

## **Brain Breaks for Managing ADHD at Home and in the Classroom\***

Physiologically and neurologically the brain needs a rest, a change in sensory input to process, learn, and remember new information. The brain also needs movement to enhance learning. Brain breaks increase energy which increases oxygen and blood flow. And makes learning more fun. Fun and play also increase learning effectiveness.

1. Use your body to measure—the width of a cabinet, the length of the room, the height of a desk. The room is 14 feet long if measured in my size 8 shoe. How long in your size 6 shoe? The easel is how many knuckles high?
2. Play Simon Says: Simon says point to the south. Or Simon Says point to Alison? Or Simon says point to five pieces of information on the walls. Use other movements than pointing, such as bending, turning, or twisting.
3. Move around the room finding all the colors of the rainbow, someone else's desk, objects that start with the letter "B," the side of the room where you were standing when we did the science experiment.
4. Connect movement to subjective feelings. Move to the left side of the room if you feel more like a horse than a puppy. Move to the right side of the room if you feel more like a puppy than a horse. Be sure to move the way you think a puppy or a horse would move.
5. Make up singing rhymes for learning new spelling words or vocabulary words. Jump rope to these rhymes. Jump ropes to traditional rhymes.
6. Move with math. Take the number of steps that equal 7 plus 5, or 48 divided by 6. Make more complicated problems similar to algebra: 7 plus 5 divided by 2 times 4 equals the number of steps you must take.
7. Clap while spelling words—one clap per letter. Take a step per each letter. What other movements can you use for spelling?
8. Do the Hokie Pokie. (Even London Bridges and Ring around the Rosie.)
9. Ball toss to review new learning, tell stories, divulge something about your self, ask questions. I've got the ball. I toss it to you and you spell the word I give you. You've got the ball. You toss it to me and I tell a joke. I've got the ball. I toss it to you and you tell a story about your pet. Do ball toss with math, with taking turns reading out loud, reviewing for a test. Or bean bag toss. Or balloon toss. Or . . .
10. Walk around.
11. Stand up to learn. In some cultures, students stand all day long at tall desks while at school. Standing increases heart rate and gets more blood and oxygen to the brain. Facilitates more learning than slouching!
12. Do cross-laterals: left hand to right shoulder, right elbow to left knee, right thumb to left big toe. How many ways can you cross the midline of the body?
13. Stretch and breath.
14. Allow kids to move when they need to move. (No noise, no bothering other kids, no leaving the room. Permission plus boundaries helps learning and discipline challenges!)
15. Kids think up a brain break and present it to the class.

\* adapted from Eric Jensen, *Brain-based Learning*, rev. ed (Brain Store, 2000), pp. 173-74