

## **“MOVEMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO LEARNING”**

**THE BRAIN NEEDS 10% MORE OXYGEN THAN ANY ORGAN IN THE BODY!!**

**FRESH OXYGEN TO THE BRAIN IS GAINED ONLY THROUGH CARDIO-VASCULAR EXERCISE!**

**85% of all children at kinesthetic learners---- learning is done best when moving.**

**Memory is retrieved better and sooner when learned through movement.**

### **BRAINERCISE-EARLY MORNING EXERCISE PROGRAM**

We are starting our 15<sup>th</sup> year of early morning exercise to music. The fifth graders are leaders in each classroom. The voice over music moves are made in garage band on the mac computer.

The first song is always very aerobic to get the heart rate up and the second is Brain Gym moves which makes uses the brain and makes the body cross the midline and use both sides of the brain. It really gets the students ready for the new school day because doing something aerobic sends fresh oxygenated blood to the brain, and that helps restore brain cells and wakes the brain up.

Through studies from a former principal, discipline referrals went down 62% after beginning our early morning Brainercise program. For some students it takes the place of needing meds to settle them down for the day. For the teachers, it's a good way to get the academic day underway with everyone participating.

### **BRAIN GYM-HIGHLY RECOMMENDED IN ALL SCHOOLS AND HOMES**

Brain gym activities are excellent when a person is tired or right before taking an exam. Some of the exercises are good for students with head aches and back aches.

The **“calf pump”**, one excellent exercise is very good for autistic students. Their calf muscle is very tight which causes them to walk without touching their heels on the ground. In turn that can cause headaches, and they feel very stressed.

Some teachers use calf pump exercises for all students when they come in from recess or P.E. class to get them stretched out and less stressed.

**Cross crawling**, a great brain gym exercise, has been used extensively for students who have trouble allowing the limbs to cross the midline.

One great example is the sophomore student who was labeled disabled and could not read. His parents spent many hours and much money on testing him and taking him to specialists. They finally found out about Brain Gym and began to do cross crawling and other brain gym moves every morning before school and every evening before bed. Within six weeks, he was reading at sophomore level. He also had been recruited for the basketball team, was six feet, two, but was very clumsy, and couldn't dribble the ball. Soon after the six weeks was up, he was also becoming an important addition to the basketball team. All the pieces of learning had been there for over ten years, but he hadn't been able to integrate them together. He has now completed college degrees in biology. All this was done with no cost.

We like to think our students reading and math scores have improved partly because of the time we spend with brainercise and brain gym activities.

### **X's-Shoulder, Shoulder,Thigh,Thigh-crossing the midline several times to 1-2-3-4 or A-B-C-D**

Saying the A-B-C's Forward and backward is a great challenge for all ages. It causes the hemispheres to connect resulting in brain function and good memory. Try a jump rope foot work move while doing X's as well.

**“If kids aren't bouncing up and down in the gym, they are going to bouncing off the walls in class!”**

### **Brain Breaks**

#### **5 Point Teacher Call**

Point to head and body part with numbers and call out directions.

1-left shoulder

2-left ear

3-nose

4-right ear

5-right shoulder

Teacher calls directions with numbers and watch students to touch where the number is correctly.

**Nosey Nose**-Stand still. Cross midline by putting one hand on ear and the other on nose, you must have your arms crossed. Change hands to put opposite hand on ear and opposite on nose. You must remain crossed. Start to let go of crossing and re cross. After that march in place or do a jump and cross.

### **Slap Count**

Students face a partner with hand extended palms up. Start out by counting and slapping right over their right and then left over their left. Count by 1's, 2's and 3's. Also do adding or multiplying by saying 2 plus 2 and the partner answers by saying equals 4. That takes two counts just like 2 plus 2 so it's still right slap right. Make up several different ones for this such as saying the ABC's or spelling out your name or school name etc. A good thinking skills game. Add a clap and ask a question.

### **Exercises to do in the classroom setting or following P.E. before returning to the classroom.**

1. Eye exercises. Hands on hips. Look straight ahead and then on teachers' command go R-L-Up-Down-Corner down right etc. for 3 minutes. Eyes will water but will be ready to read more fluently without eye distraction.
2. Hook-ups-get students quiet and balanced-feet crossed, arms crossed, link fingers, twist arms under to sternum, tongue to the roof of the mouth-----used when students are arguing or need to relax and think.
3. Calf Pump-great to relax those with headaches, backaches, those with tight muscles in the calf area such as students with reading difficulty, autistic, and those unflexible, or those having tendon guard reflex Good for anytime especially coming in off recess or just a time to relax.
4. Do X's very often. I even have my 5th graders do them to the ABC's with rhythm and also to counting by ones, two's and threes.  
Shoulder shoulder thigh thigh everything is in fours. Try in with abc's going in groups of four letters at a time. We learn to do x's with the alphabet backwards while doing the scissors jumps.
5. Do raps, jump rope moves, juggling scarves right in the classroom.
6. Make up your own hand jive and they will memorize it very quickly.  
Thigh, thigh, thigh, thigh, Clap, clap, clap. clap,  
Jive, jive, jive, jive----one hand above the other and switch Palm to palm  
Hitch hike right twice, hitch hike left twice  
Repeat--they love this jive and learn it quickly in kindergarten
7. Clap, clap, click, click, count in odd numbers to certain number, then go backwards in odd numbers
8. "Whistle 1-2-3-4"—give everyone a number up to 4. Use a whistle, wood block, or clap. When the noise sounds once, all ones run, when another number sounds, moving group stops, and new group starts. It's a great listening game with no voices allowed in order to hear all sounds.
9. SWITCH<CHANGE<ROTATE:::Make a file of three; all face the teacher. On Switch---front and back person switch places. On Change---the whole group turns a 180' turn. On Rotate---front player runs to back
10. Butterfly, hands with palms facing criss cross hands and link thumbs. Fly the butterfly and move eyes to follow fingers all the way in the air. Move side, forward and back, down and around.
11. Starfish/Octopus---Stare at your hand out in front looking straight at the palm, then stare beyond the hand into space straight ahead. The hand will have many more fingers; thus an octopus.
12. 13 jumps to 30 or more seconds using arms as well like a jump rope. BOTH FEET-One Foot-Straddle-Alternate Feet-Cross-overs-Skiers Jump-Jumpers Shuffle-Bell Jump-Backwards-Twisties-Matador-Scissors-Hoedown

**EYE DOMINANCE**-For some students finding eye dominance is important so they are tracking the teacher, work on the board, and following along in class

**EAR DOMINANCE**-important to know which ear is dominant to teach them successfully

**FOOT AND HAND DOMINANCE**-which hand is dominant for writing skills, leg for kicking skills

### **Books to purchase and read more than once!**

**"Smart Moves Why Learning Is Not All In Your Head" by Carla Hannaford**

**"Brain Gym" by Paul E. Dennison**

**"Energizing Brain Breaks" by David Sladkey**

**"Switching On" by Paul E. Dennison**

**"The Eat This Not That Diet" by David Zinczenko**

**"Thinking On Your Feet" (Action Based Learning) by Jean Blaydes Madigan**

**"Bal-a-vis-x" by Bill Hubert**

**"The Dominance Factor" by Carla Hannaford**

[brainbreaks.blogspot.com](http://brainbreaks.blogspot.com)

**"Awakening the Child Heart" by Carla Hannaford**

[brainrules.net/therules](http://brainrules.net/therules)

[blog.motionfitness.com](http://blog.motionfitness.com)

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