

How Fit Kids Become Smarter Kids

By US Olympian Jeff Galloway, Author: FIT KIDS - SMARTER KIDS

As a former lazy fat kid, who hated exercise, I have experienced the good and the bad side of exercise. From the jokes played on those (including me) on the young, plump and lazy, to burnout among talented kids who were pushed too early, to the daily empowerment bestowed by the right exercise and the right group.

Research shows that exercise improves brain function giving kids a head start in every area of life

- New growth of brain cells
- Activation of key brain circuits to think quicker and make better decision
- Turns on brain networks that produce a better attitude and personal empowerment
- Vitality/energy circuits are revved up and appetite control turned on
- Circuits of appetite control are activated
- Exercise stimulates brain hormones that help the brain work better and quicker

Increased Physical Activity leads to higher Academic Achievement

When I wrote Fit Kids - Smarter Kids I was advised by CDC Prevention specialists that the success of PE in the school curriculum is ultimately connected to its effect on learning. With their help I found the growing number of studies that support this - some are listed in the book. A few findings:

[Note: the following were compiled, with a bibliography in FIT KIDS—SMARTER KIDS]

- Better test scores, when physical activity is increased* Shephard, R.J., 1997.
- Math scores are better when physical activity is increased, Shephard et al; Thomas et al, Dwyer et al.
- GPA and attendance improved when physical activity was increased, Collingwood
- Exercise results in better brain activity, while it improves functioning in parts of the brain, and helps to make better connections between neurons, Boyd et al.
- Increased blood flow to the brain. Moderate to high intensity exercise promotes a significant increase in cerebral blood flow. Jorgensen et al.
- Higher physical fitness levels in 5th, 7th, and 9th grade students are associated with higher academic achievement. California Dept of Education ongoing program with over 1 million kids annually enrolled*. NASPE, Calif Dept of Ed.

From FIT KIDS—SMARTER KIDS and CROSS COUNTRY

The right exercise, done regularly can improve the quality of our lives and those of our children

- Every day, for a few minutes, engage in playful exercise with your child
- Make it fun
- Use Run Walk Run: start with 10-30 seconds of jogging followed by 10-30 seconds of walking
- No huffing and puffing and no puking
- Give verbal rewards for finishing each exercise
- You can help kids become fitter and smarter.