

The Movement Revolution: Unlocking the Full Potential of School-Aged Children through Physically Active Learning

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- There has been a slow, pervasive pandemic growing for decades. You wouldn't know it unless you have children or are around children. It's not transmissible, but it's been increasing in intensity across the country, regionally, developmentally, and socio-economically. This pandemic often results in childhood obesity, attentional disorders, depression and anxiety. This pandemic is called a "sedentary lifestyle."



Reports indicate that sedentary lifestyles and screen time dominate the lives of school-aged children. The impact on children's health is frightening. Medical and scientific research prioritizes [physical activity](#) and [movement](#) as the primary evidenced-based practice to address the growing mental health crisis in the U.S. today. Increased movement opportunities within educational settings can have a significant impact on children's physical health, mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. Yet knowing this doesn't seem to initiate educational change, however, one CEO understands and is making it her charge to see change happen in public schools.

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Pamela Gunther, CEO & Founder of Fit and Fun Playscapes

[Fit and Fun Playscapes](#) Founder and CEO, Pamela Gunther, explains, “essentially, movement is the foundation for growth, physically, academically, socially, and creatively. Children ages 3-5 need to be active throughout the day. Children and adolescents 6 through 17 need to be active for 60 minutes every day.”

Source: CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/children/>

The Center for Disease and Control (CDC) recommends daily physical activity of 60 minutes or more for both children and adults. Take a closer look at these jarring findings and feedback from educational, scientific, and medical experts who advise on the urgency for 'The Movement Revolution.'

MOVEMENT IS ESSENTIAL FOR GROWTH

Science supports physical activity and movement as essential factors for growth and development. Imagine a school where children have longer recess periods, more opportunities to engage in unstructured play, socialize, self-regulate, and develop crucial life skills. The benefits of increased daily movement and physical activity include:

* Enhanced Cognitive Growth:
Studies have shown that physical activity and free play during recess and throughout the day contribute to improved cognitive function.

* Improved Academic Performance:
Contrary to popular belief, increasing physical activity time does not hamper academic progress. In fact, it can have the opposite effect.

* Improved Social and Emotional Development:
Daily and frequent physical activity provides a unique opportunity for children to develop vital



social and emotional skills.

* Increases in Physical Health and Well-being:

With the rise of sedentary lifestyles and childhood obesity, longer periods of time dedicated to movement can serve as a powerful intervention.

* Reduction in Stress and Mental Health Concerns:

The pressures of modern education can take a toll on children's mental health. Daily and frequent physical activity offers an opportunity for stress relief, rejuvenation, and improved overall well-being.

By prioritizing children's mental, physical, and emotional health, Fit and Fun Playscapes creates a positive learning environment conducive to academic success. Fit and Fun has examined the immense potential of extended recess and increase in movement opportunities for school-aged children, emphasizing the myriad benefits it brings to their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

Research demonstrates that children who engage in regular physical activity perform better academically, exhibit improved concentration, and display enhanced memory retention. Simply by providing increased movement opportunities, children can enjoy an educational experience that fosters well-rounded individuals prepared to thrive in the modern world.

THE MOVEMENT SOLUTION

One of the most practical, dynamic, and effortless solutions that schools can utilize is to continue to integrate movement across the day – not just during recess and physical education. Fit and Fun Playscapes encourages daily physical activity, motor planning, play. These activities can



happen during in class time, at transitions, and recess. The application of painted stencils, floor and wall stickers, and portable mats, such as the products presented by Fit and Fun Playscapes afford children the opportunity to move.

The results speak for themselves. An example of the effectiveness of Fit and Fun products includes a study by the Oklahoma Dept of Education through the CDCs Healthy Schools program.

When utilizing Fit and Fun's reusable stencils, the results yielded "A 66% increase in teachers and schools playing games and being engaged with students and a 27% increase in the percentage of students who are physically active. Post-intervention observation showed that over 90% students were involved in physically active play." Source:

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/achievement_stories/oklahoma.htm

Physical activity increases blood flow to the brain and throughout your body. As blood flow increases, the brain is exposed to more oxygen and nutrients. Exercise also induces the release of beneficial hormones and endorphins. Exercise impacts the brain by influencing the levels and activity of various chemicals, including neurotransmitters. People who exercise often have healthier brains, leading to improved regulation of mood, cognition, motivation, and overall brain function. The impact of exercise on the brain contributes to the many cognitive and emotional benefits associated with physical activity.

"Since our products are developed with educators and experts in health fields, they are easily integrated into schools. They are used for active play, self-regulation, mindfulness, fitness, social and sensory needs." says Gunther.

MOVEMENT WITH PURPOSE

"Our activities and graphics provide multiple opportunities for movement, self-regulation, and social interaction. Movement is how kids learn life skills and recess is a great place to practice these skills. Recess is a microcosm of how they will deal with situations throughout their lives." – Gunther

Fit and Fun Playscapes designs their indoor, outdoor, and portable activities with this in mind; combining colorful graphics, science-based movements, and intentional activities into every product.

"As a Pediatric Occupational Therapist... their products help to improve motor planning and body awareness while providing visual, kinesthetic, proprioceptive, and tactile feedback. They assist those that need to increase their energy and arousal level as well as those who need to calm and organize their bodies. The carefully chosen and classic games allow for creatively crossing the

bodies' midline and connecting both the right and left sides of the brain allowing for increased processing. Not to mention the added benefits of focus, academics, and physical coordination while encouraging socialization and problem-solving skills!"– Pepper Franchina-Gallagher BS/MS OTR/L Coastal Kids Occupational Therapy, PLLC

Creating unique activities and graphics that promote physical activity and mindfulness to include Social-Emotional Learning "SEL" (i.e., hopscotch, sensory pathways, yoga poses, and positive messaging but with vibrant colors and engaging styles) is abundantly backed by scientific research and findings from the medical community, mental health professionals, teachers, and school administrators.

DESTINED FOR GREATER GOOD

Pursuing a lifelong passion isn't always aligned with the subject-matter studied in college. Oftentimes, life's curve ball and unexpected journey endlessly tug at a mother's heartstrings in a determined search for a solution. Such is the case for Fit and Fun Playscapes Founder and CEO, Pamela Gunther who embarked on her professional journey as a licensed architect and subsequent VP at a real estate consulting firm in NYC.

After three sons, and the eldest attending elementary school, Gunther volunteered and joined the Playground Committee for the PTA. Seeking engaging games for the recess area that weren't plain or square, rather colorful and organic thematic designs, Gunther came up empty-handed. As a result, they simply painted recess games for days by hand.

"It was a labor of pure love. When they were complete enough for the kids to use, I recall how they came off the bus, hopping, skipping, and jumping their way across the playground in awe. That moment gave me sparks! Every kid was moving, laughing and enjoying the colorful designs we painted." – Gunther

About four years later, Gunther's eldest son was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and uncovered that diverse physical activity could significantly help children with ADD/ ADHD. Later, her youngest son was diagnosed with ADD as well. These experiences led her down a singular path to launch and slowly build Fit and Fun Playscapes that combines themed activities, sensorial stimulation and pathways, and encourages varied physical movements, beyond the fun it represented for children.

"It took many years to create and lots of research about how movement could help students with ADD and ADHD, attending physical education conventions, talking to doctors, reading a ton of literature and studies. Over the years, we developed not only diverse products, but also built free resources, an active social media presence and created helpful blogs. In 2017, Fit and Fun was named as a resource by the CDC for 'creating environments supportive of physical activity.' " –

Gunther

JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

Today, Fit and Fun Playscapes has grown its product offerings to include engaging graphics that help kids anywhere and of any ability to get the movement their bodies need. They continue to develop new, innovative ideas for an older and broader segment because we are all just not moving enough! Join Fit and Fun Playscapes in advocating for this important cause and reshaping the future of education for the better.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITES

- * Website: <https://www.fitandfunplayscapes.com/>
- * Twitter: <https://twitter.com/FitandFunPlay>
- * Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FitandFunPlayscapes>
- * Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/fitandfunplayscapes/>
- * YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@FitandFunPlayscapes>
- * LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/fit-and-fun-playscapes>
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