



Biking helps kids think more clearly (and behave).

Bikes instead of desks?

While some schools have nixed recess to make more time for studying, others are moving in the opposite direction—incorporating physical activity into the classroom to improve behavior and concentration. Check out a few active-learning programs growing in the United States. You may want your kid’s school to take one for a spin.

➔ Stand and Study

When Mark E. Benden, Ph.D., director of The Ergonomics Center at Texas A&M Health Science Center, and his colleagues tested standing desks in three elementary schools, they found that students burned 15 percent more calories than kids at sitting desks, and it was easier for them to concentrate. “We think better on our feet than in our seat,” says Dr. Benden. “Children with ADHD, in particular, seem to benefit from the engagement and focus boost that the desks offer.”

➔ Words on Wheels

Kids in the Read and Ride program at Ward Elementary in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, can read books and magazines in a room filled with donated exercise bikes as a reward or hop on a bike in the corner of their classroom if they need some extra stimulation during the day,

says Scott Ertl, M.Ed., the school counselor and founder. Students who spent the most time on the bikes achieved an 83 percent proficiency in reading on standardized tests, while those who spent the least time in the program had only 41 percent proficiency. The activity can also help kids with anxiety disorders or hyperactivity release extra energy.

➔ Burn Before You Learn

Many experts favor starting the day with exercise, then covering the difficult subjects right after, while the brain is most susceptible to learning. Highlander Way Middle School, in Howell, Michigan, is doing just that. The school’s phys ed teacher has created two mobile fitness labs with equipment like kettlebells, BOSU balls, and resistance bands, which teachers can check out for their students anytime.

*** The Read and Ride program has expanded to 30 other schools since 2009. To learn more about it, visit readandride.org.**



Medicine-cabinet must-have

Whether the culprit is a hot cookie sheet, a glue gun, or even a rug, minor burns happen all the time—and they hurt! We were impressed by FirstDegree’s Burn Cream and Maximum Pain Relief Burn Spray. *Parents* photo editor Kristen O’Hara, who was burned when helping her pastry-chef husband in the kitchen, says, “It took the pain away quickly, and the next day I could barely even tell I’d gotten a burn.” Both products are safe for kids ages 2 and up, and double as great itch relievers for bug bites. \$5 to \$9; firstdegree.com

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That’s about how much more sodium (in milligrams) kids consume than they should, finds a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Kids should have no more than 2,300mg/day, but those studied consumed an average of 3,279mg of sodium daily.