

# Creating opportunities for movement



- Use **active responses** as part of instructional activities. For example, students may turn and talk with a partner, stand up to indicate agreement, or move to different parts of the room to use materials.
- Allow students to **work at different stations** such as at a large table, the board, an easel or chart paper on a wall.
- Look for nondistracting ways for students to **move while working** at their desks. For example, replace a student's chair with a large ball. Students may bounce gently at their desks while working.
- Provide individual students with **fidget toys** (e.g., squeeze ball, eraser, wooden beads) to keep in their pockets and use quietly as needed.
- Make **stretch breaks** part of the classroom routine.
- Arrange an **area in the classroom** where students can move around without distracting others. Give students the option of going to this area when they need a stretch break.
- Ensure students participate in **physical activities**, go out at recess and take breaks. They may be more attentive and productive after a break because of the opportunity to run off excess energy and restlessness.
- Create opportunities for students to do **helpful jobs** in the classroom, such as passing out papers or putting materials away, so they have opportunities to move in the classroom in appropriate, helpful ways.

See next page for creating an "I Need a Break" card system



## Creating a Card System

Consider setting up a system whereby students can use printed cards to signal when they need a break from a classroom activity to go to a supervised prearranged area.

1. Individual students keep file cards at their desks that say “I need a break.”
2. When a student needs a break, the student places a card on his or her desk to signal the teacher.
3. The teacher acknowledges the request, and if it is an appropriate time, the teacher exchanges the request card for a card that says something like, “Lee needs a five-minute break.”
4. The student then carries this card to the office or library and gives the card to an adult such as the school secretary or librarian.
5. The student spends the next five minutes engaging in a prearranged relaxing activity such as working on a puzzle or looking at a favourite book.
6. When the time is up, the supervising adult thanks the student for the visit, comments on positive behaviour, and then gives the student a card to return to the classroom teacher. The card might say something like, “I enjoyed having Lee come to the office for a five-minute break.”

This strategy can also be expanded to help students plan their breaks throughout the day. For example, students could receive a set number of “I need a break” cards at the beginning of the school day and be responsible for planning how they will use them throughout the day.

