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**Long Summer Vacation?
Top 10 Ways to Maintain Your Student's Attention!**

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One of the most difficult transitions in the school system is coming back from summer vacation! Most likely your students have been staying up late, sleeping in, had limited structure, and doing new and exciting things. Now they are going to be required to sit and learn in a structured environment. Try to allow for movement breaks in the classroom in between subjects and do not expect your students to sit for long periods of time. Here are 10 easy and cheap solutions that can be used within the school environment that can be done with restless children in the classroom:

1. Allow alternative seating! Let students stand at their desk or lay on the floor to complete work.
2. Wouldn't it be great to have all students sitting on therapy balls in the classroom? However, what usually happens? The balls roll away, kids fall off on purpose, and it causes an overall distraction in the classroom. A simple solution is to put the ball in a cardboard box to limit rolling. This will still allow for movement and bouncing!



3. Take two minute movement breaks by doing 2-3 yoga positions when transitioning from one subject or topic to another. Try these free activities: <http://yogainmyschool.com/yoga-classroom/yoga-games/>
4. Place a water bottle, preferably with a straw. This helps add oxygen and hydration to their brains!
5. Allow kids to chew gum! Studies have shown that chewing gum increases brain function! The act of chewing tricks the brain into releasing insulin and increasing energy levels. If gum is not allowed in your school, try using licorice, dry cereal, vegetables, pretzels, popcorn, etc.
6. When walking in the hallway kids have a tendency to skip, touch the wall, push their friends, etc. If you want your students to have better behavior in the hallway, allow them to walk with heavy books or other weighted items (i.e. yoga balls). It is very difficult to skip when holding heavy items and they will not be able to touch the wall.
7. Encourage heavy work in the classroom as much as possible. Have the kids push against a

- wall. "The room feels small this morning, can everyone help push the walls out to make the room bigger?" Rearrange furniture in the classroom (with adult supervision of course!)
8. Fidget toys for the hands (especially balls) can be just that..."toys!" They can cause extra distraction or behavior issues. Try using squeeze toys that can be squeezed quietly on the student's lap as to not disturb the class. My new favorite stress ball technique is to put play-doh inside a balloon! The feeling is GREAT! Another great idea is to attach a piece of velcro to the desk so that he/she can touch this during the day.
 9. Fidgets for the feet! How many kids in your classroom are constantly fidgeting? One of the ways to help with this is to put a piece of theraband (typically used in yoga or physical therapy for strengthening) around the front two legs of their desk or chair. The student can then kick or rest their feet on it. A cheaper and more durable solution is to stop at your nearest bike store and ask for their recycled bicycle inner tubing (you may need to wrap this around each leg more than one time).
 10. Put yourself in their shoes! Have you been to a continuing education course lately? Did you find it difficult to sit and listen to someone speaking to you for 6 hours (even though you had a lunch break and a couple of 10 minute bathroom breaks)? Think about all of the ways you learn best! Most people learn best when they are able to use all of their sensory systems at the same time. Don't forget to use a multi-sensory approach to teaching and have fun!!

Please check out my webinars related to this topic:

<http://www.otkimwiggins.com/webinars-1>