

# Give Your Brain A Workout

Whether it's driving, working at the computer, or watching a movie, we all spend a tremendous amount of our time sitting. Children are no exception. They sit all day in a classroom, or and if they're like most American kids, they spend hours sitting and watching television or playing video games. Though we often view thinking and movement as separate, research has shown that our bodies and brains are connected, and that movement is an important part of the learning process.



Each side of the brain is designed to do specific tasks. However, much of the time the two sides of the brain must talk to each other and work together. For example, the left side of the brain processes information and the right side of the brain interprets it. This means the left side reads the words, but the right side understands the story. Each side of the brain must be able to do its job quickly and efficiently send the information to the other side to make reading happen.

There is a part of the brain that connects the two sides. It is called the corpus callosum. We want this connection to be like a smooth superhighway so that the information can travel quickly from one side to the other. If the road is bumpy, it is hard for the information to travel. The good news is, there are motor activities that we can do to smooth out this highway and make it easier for our brains to work. Paving this highway can make reading, writing, and other academics much easier and less frustrating.

Your child may come talk with you about movement or motor activities they are doing as part of their literacy block. These movements are used to help students:

- think more clearly
- feel relaxed and calm
- improve hand-eye coordination
- improve visual tracking (moving your eyes and not your head to see something)
- increase attention span
- increase writing flow and speed
- improve memory
- improve crossing the midline of the body to activate the two parts of the brain

For more information check out:

- Brain Gym website: <http://braingym.org>
- Dr. Robert Melillo's website: <http://drrobertmelillo.com>