes of free dance!) | May 6 Animal Moves (hop like a frog, waddle like a duck, gallop like a horse) | May 7 Chair Aerobics (march, punch arms, twist from your seat) | May 8 Slow-Motion Challenge (walk or act in slow-mo) | May 9 Mirror Moves (partner up and copy each other's moves) |
| May 12 4 Corners Fitness (assign an exercise to each corner and rotate) | May 13 Would You Rather Workout (2 options = 2 moves, students pick one) | May 14 Toe Tap Challenge (tap your toes as fast as you can for 30 sec!) | May 15 Air Writing (use arms or legs to draw letters or spell a word) | May 16 Statue Stretch (freeze in a stretch pose—can you balance?) |
| May 19 Popcorn Jumps (squat down and “pop” up when teacher says go!) | May 20 Walking Quiz (walk in place while answering review questions) | May 21 Shape Stretching (use your body to form shapes: circle, triangle, etc.) | May 22 Invisible Jump Rope (pretend to jump rope—get fancy with tricks!) | May 23 Dance & Drop (dance until teacher says “DROP” – freeze on the floor!) |
| May 26 Holiday – No School | May 27 Go Noodle! (use the free platform for a classroom dance break) | May 28 Balance Break (stand on one foot, close your eyes—hold it!) | May 29 Number Stomp (teacher says a number, class stomps that many times) | May 30 Freestyle Friday (let a student lead the class in their own brain break!) |