

Easy, On-the-Go Play Activities

Overview

Play is an [essential part of development](#) and offers children a chance to use their imagination to think outside of the box and discover new ways of thinking. Even on our best days, we sometimes find ourselves with limited time and on the move. Read on to learn more about three easy ways to incorporate play while on the go - whether its from classroom to classroom, in the car, or on a field trip.

Take Action

Make transitions from one place to the next playful and engaging.

Traveling from one classroom to the next or while in the car is a great time to help children reset and refocus. Those 5-10 minutes can be brought to life with a fun activity to help students stay engaged that also doubles as a brain break - win, win! Try these ideas below and [discover more](#) with Playworks.

- Draw from stories you are using in class or reading at home, and encourage children to move or act like those characters. Take *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* for example: As children move from one place to the next, call out animals and actions such as "hop like the green frog as quiet as can be" or "tip toe like the purple cat as sneaky as can be."



- Try the “5-4-3-2-1” grounding technique to help students refocus. Encourage children to repeat the process and discover what new things they sense as they move from place to place.
 - Guide students in finding their breath.
 - Ask them to quietly to themselves acknowledge:
 - 5 things they can see around them
 - 4 things they can feel around them (their shirt, their hair, the wind, the sun, etc.)
 - 3 things they can hear
 - 2 things they can smell
 - 1 thing they can taste
- Make it a Rainbow Walk (or drive). This quiet activity helps children relax and become more in-tune with their surroundings. Have them quietly to themselves identify one thing they see for each color of the rainbow: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple.

Put together busy bags or quiet bins.

Busy bags and quiet bins are an easy way to allow children to get creative, think outside the box and stay engaged during downtime in a way that is meaningful for them. These activities are nice because they can easily be transported, all of the materials needed are in one place, and they can be anything you want them to be. These can be used during free time in the classroom, in the car, and at home after school before dinner.

- Random busy bags are often made up of different materials and manipulatives. Things like pipe cleaners, buttons, toilet paper rolls, sponges for blocks, pom poms, stickers etc. These offer children a chance to create or pretend - maybe the pipe cleaners and buttons could make a newly discovered bug!
- Themed busy bags can be centered around a specific activity, story or movie. Check out a few themed ideas below:
 - *Pizza, Pizza, Pizza:* Create an on-the-go pizza parlor with two light brown felt circles and an assortment of felt pieces cut in different shapes and sizes. This activity can also be used to tie in pattern

practice, color sorting and math. You can also make this bag with a felt sandwich, salad or another favorite food.

- *Playdough Mats*: Take a favorite story or theme (under the sea, outer space, etc.) and print a few scenes. Laminate and include with a set of small travel sized playdough. Children can create characters, tell stories while also practicing fine motor skills.
- Check out [27 more ideas](#) from Hands On As We Grow.

Go on an adventure story.

The next time you are walking to the park or playground, turn it into make-believe action! Encourage children to begin a story and play along with new twists and turns. You can use this time to tie in physical activity ("Hop on one foot until we reach the bridge.") and subjects being studied ("That bee is taking something from that flower... do you know what it is?").

- Start with a prompt. This could be something related to your surroundings like a crack in the sidewalk that might just be a bridge or a piece of litter that might need a recycling superhero.
- Ask children what you should do next, and have them tell a little more of the story. Use your imagination to look at your surroundings through a different lens:
 - A tree could be a secret hiding place until it's safe to pass.
 - A log could be a rickety bridge across the water.
 - The mailperson could be from superhero headquarters delivering the latest mission.
- Take turns if in a group and work together to overcome challenges and obstacles.
- Need some inspiration for a story prompt? Check out this interactive [Story Starter](#) from Scholastic!

Tips



Starting small is okay! Start with classroom goals and then widen



Think of safety first! Be sure any routes you use are safe for

to a school-wide initiative to add more playful time into the day.

children and there is adequate

supervision based on the group size.



If implementing these activities in school, create a take home summary or worksheet that give parents the opportunity to replicate. Encourage conversations around the importance of playful learning and unstructured time and look to parents to share what other activities have worked for them.



Incorporate activities like these throughout the day at school and at home to improve focus and help children be creative.

Active Learning Opportunities

Incorporate physical activity before, during, and after the school day, as well as into daily lesson plans.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks

Physical activity doesn't have to be in a recess or PE setting to be effective.

Yoga for Children

It's often assumed that one must already be flexible and physically fit to participate in yoga. One of the many great aspects of yoga is that it can be modified to fit the age, goals and abilities of almost anyone.

Get Family Fit: Family Activity Points

Be a healthy role model, and make physical activity fun at home by playing family activity points.

