

In-Class Physical Activity Breaks

Take a Break + Refocus

When students lose focus or develop the wiggles, take a few minutes to honor the break their bodies need. The few minutes invested in a physical activity break will get them refocused and ready to learn. These three- to five-minute ideas can be incorporated into many lessons you are leading or developed into longer breaks for rainy day recess.

Get Up + Move ...

Chair Workout

Have students pull their chair out from their desk. They should sit up straight, keeping their ankles together, and lift and extend legs to a 180-degree angle for 20 repetitions. Then have students stand behind their chair and, while holding the back for balance, extend their right leg out to the side to a 45-degree angle for 20 leg lifts. Repeat with the left leg.

Task Master

Have students stand up and push in their chair. Explain that you are going to give them a series of tasks, and the goal is to complete them as quickly as possible. Direct students that once they have completed the task they should stop where they are and raise their hand. For the first task, have students touch 10 chairs that are not in a row. For the next task, have students touch elbows with eight classmates. For the last task, tap shoes with six classmates wearing six different colored shirts.

Bad Weather Boogie Days

Have students spread out across the room while you play a song, letting kids bust a move. Have them follow your lead to make sure movements are appropriate. Try doing some vintage moves like the twist or the mashed potato.

Take a Tour

There is no reason to ban the cupcakes to host a healthy classroom party. Bring small portions of sweets and direct students and parents to think beyond dessert and bring food-group foods with added fun and flair. Anything to dip, stack or assemble is usually a hit!

Acting Out

Read a paragraph or page from a book, and every time an action verb comes up have the students act it out.

These Ideas use Dairy Council of California Teaching Materials and Resources

Food Picture Cards. Using your Dairy Council of California Food Picture Cards (or write food-group foods on slips of paper), assign an activity to each of the five food groups (e.g., jumping in place for Milk + Milk Products, running in place for Vegetables). Pass out a card to each student and have students do the activity for their food group for 20 seconds. Have students pass their card to their neighbor and repeat for five passes.

Mix It Up. Create a dance sequence one move at a time by calling out a move associated with a food group. Add one move each time through the sequence. Moves could include stomp left for Milk + Milk Products; high five someone for Vegetables; jump twice for Fruits; spin in a circle for Grains, Breads + Cereals; squat for Meat, Beans + Nuts. Make this harder for older students by calling out a food and having them choose the food group and corresponding move.

Stand Up for Vocabulary. When introducing the vocabulary words for a lesson, tell students that every time you or a student uses one of the vocabulary words during a 10-minute teaching segment, students must stand up or sit down. This activity is great for incorporating listening skills as well.

