

Top Tips for Inclusive Brain Boosters



Research has shown that physical activity improves brain function by increasing blood flow and oxygenation to the brain. Teachers should consider incorporating moderate physical activity (MPA) breaks throughout the day to improve concentration, energize students after a lunch break, and/or help students relax before a test. Short classroom activity breaks are an emerging intervention to increase participation in regular physical activity. Activity breaks are short (10 minutes or less), classroom-based activities that integrate physical activity with academic concepts. An activity that involves moving arms, hands, and heads, in addition to legs, also includes children and youth with disability. These classroom breaks are often called "brain boosters," "brain breaks," "classroom activity breaks," or "classroom energizers," and involve physical activity as well as learning and social interaction activities.

- Involve students with disability and an adapted physical education teacher when selecting activities.
- Incorporate activity breaks into a routine.
- Be strategic about when to incorporate activity breaks. Use activity breaks before an exam, after a lunch break, or to break up a tedious topic.
- Looks for cues, such as anxiety patterns or lack of focus, from the students.
- Be familiar with students' abilities. If you are not sure about their abilities, do not be afraid to ask.
- Activities might be done from a seated position. Allow the use of mobility devices and ensure there is plenty room to move around.
- Use pair, groups, or "follow the leader" activities.
- Use rhythmic or musical activities.
- Be patient and provide enough time to complete the task.
- Ensure the environment is safe and free of clutter. Reorganize the room if necessary, but make sure that children with visual impairments are aware of the changes made.
- Use verbal and visual cues.
- Use demonstrations or modeling of movements before and during the activity.
- Select activities that are simple and do not require a lot of instruction.

Find out more and watch a video at: <http://www.nchpad.org/1548/6532/Brain~Boosters>.