

*Integrating Physical Education  
Into the Language Arts Program  
Grades K-5*

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**GAMES & ACTIVITIES FOR  
FLUENCY BUILDING**

**1. Word Sort**

This is a variation of a “word sorting” exercise, but includes physical activity as well. Students have a baggy of words: their high frequency or “sight words,” work especially well for this activity. Substitute a typical Freeze Tag game with a word game. The only way a student can get “unfrozen” is by following the caller’s rule. If the teacher or designated caller yells out “Rhyme with CAN!” The only way a person can be “free” again is by holding up a word from his or her baggy that rhymes with “can.” More caller ideas might be: a word with two syllables, the opposite of happy, a word with a silent “e”, etc. Younger students can say words that start (or end) with a certain sound or phoneme called out by the caller. This can even be done inside (especially on a rainy day!) substituting the running with walking/crawling around the room!

**2. The “Action Word” Game**

Brainstorm with your class to create a large chart of action words. It is important to clarify with your students that some verbs (they are called “action words” in many language arts programs, such as Houghton Mifflin) are not actually movement words (think, love, respect, etc.) For this activity, the chart of words will **only include movements**, which is usually what children come up with anyway. They will generate words like hop, skip, run, crawl, leap, jog, roll, etc. Practice these words together, using each word in a sentence. They can go around in a circle taking turns. Oral language development is very important, especially with the second language learners. Then take the students outside and label each of 5-10 numbered cones with your action words. Select some helpers: the cones can be spread out, according to age-appropriateness, in order (or you do this ahead of time.) As students go around the “course” they need to read each word and do the designated action to the next cone! Students can go through the course alone, in pairs, or in small groups.

**GAMES & ACTIVITIES FOR  
PHONICS, SIGHT WORD & SPELLING INSTRUCTION:**

### **1. Beach Ball Toss**

Blow up a large multi-colored “beach ball.” The most popular kind has six to eight colors, or sections. Stick the letters/words you would like students to work with (high-frequency words, spelling words, or vocabulary words) onto the ball so there is about six on each color. The large white address labels work great. You could also use fat white tape. It is important that the words are large enough and easy to read. Students may work in partners or small groups for this activity. As students catch the ball, they read the words under their hands. Then they spell the word back and forth, one toss for each letter. This activity is quick and extremely easy to prep for, plus it’s fun and adaptable to any teacher’s needs and grade level! It’s also a great “filler activity” at any point in the day. Important: This lesson should take place after giving an introductory lesson on the word list.

## **2. Bean Bag Throw**

A game is set up with “targets.” Each target is a word from the week’s list (phonetic words, phonemes, sight words, etc.) Students take turns using a bean bag to aim and throw through a target hole or onto a target on the floor. Whatever target they land on (or throw through) they read and collect that word from the list of words. Any words at the end that a student did not get, they take home for practice.

## **3. Hopscotch**

If your school does not have a Hopscotch area, make one with side-walk chalk. An even better variation of this would be to have your older students be the creators. Instead of using the numbers on the squares, however, use words! As in a regular game of Hopscotch, students take turns tossing a rock or beanbag onto the squares. In this game, students must read the word that it lands on, and skip that word as they jump to the other side. They call out the other words (or sounds/letters) that they land on as they go. You can select the words for them, or have them pick their toughest ten words for the week! It is also fun to have your students make complete sentences out of their “route” as they jump to the end. Teachers would require that they include naming words (nouns), action words (verbs) and maybe some conjunctions, etc. depending on grade level. In fact, the boxes don’t even have to be limited to ten if they are creating their own games. Hint: It is better to write the words/letters on cards and tape them down rather than use chalk which gets smeared when jumped on. Younger students can have letters rather than words in the boxes and “jump to spell” words.

## **4. “Steal the Bacon” Game**

Students are split up into two teams. Each student holds a word card, and both teams have the same set of cards. Line up each team, facing each other, with a ball in the middle. The inside area is called “the pig pen.” When the teacher calls out a word, the students with that card race to the middle to get the ball. Whoever gets the ball first dribbles it back to his or her team line. Continue to practice with all the words. Students can be rewarded by being the “caller.”

## **5. The Traveling Spelling Game**

The teacher tapes laminated letters/words around the classroom, gym, or playground area. Working individually or in pairs, students “make” words by jumping to the appropriate letters. Young students can start by jumping to the letters in their name. This activity can be done to music, so that when the music stops, students stop. Older students can jump to words cards instead, moving in alphabetical order. Before the music starts each time, the teacher can call out a different mode of movement: skipping, hopping, etc. This is a “generic game” once the letter cards are made and can be replayed many times substituting new words lists.

### **1. Role Play**

After hearing or reading a story, students act out the important events. Group the students into foursomes, having them plan out their retell together. They need to include the beginning, middle and end of the story. Their retell must also include some kind of a problem and solution. They will introduce the main characters and a narrator will tell about the setting. A great way to assess the group's clarity and ability to sequence properly is to ask students in the audience what the story was about afterwards.

### **2. Basketball Sequencing**

Divide the class into two or more teams. As one person shoots and makes a basket, he or she gets to pick one card from the teacher's stack of cards. The goal for each team can vary depending on teacher's intent or objective. The winning team might be the one who is first to create a sentence, in which case the cards have nouns, verbs, etc. written on them. The teacher might have letters written on the cards, so the first team to create a word or specific number of words, would be the winner. Students can also put the 4-6 main events of a story in proper order to be the winners.

## **FITNESS and WRITING Ideas for Grades 3-6**

1. Keep a Fitness Journal/Diary
2. Write step-by-step instructions/rules for younger students/peers
3. "Follow a favorite Athlete" for a week and write a report
4. Write: "A Day in the Life of..." report
5. Write from a favorite athlete's perspective! (his or her schedule, etc.)
6. Research & write about a famous athlete (see book suggestions in resources.)

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH READING DISABILITIES**

### **Exercises for Dyslexia**

Balance-remediation exercise-training can help with some of the difficulties seen in dyspraxia and, according to some researchers, dyslexia. The exercises below were given to home educator Claire Killips by a NHS physiotherapist, to carry out with her daughter. She found them simple to follow, beneficial and fun.

Exercises should be done for about 15 minutes a day - if you have a student(s) with dyslexia, think of adding them as one part of the 'physical education' element of your curriculum!

1. **Balancing:** standing on one leg (start with stronger leg) and count how long your

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child can balance for, keeping eyes open. Next, do the same on the weaker side. Eventually your child/student should be able to do this with eyes closed though not as easily. I sat on a chair and S. stood in front of me focusing on my face which helps with balance.

2. **Hopping:** again start with the stronger leg and count how many hops your child can do. When they eventually lose balance swap to the other leg. To start with they will probably hop all over the place but eventually they should be able to hop on the spot, for example, within 2 square feet.

### **Ball skills**

3. Using different size balls from tennis to football, practice throwing/catching between you and your child. Start with a short distance between you gradually widening the gap. Aim to ensure your child watches the traveling ball and they don't just stick their hands out hoping the ball will land in them! Sounds obvious I know but to some kids with these problems it needs explaining. This aids judgement of distance and speed.

4. To begin with **throwing/catching** should be directly to the child, moving onto throwing to the left(L) and right(R) of your child (without telling them where it's going) varying how far, so they have to judge how far to move, in order to catch it.

5. Also practice doing the above but with a wider gap between you and allowing the ball to bounce once in the middle. Again start with direct throwing but then moving onto L & R throws.

6. Now move onto **single-handed throwing/catching**. Best to start with the more confident hand. S is right-handed so that's her lead hand, with the other hand behind your child's back. Remember you have to do this too! Then swap. Follow above with direct throws then L & R.

7. As they become more confident get them to practice bouncing a ball off the wall. I marked out a square 3x3 bricks which she had to throw into. Eventually I reduced this area down to a large X which she had to aim for.

8. Practice **football skills**. Start with a little distance between you, gently kicking the ball back and forth. Again start with the 'lead' leg but do swap equally between both legs. Aim directly to begin with, gradually kicking to L & R of your child and they should do the same back to you (as with all the ball skills).

9. Last one! Using a football to begin with as it's bigger, get them to practice bouncing it with one hand. At first they might wander all over the back yard doing this and that's fine but eventually they should be able to do it on the spot. Again your child should practice with each hand equally. Over time they can move to a tennis ball. An adaptation of this is to practice bouncing the tennis ball with some

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kind of bat or a tennis racket.

**These exercises don't just aim to improve balance and co-ordination, they also aid visual processing and tracking and teach skills such as judging distance and speed, logic and sequencing** - they have to think where they are going to throw/kick/bounce the ball and where the ball will end up. Some children will pick this up quicker than others, and some will find it very difficult. S loved doing them even though she really struggled at times and did them every day. The physiotherapist said that these exercises should be done in conjunction with practicing riding a bike and skipping if possible. We did the exercises for 3 or 4 months before I attempted to see if she could ride her bike or use the skipping rope. I think it depends on the nature of your child and their determination levels!

More balance-exercises can be done using a wobble or balance board. A wobble board is a piece of non-flexing wood with a spherical base, allowing 360 degrees of movement over 10-20 degrees of tilt. A balance board looks more like a see-saw in design. Boards are available from many sports and fitness equipment stockists in the UK. Exercises include throwing bean-bags for the child to catch and the child throwing bean-bags at a target whilst standing on the board.

**www.plusballs.com** Plusballs are made of paper and are light and slow moving. They can help improve hand/eye co-ordination and motor performance. Especially suitable for small spaces and indoor use.

**www.pindorasbox.com** This company sells a neat box containing a collection of equipment such as lacing cards, beanbags and 'footprints' along with full instructions. This forms a programme of exercises to improve fine and gross motor skills and is designed to be used at home. Helps with handwriting skills and improves hand/eye coordination.

**Book:** Take Time. Nash-Wortham/Hunt. Pub. The Robinswood Press. Movement exercises for parents, teachers and therapists of children with difficulties in speaking, reading, writing and spelling.

**DDAT** (Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and ATtention deficit disorder) This exercise 'treatment' programme, developed by Wynford Dore, has received a great deal of publicity in the last couple of years. The International Dyslexia Association ( [www.interdys.org/](http://www.interdys.org/) ) have produced the following press release and articles regarding this programme:

**[www.interdys.org/npdf/pos102303.pdf](http://www.interdys.org/npdf/pos102303.pdf)**

**[www.interdys.org/npdf/res1.pdf](http://www.interdys.org/npdf/res1.pdf)**

**[www.interdys.org/npdf/res2.pdf](http://www.interdys.org/npdf/res2.pdf)**

<http://teachers.net/mentors/bcl/topic316/6.04.05.06.02.26.html> Brain Gym = Bad Science. Definitely!

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### **Exercise and Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD & ADHD)**

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#### *Can Exercise Replace Ritalin as a Treatment for ADHD?*

In a study designed and supervised by Dr. Michael S. Wendt at the State University of New York at Buffalo, exercise significantly improved the behavior of ADHD children between 5-12 years of age. Subjects involved in this study were subjected to 40 minutes of exercise five out of seven days per week. Respiration rates were monitored during the sessions to insure that children were exercising at a pre-designed zone of oxygen consumption for at least half of each exercise session.

Contemporary research revealed that neuro-chemical changes occur in the body when respiration rates exceed 50% of the body's total capacity for oxygen consumption. As a result, exercising above this threshold may promote changes in brain chemistry. Wendt felt that these neuro-chemical changes could have a direct impact on the behavior of ADHD children because the disorder stems from a breakdown of neurological functions in the brain.

Based on national statistics, children in this age bracket generally live a sedentary lifestyle. Research indicates that American children have become increasingly less active over the last ten years. Children seldom become active enough to exceed 50% of their total rate of oxygen consumption. It may be no wonder that over the last ten years, the identification rate of psychosomatic disorders in children has dramatically increased.

The results of this study showed a significant improvement in behavior when pre and post test comparisons were made over the six-week duration of the study. Wendt said that changes in behavior were generally noticeable between two and four weeks into the exercise program. The greatest gains were made in the oppositional category of behaviors, which are largely responsible for conflict problems with children.

Wendt indicated that this might be an alternative for parents who do not wish to use medication as a means of modifying behavior. The side effects of a good exercise program are far less invasive than the side effects of exposing children to long-term doses of medication.

An added benefit to an exercise program for children is it may produce a chemically enriched environment that promotes brain growth. The latest research in fitness and exercise implies that an active lifestyle can have a positive effect on brain growth and development. If this is true then keeping your child involved in exercise can be beneficial, especially if it takes place over a number of years.

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It is time to change our conventional \_\_\_\_\_ of medication coupled with repeatedly assigning children “Time-outs.” It’s time to get America’s children back into action. Change that “Time-out” to a “Time-in.” Time to exercise!

For more information you may email Dr. Wendt at [mike\\_wendt@juno.com](mailto:mike_wendt@juno.com).

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### **Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing Your ADHD Child with Exercise**

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**Book Description:** Millions of children who are diagnosed with ADHD can reduce or eliminate their medication while vastly improving their quality of life—just by exercising more, according to Stephen C. Putnam, author of this landmark book on the subject.

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has become an epidemic, with an estimated 5 percent of American children now on prescription drug regimens and the numbers increasing at a rapid rate. Meanwhile, the average child gets less exercise than in past generations, thanks to television, video games, and other inactive pastimes.

Putnam, in testing his theories, brought together a wide range of studies, anecdotal evidence, and laboratory research, reaching a firm conclusion that for many ADHD children, an exercise regimen controls the condition as well as drugs—without the unwanted side effects. The result of that research is the new book, *Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing Your ADHD Child with Exercise* (Upper Access Books, \$9.95). The findings include the following:

- Laboratory experiments have established that aerobic exercise has a chemical effect on the brain similar to that of Ritalin and other psycho-stimulant drugs, and the same ability to help people to focus their minds.
- ADHD has a variety of symptoms and causes, and neither exercise nor drugs is effective in treating all cases. However, in general, the children who respond the best to medication also respond the best to exercise.
- Psycho-stimulant drugs reduce a child's desire for rough-and-tumble play, thereby decreasing exercise and increasing the dependence on drugs. This can be turned around if activities involving aerobic exercise are worked into the child's schedule.
- While children usually need help from parents and others to become motivated to take up a regular exercise routine, the motivation—once it starts—is self-perpetuating. In other words, once children understand that the exercise regimen makes them feel better, improves social life, helps them with school, and provides other benefits, they pursue it with enthusiasm.

Putnam emphasizes that "This is not an anti-Ritalin book. The benefits of Ritalin

and other medications for many children have been well established." He also notes that any change in treatment must be undertaken in consultation with the child's physician. Yet in case after case, he notes that by adopting a regular exercise routine, children have been able to reduce, and often eliminate, medication while improving social and academic life.

In addition to explaining the scientific issues, the book provides details on how to determine the optimum amount of exercise and the optimal schedules, plus numerous suggestions of ways to motivate your children to take up appropriate activities. "Motivation is the tricky part for most kids," Putnam says. "They're not going to exercise just because a parent is nagging them. But once they start feeling the benefits, they'll want to keep it up. Parenting is never easy, and every situation is different. In researching and writing the book, I tried to cover the wide range of situations that parents face. "

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**Medical RSS Feeds by: MSN Search: Nature\'s Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing Your ADHD Child with Exercise**

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- Handwriting Exercise - ... Listings from Upper Access Books ... by Mark Pendergrast Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing your ADHD Child with Exercise by Stephen C. Putnam Purple Sun by Lawrence McAuliffe Servants ...
- )Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind - Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing your ADHD Child with Exercise by Stephen C. Putnam Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing your ADHD Child with Exercise Table of Contents ...
- Stephen C. Putnam: The Upper Access Directory of Experts - ... The result of that research is his book, Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing your ADHD Child with Exercise. The book has won widespread acclaim from mainstream physicians and other ...
- PE Central: Bookstore-Fitness, Fitness Testing, and Exercise Texts - ... Jo Harris, Jill Elbourn / Paperback / Published 1997 Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing Your ADHD Child With Exercise Steve Putnam / Paperback / Published Aug. 2001 | Home | Lesson Ideas | ...
- Kids Running - Staying Focused in School - ... KidsRunning.Com invited Stephen C. Putnam, author of Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind, Nurturing Your ADHD Child with Exercise to develop a back-to-school checklist with strategies to help kids ...
- Fit Life - Newsletter - ... Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing Your ADHD Child with Exercise. The first thing to ... Nature's Ritalin for the Mind: Nurturing Your ADHD Child with Exercise , Hinesburg, Upper ...
- DyslexiaA2Z.com ADHD Book List - ... Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing Your ADHD Child with Exercise W. Mark Shipman

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(Foreword), Stephen C. Putnam Upper Access. Paperback - June 1, 2001  
ISBN: 0942679261 Homework ...

- Book Reviews - ... by Dr. Kevin Ross Emery (Light lines Publishing, 2000)  
Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing Your ADHD Child with  
Exercise by Stephen C. Putnam (Upper Access Books, 2001) Prozac Free ...
- Swindon Dyslexia Centre Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD) Book List -  
... Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon Mind: Nurturing Your ADHD Child  
with Exercise W. Mark Shipman (Foreword), Stephen C. Putnam Upper  
Access. Paperback - June 1, 2001 ISBN: 0942679261 Homework ...
- Parenting - ... Check for gift-wrap (\$1.50) Nature's Ritalin for the Marathon  
Mind Nurturing Your ADHD Child with Exercise By Stephen C. Putnam If  
you are the parent of a hyperactive child this may be the most important ...

## READING RESOURCES

**Here are some great reading materials for teachers to use as a means of  
integrating Physical Education into their reading program:**

### **Fitness Books For Kids:**

Babar's Yoga for Elephants  
by Laurent de Brunhoff

Babe Didrikson, Girl athlete (Childhood of famous Americans)  
by Lena Young De Grummond

The Busy Body Book : A Kid's Guide to Fitness (Booklist Editor's Choice. Books for  
Youth (Awards))  
by Lizzy Rockwell (Illustrator)

Famous Negro Athletes  
by Arna Wendell Bontemps

From Head to Toe Board Book  
by Eric Carle (Illustrator) "I am a penguin and I can turn my head..."

Jim Thorpe: Olympic Champion (Childhood of Famous Americans) by Jr.,  
Guernsey Van Riper

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Jim Thorpe, Indian athlete (The Childhood of famous Americans series [97])  
by Guernsey Van Riper

Joe DiMaggio: Young Sports Hero (Childhood of Famous Americans)  
by Herb Dunn, Meryl Henderson (Illustrator)

Knute Rockne: Young Athlete (Childhood of Famous Americans) by Jr., Guernsey  
Van Riper

Lou Gehrig: One of Baseball's Greatest (Childhood of Famous Americans)  
by Guernsey Van Riper

Roberto Clemente: Young Ball Player (Childhood of Famous Americans)  
by Montrew Dunham, Meryl Henderson

Wilma Rudolph: Olympic Runner (Childhood of Famous Americans) by Jo Harper,  
Meryl Henderson (Illustrator)

### **Fitness Guides and Resources For Elementary Classroom Teachers:**

Aerobic activities for cool kids!  
By Carol Bassett

Fitness for Children  
by Curt Hinson

Fitness for children through hopscotch, peg board, rope jumping (Bulletin)  
by Harry A Applequist

Games to Keep Kids Moving: P.E. Activities to Promote Total Participation, Self-Esteem, and Fun for Grades 3-8  
by Bob Dieden

Indoor Action Games for Elementary Children: Active Games and Academic Activities for Fun and Fitness  
by David R. Foster, James L. Overholt, Ron Schultz

Kid's Yoga Deck: 50 Poses and Games (Misc. Supplies)  
by Annie Buckley

My Daddy Is a Pretzel: Yoga for Parents and Kids  
by Baron Baptiste, Sophie Fatus (Illustrator)

Exercise and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD & ADHD)

Nutrition and Fitness: Evolutionary Aspects, Children's Health, Programs and Policies: 3rd International Conference on Nutrition and Fitness, Athens, (World Review of Nutrition and Dietetics)  
by Greece International Conference on Nutrition and Fitness 1996 Athens, Artemis P. Simopoulos, A. P. Simopoulos (Editor)

Nutrition, Food, and Fitness: Teacher's Wraparound Edition  
by Dorothy F. West

P.E. Teacher's Complete Fitness and Skills Development Activities Program  
by Jeff Carpenter

Personal Fitness and You (Teachers Resource Manual)  
by Roberta Stokes

Physical Education for Lifelong Fitness: The Physical Best Teacher's Guide  
by Physical Best, Human Kinetics, Nat'l Assoc for Sport & PE

Ready-To-Use P. E. Activities for Grades K-2 (Ready-To-Use Physical Education Activities)  
by Joanne M. Landy, Maxwell J. Landy

Ready-To-Use P.E. Activities for Grades 3-4 (Ready-To-Use Physical Education Activities for Grades 3-4)  
by Joanne M. Landy, Maxwell J. Landy

Ready-To-Use P.E. Activities for Grades 5-6  
by Joanne M. Landy, Maxwell J. Landy

SPRI Muscle Up with ABC Flat Band Video for Kids  
Other products by SPRI

Station Games: Fun and Imaginative PE Lessons  
by Maggie C. Burk

Total Fitness for Children: A Guide for Parents and Teachers  
by James H. Humphrey

Walk Like a Bear, Stand Like a Tree, Run Like the Wind: Cool yoga, stretching and aerobic activities for cool kids  
by Carol Bassett

Walking Games and Activities  
by June I. Decker, Monica G. Mize

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Yoga Games for Children: Fun and Fitness With Postures, Movements, and Breath  
(Hunter House Smart fun Book)

by Danielle Bersma, Marjoke Visscher, Alex Kooistra (Illustrator), Amina Marix  
Evans (Translator)

201 Games for the Elementary Physical Education Program

by Jerry D. Poppen