

Tips for a Physically Active Classroom

1 Model healthy behavior by participating in physical activity with students.

If students are at home, encourage parents/caregivers, siblings, guardians, and other household members to join in, when possible.

2 Communicate with parents and caregivers

about the importance of physical activity. Share the types of activities being integrated to keep students active so they know what to expect, understand the purpose, and can support and reinforce participation. Share any practical considerations of which families should be aware (e.g., space needs, audio requirements, noise level, etc.).

3 Ask students to share their physical activity ideas

and give them the opportunity to choose the physical activity idea and/or to lead the activities.

4 Mix it up.

Sotate movements/exercises, and vary the length of the activity. Keep it interesting and fun, and make it work for you and your students.

5 Play music.

Play a song or tune to signify a movement break. Music and movement can help students feel more energized and less stressed.

6 Be mindful of different abilities and provide alternatives

(e.g., arm circles instead of jumping jacks; doing activities from a seated position instead of a standing position). Let students know that it is okay to engage in a different physical activity — the idea is to take a break and move.

7 When doing virtual learning, keep in mind where students are physically located

(e.g., in a community center, at home in a crowded space, etc.) and how that might affect their ability to participate in physical activity.

8 Notice patterns of student participation

(i.e., who is participating and who is not) with respect to race, gender, language of origin, physical or learning ability, where they are seated, etc. Explore reasons why they may not be engaged and find opportunities to more inclusively engage these students. For example, some students may not know seemingly common terms for movement or games (e.g., jumping jacks, etc.) and therefore might not participate or feel included. To help students feel more comfortable, teachers can model the physical activity and do a practice round with the class. Modeling physical activity is also a best practice.

9 Use classroom physical activity as an opportunity to build community

and get to know one another.

Engage youth in sharing/creating a physical activity

Encourage and give students an option to:

- Create a 1 to 2-minute video of themselves doing, or explaining, an activity of their choice, or
- Write a description of a physical activity idea. These physical activity ideas can be collected and used as a bank for the class to choose activities from.