



OPTIONS CENTER EDUCATION TOPIC



Working with Schools

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Always obtain parental support and permission before using Brain Gym® in a school. The following resource contains sample wording that you may use to communicate about Brain Gym® and request permission for its use with children in the schools. We did our best to include something for every situation, so the material is much longer than you will want to use. Use only explanations that are pertinent to your situation. **Be sure to rewrite these in your own words.**

Sample School Letter No. 1

Dear Parents,

A new educational program called Brain Gym® is being made available at (name of school). The program uses simple movements that have been shown to enhance learning abilities in children and adults. This letter contains a brief introduction to Brain Gym®, and asks your permission for your child to participate in the program.

What is it?

Brain Gym® is the registered trademark for an educational therapy program developed by Paul E. Dennison, Ph.D., an expert in child motor-development. It is based upon 80 years of research by educational therapists, developmental optometrists, and other developmental specialists. Brain Gym® consists of simple movements similar to the movements that children naturally do during their first three years of life to accomplish important developmental steps for coordination of eyes, ears, hands, and the whole body. The Brain Gym® movements have been shown over years of clinical experience, in field studies, and in published research reports, to prepare children with the physical skills they need in order to learn to read, write, and otherwise function effectively in the classroom. The ability to learn easily is especially important for children in the first years of school, when they are laying the foundation for their schooling and adult life work.

How does it work?

Briefly, Brain Gym® works by facilitating optimal achievement of mental potential. Brain Gym® promotes efficient communication among the many nerve cells and functional centers located throughout the brain and body. Blocks in learning occur when information cannot flow freely among these centers. The Brain Gym® movements stimulate this flow of information within the brain and body, freeing our innate ability to learn and function at top efficiency.

Three Dimensions

Dr. Dennison describes brain functioning in terms of three dimensions--laterality, focus, and centering.

Laterality is the ability to coordinate one side of the brain with the other, especially in the midline. This skill is fundamental to the ability to read, write and communicate. It is also essential for fluid whole-body movements, and for the ability to move and think at the same time.

Focus is the ability to coordinate the back and front parts of the brain. It is related to 1) participation and comprehension, 2) to the ability to act on the details of a situation while keeping an awareness of the entire situation and of who we are, and 3) to understanding new information in the context of all previous experience. People without this skill are said to have attention disorders and difficulty in comprehending.

Centering is the ability to coordinate the top and bottom parts of the brain. This skill is related to organization, grounding, feeling safe, responding clearly without emotional overlay, and feeling and expressing emotions.

Possible Benefits

The Brain Gym® movements integrate (connect) the brain in these dimensions, allowing us to easily learn through all the senses, to remember what we learn through all the senses, and to participate more fully in the events of our lives. We are able to learn with less stress, and to express our creativity using more of our mental and physical potential. The movements also assist in clearing emotional stress from the system.

Possible benefits include improvements in learning expression and movement abilities in children and adults. Teachers typically report improvements in attitude, attention, homework performance, discipline, and behavior for the entire class.

The Brain Gym® movements are simple tools that enable students to more easily learn the school curriculum that the teacher is presenting at the moment, including reading, spelling, math, etc.

The mechanics

Where to get more information...contact someone at the school, etc.

Ask permission from parents in a format that works for your school.

Sample School Letter No. 2 **by Ava Jo Butcher**

Brain Gym®--It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to a leading-edge technology which combines movement and learning. Babies build their neurology through sensory-motor integration. Learning and movement are linked from birth and are inherent within us just like breathing. The question is, therefore, if moving worked so well for the toddler, why stop using it? Dr. Paul Dennison answered this question by developing a system of movements which enhance learning. The gifted child becomes even more creative by activating both brain hemispheres optimally, and the developmentally delayed child builds additional neural networks to cross the midline so that learning won't be so difficult. Everyone can reach his/her greatest potential. Learning can be fun and easy as it should be for everyone. There are about 26 movements, each designed to activate a specific part of the brain. We won't learn them all;

however, each child will learn what is necessary to ensure success. We will begin each day with about ten minutes of Brain Gym® to get everyone ready to learn. From that point on, it will be on demand only. In other words, if your child learns easily and quickly, s/he may not do additional movements. If your child has a problem cutting, for example, we will do a movement to help with hand/eye coordination. Or, maybe your child's eyes are not developed to the point where they work together across the page. We will do movements to help them develop binocular vision (eyes working together). Anything your child might have trouble with, we will address with Brain Gym®. I will be glad to talk with you at length if you have more questions. Please feel free to call me at school before (time) or after (time).

Sample School Letter No. 3
by Nat Harper
(on school letterhead)

Dear Parents,

There is help available for students who have difficulties with reading and math. It is called Brain Gym®, and it deals with learning through movement. The simple movement combinations (physical exercises) help children complete any unfinished developmental tasks from infancy so that they are able to experience success at school.

(Include your OWN success story in place of this one) A fellow teacher (name) has been using Brain Gym® with positive, impressive results since 20___. Working with her as well as on my own, I have begun to teach children the exercises. Many of the children comment that they feel calmer and more able to pay attention right away. Some children need individual sessions as well as a daily maintenance program which will get them ready to work and learn.

I welcome the opportunity to work with your child. All I need is your permission for him or her to step out of regular class at a time his teacher approves of for the individual session. Please sign below indicating that you do permit me to work with your child in this program. Return the bottom portion to me. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (school).

(Student name) has my permission to work with (Brain Gym® facilitator) in the Brain Gym® program.
(Signed) _____ (Date) _____

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