

LINK BETWEEN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Recent research shows that kids who engage in physical activity on a daily basis have better attendance at school, increased positive attitude toward school and superior academic performance. Researcher Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences attempts to steer the definition of intelligence away from the traditional concept defined by IQ tests. In Gardner's theory, intelligence can be expressed in eight different ways. One such intelligence, Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence is defined as strength towards skills that require coordination, balance, flexibility or speed. By allowing students to incorporate physical activity into their learning experiences, they may actually learn and retain more information.

According to recent brain research, even students who are not necessarily strong in the Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence can benefit academically from short breaks of physical activity. The ability to recall information is shown to improve when material is presented in shorter segments rather than all at once. Brain research has long demonstrated that attention requires "periodic novelty" and that the brain needs downtime to process chemicals needed for long-term memory function.

As teachers, most of this research is readily observable in the classroom environment. Students that sit too long fall asleep, at least mentally and are not engaged in the learning process. Many students squirm in their seats and struggle to stay focused. This web site will assist school administrators and teachers on how to effectively integrate activity and still maintain a focus on student academic achievement.