

Active Play, Balance My Day

Brain Breaks

Kids get restless sitting for a long time and research shows they can actually do better with their school work with scheduled “brain breaks” during the day. Add more “roaming time” minutes of motion to classroom or youth group activities.

Modify familiar games to incorporate more active play:

- *Musical Chairs* – Instead of walking around the circle of chairs, have kids gallop, tip toe or hop. Those kids that are “out” during the game can march in place or do various stretches.
- *Heads Down, Thumbs Up* – Have the kid who is “It” walk around the room 2 times then pick someone. After picking a person, they must come to the front of the room and do a movement such as jumping jacks until all the “Its” have finished picking. After the guessing takes place, the kids that were first “It” will do stretching exercises while the game continues.

Use simple resources to make physical activity fun:

- Use soft foam balls or wadded paper to throw into wastepaper baskets.
- Gather a couple of old bed sheets and 8-10 soft foam balls. Divide kids into groups of 6 giving each group a sheet and 3-4 balls. Have kids get on the ends of the sheet, place the balls in the middle of the sheet, and have kids raise and lower the sheet trying to keep the balls from flying off.
- Use HKC’s *Setting Up for Success™* booklet, “Paper Plate Learning” activities. Order at <http://www.healthykidschallenge.com/catalog/10>.
 - *Plate Dancing* – While playing lively music, kids hold paper plates and “follow the leader” using the plates as an active part of the movements.
 - *Plate Skates* – Pull string through 2 punched holes in a paper plate. Fasten the plate skates to feet by tying the “string shoelaces”. Skate around a pretend skating rink.
 - *Plate Frisbee®* - Each child gets 1 paper plate and can play catch with a partner or aim the Frisbee® into an empty box.

Web Resources:

PECentral

(<http://www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/ia/iamenu.asp>)

– instant activity ideas

SPARK

(<http://www.sparkpe.org/physical-education/k-2/curriculum/lesson-plans/>)

– sample lesson plans for K-2

Use these brain breaks to increase attention span, improve concentration and enjoy just for FUN too!

