

Teacher Instructions for Activity Breaks

This pack contains a series of energetic activities for primary school children to perform in the classroom. All the children should be equally involved and each activity should last between three and five minutes. A selection of activities should be performed at least four times per day and preferably once each hour.

Why do this?

- Scientific research has shown that energetic physical exercise produces chemicals which directly improve the function of the brain, especially memory.
- Research has also shown that regular, short bursts of activity increase the attention span of children and decrease disruptive behaviour.
- These activities are designed to be fun and should give every child a positive experience of exercise, which will encourage them to be more active at other times.
- Playing energetically together helps children to improve their social skills and, last but not least, it improves their physical fitness and health.

The teacher should go through each card in the pack for the first couple of weeks so that all the children know how to do every activity. (The children can then choose cards if desired.) It is important to encourage all the children to be energetic and they should be slightly out of breath to benefit fully from these activities. They must also know that they have to go back to work as soon as the activity break is over!

Same or Different

Equipment: None.

Starting Position: Children find a partner and face each other about 2 feet apart.

One child chooses to be the “same,” the other is “different.”

On a signal from the teacher they run on the spot for 10 steps. On the 10th step, each player puts a foot forward. If the feet are the same (right right, or left left), the student designated the “same” wins. If the feet are different, the other child wins. (If younger children struggle with left and right, they can finish with their feet together or wide apart.) The game continues to a set number of points.

Variations:

Have students do other activities and vary the numbers before they put a foot forward. (eg. 5 jumping jacks, 10 arm circles, 5 jump in place, 10 knee lifts, etc.)

Head Shoulders

Equipment: None

Starting position: Standing with space to move, in a circle or by their desks

This is an energetic version of the song where students touch the body part mentioned and then jump twice. (Next verse - circle arms circle arms, then - lift your knees lift your knees.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes. *Jump jump*

Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes. *Jump jump*

And eyes, and ears, and mouth,
And nose. *Jump jump*

Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes. *Jump jump*