



HEALTH & NUTRITION

Classroom Energizers

BACKGROUND

For the first time in more than 100 years, our children's life expectancy is declining due to the increase in childhood obesity rates. Children born now can expect to live fewer years than their parents.

Energizers are classroom-based activities that integrate physical activity (PA) 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. The brain learns best in the calming state - physical activity helps the brain reach a balanced, calm state, increasing learning potential.

PILOT-TESTED IN MINNESOTA

Initiated in North Carolina in 2007 and introduced to Minnesota in 2010, Energizers have proven to improve student focus, time on task, memory, attention span and concentration. Teachers in the Minnesota Pilot study reported:

- 95% use Energizers 4-20 minutes total each day
- 100% believe Energizers are a useful tool in their classroom
- 91% use Energizers to teach an academic concept to students
- 100% use Energizers to help students get the wiggles out and refocus on academic tasks
- 91% feel that physical activity improves the learning of students

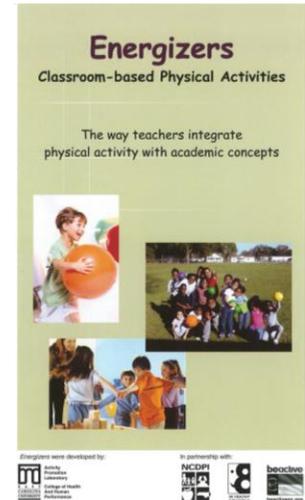
Student Benefits:

- 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:

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

**“Very fun. Makes learning more fun.
Active brains make better learners.”**



**“Happy kids, more focused,
fewer behavior issues in
the classroom!”**

MINNESOTA KIDS NEED MORE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, children need 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous PA daily for optimal health. Physical inactivity and unhealthy eating habits contribute to the rise in childhood obesity rates. Nearly 1/3 of our kids are overweight or obese. Overweight kids are at increased risk for chronic disease such as Type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea, depression, and adult obesity.

Percentage of MN students reporting being moderately physically active
(5 or more days/week, 30 minutes/day):

| | Grade 6 | Grade 9 | Grade 12 |
|-------|---------|---------|----------|
| Boys | 54% | 63% | 55% |
| Girls | 42% | 50% | 33% |



The mind can only absorb it when the posterior can endure it.

ENERGIZE YOUR SCHOOL'S CLASSROOMS – TEACHER TRAINING

Physical activity enhances communication in the brain for better learning and increases eye-hand coordination essential for reading. Energizers are easy to adapt for all ages, subjects, and for special needs students.

A single 2-hour session, led by an Extension Educator in Health & Nutrition, will equip classroom teachers to lead a wide variety of 10-minute physical activity breaks that reinforce academic concepts. Training objectives:

- Identify the impact of the obesity epidemic on children
- Know the physical, mental, and academic benefits of a physically active child
- Know the difference between physical activity, play and physical education
- Understand the importance of physical education classes
- Identify internal resources that support active classrooms
- Understand how to include all students in physical activity

COST

Training: For SNAP-Ed qualifying schools (50 percent or greater free/reduced school lunch program participation) the training is free. For non-qualifying schools, the cost is \$400 for up to 25 participants, \$10 each per additional person up to 60 participants.

Materials: Please use the following URL to download the PDF to a tablet, or to print (on cardstock) and bind (spiral or 3-ring) copies of the K-5 and/or Middle School Energizer books for each teacher. These materials were created with public funds so it is permissible to print the PDF in large batches.

<http://hlnces.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/Classroom+Energizers>

Equipment: Most Energizers use regular classroom supplies and equipment, so no additional equipment is necessary to conduct Energizers in the classroom.

Contact:

For SNAP-Ed qualifying schools, contact your local SNAP-Ed educator or regional coordinator:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/health-and-nutrition/partner-with-us/snap-ed/>

For all others, contact Betsy Johnson, MPH, Extension Educator in Health & Nutrition at john3064@umn.edu or call 218.327.5958 x3006.

Please allow 4-6 weeks advance notice to schedule your onsite school or district-level training.