

Active Schools Help Students Move & Learn



DGF kindergarteners take a movement break.

Training leads to active classrooms

What if all students had the opportunity to take short physical activity breaks during the school day? With one in three children in the U.S. overweight or obese, making time for students to move is more important than ever. Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton (DGF) schools partnered with PartnerSHIP 4 Health in August 2015 to offer an “active classroom” training session to equip 28 K–8 teachers with the skills and confidence to add physical activity into the school day. The training, led by Mary Thissen-Milder from the Minnesota Department of Health, empowered teachers to positively impact nearly 1,000 DGF students.

Active classrooms are just one of several steps taken by DGF to increase physical activity for students. Dilworth Elementary created the “Railyard Room,” an indoor obstacle course where students take movement breaks. In August of 2016, DGF collaborated with PartnerSHIP 4 Health to offer active recess training for paraprofessionals, resulting in more organized active play.

Physical activity breaks improve student focus and retention

Including physical activity opportunities throughout the school day offers positive academic benefits for students. In addition to improving information retention, physical activity can improve student behavior and increase focus when it is time to learn. Activity opportunities can be as simple as short movement breaks during transition times in the school day. According to DGF Kindergarten Teacher Donna Oberg, “Students are up and moving a lot, so when it is time to just sit, they really do a nice job with it.”

While it can be a challenge for educators to find time and physical space for students to be active, PartnerSHIP 4 Health offers support and resources to make it happen. “Make the effort,” says Donna Oberg. “It is so worth it for kids, for you as a teacher, having that physical break for everyone.” Are you interested in integrating physical activity into the school day in your school or school district? Contact PartnerSHIP 4 Health to learn more about making an active school day the average school day in your area.

To see active classroom strategies in action in a DGF classroom, check out

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=408zwPpVWPQ>

Learn more about PartnerSHIP 4 Health’s work in Becker, Clay, Otter Tail and Wilkin counties at

<http://partnership4health.org>

January 2017
Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton Schools
Clay County

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