

Frederick County Public Schools

School Health Council

Health Brief

**Kinesthetic Classroom: Brain Boosts not Brain Breaks!**

**What?**

A kinesthetic classroom supports student movement throughout the lesson by incorporating brain boosts. Brain boosts are classroom-based activities that integrate physical activity with academic concepts. It is an evidence-based intervention proven to increase student physical activity levels.

Including physically active lessons in the day provides another learning opportunity for students. Just as audio and visual learning cues are varied, kinesthetic or movement oriented cues should also be included.

**Why?**

Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence is important for promoting lifelong health and wellbeing and preventing various health conditions. The 2008 US Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 years should have at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Studies consistently demonstrate that physical activity is associated with improved academic achievement, academic behaviors, and cognitive skills

Middle and high school student physical activity has been reported in the 2013 and 2014 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). In 2014, 44% of FCPS high school students and 61% of FCPS middle school students were physically active for 60 minutes per day on 5 or more days before the survey. Conversely, only 15% of FCPS high school students and 8% of FCPS middle school students were not physically active for 60 minutes on any of the previous 7 days before the survey. More information related to Maryland YRBS data can be found in the resources section.

Physical activity and higher aerobic fitness enhance basic cognitive functions related to attention and facilitate learning. Given the importance of time on task to learning, students should be provided with frequent physical activity breaks that are developmentally appropriate. Research has demonstrated that physically active lessons offered in the classroom may increase time on task and attention to task in the classroom setting.

**Student Benefits of a Kinesthetic Classroom:**

- Improved focus, time on task, memory, concentration and attention span
- Healthy students have fewer absences from school
- Physically active and fit kids tend to have better academic achievement

**Teacher Benefits of a Kinesthetic Classroom:**

- Reduces behavior problems at school
- Increased awareness and perceived health

### **Recommendations from the School Health Council:**

- Recess shall consist of unstructured free play or structured games and activities. Recess and physical activity shall not be taken away from students as a form of punishment; furthermore, exercise shall not be assigned for use as a form of punishment for students.
- A school's Continuous Strategic Improvement will include goals related to students being provided regular physical activity.

### **Resources**

2013 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data

<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/ccdpc/Reports/Pages/yrbs2013.aspx>

2014 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data

<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/ccdpc/Reports/Pages/yrbs.aspx>

Rasberry CN, Tiu GF, Kann L, et al. Health-Related Behaviors and Academic Achievement Among High School Students — United States, 2015. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2017;66:921–927. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6635a1>

Health and Academics: Healthy Students Are Better Learners

[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/health\\_and\\_academics/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/health_and_academics/index.htm)

Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP)

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/cspap.htm>

Action for Healthy Kids: Brain Breaks, Instant Recess and Energizers

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools-for-schools/1252-brain-breaks-instant-recess-and-energizers>

Eat Smart, Move More: Energizers for School

<https://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Energizers/EnergizersForSchools.html>

Retrieved From: Maher, M. T., Kenny, R. K., Shields, A. T., Scales, D. P., & Collins, G. (2006). (Rev. ed). *Energizers: Classroom-based physical activities*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Retrieved from: <http://www.nhealthyschools.org/energizers/>

Action Based Learning

<http://www.youthfit.com/ABL>