

Learning Is NOT All in Your Head

We were born to Learn with our Whole Body-NOT just our brain

Most people acknowledge that physical activity can impact their child's physical development, yet are not aware of its impact on his social, emotional, and intellectual development. It is a huge mistake to think the mind and body are separate entities. Research confirms that the domains of child development – physical, social, emotional, and cognitive— simply do not mature separately from one another. God designed an overlap and interrelatedness which uniquely links them. Children-(actually, all people!) cannot separate thinking, feeling, and moving.

In fact, it is the experiences of our bodies that teach us to understand the world around us. Without the incredibly fine-tuned machine called our body, our brain would be at a loss to describe the world. **“Our ability to see, touch, feel, hear, move and control ourselves in relationship to the environment is the slate that academic learning is etched on,”** says Athena Oden, in *Ready Bodies, Learning Minds*.

What could movement possibly have to do with learning?

It's now understood that because a child's earliest learning is based on motor development, so too is the knowledge that follows. **The cerebellum, the part of the brain previously associated with motor control only, is now known to be, as Eric Jensen, author of numerous books on brain-based learning, puts it, a “virtual switchboard of cognitive activity.”** Study after study has demonstrated a connection between the cerebellum and such cognitive functions as memory, spatial orientation, attention, language, and decision making, among others. **In fact, physical movement is the precursor to all learning!**

The Importance of Short, Hands-on Lessons

Thanks to advances in brain research, we know that most of the brain is activated during physical activity – much more so than when doing seatwork. In fact, according to Jensen, sitting for more than 10 minutes at a stretch “reduces our awareness of physical and emotional sensations and increases fatigue.” Stillness results in reduced concentration and, most likely, discipline problems. Therefore, movement should always be carefully integrated with study.

For this reason, learning through exploration and discovery has greater meaning for children and stays with them longer. Eric Jensen suggests using hands-on teaching methods which are implicit – like learning to ride a bike, are the most effective. For example, it is more effective to do the science experiment than to read about it, just as building a model or creating a video makes learning more memorable. Even pinning down a thought takes movement. That's why we craft charts to make sense of difficult information, even though we might not need to ever refer to them again. It's the *actual writing, typing, or drawing* that creates more permanent and readily assessable neuropathways to the thought, rather than just the thinking by itself.

**Learning to work with your child's wiggle-
instead of making him sit still- will vastly increase his learning potential!**

Ready for tools to teach with the brain in mind?
Searching for ways to turn lessons into hands-on activities?

Unlocking the mystery of your child's MOVEMENT could be a piece to your Parenting Puzzle

To learn about parent coaching or for more training on this topic,
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