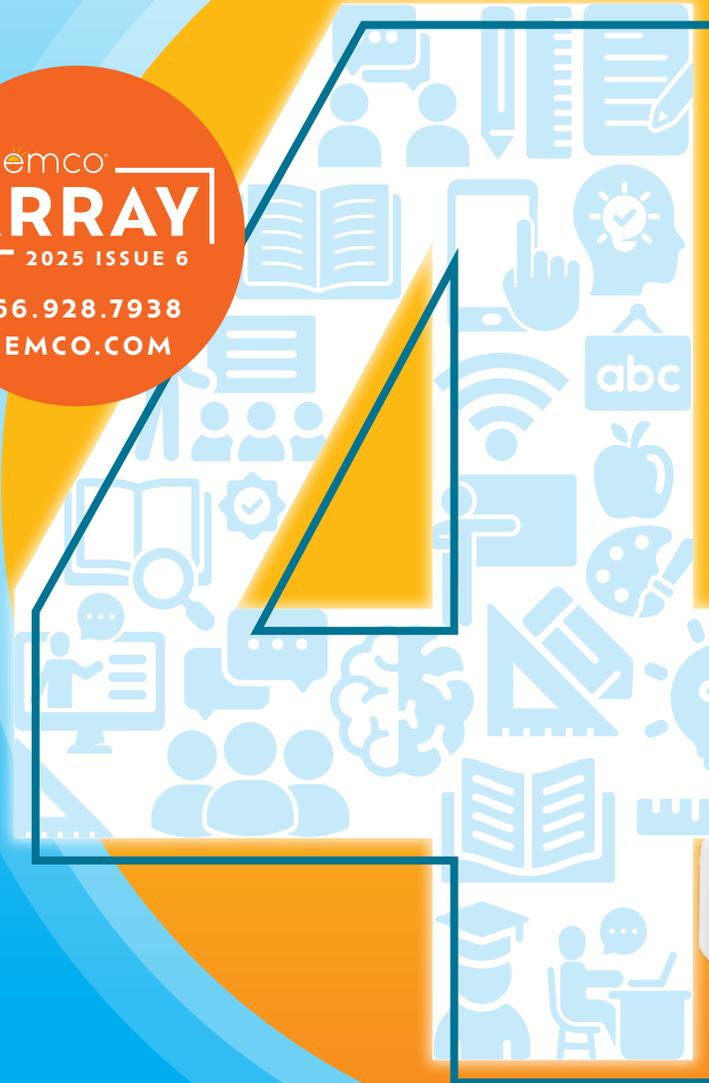


# Making Movement Matter:

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## PRACTICAL WAYS TO ENERGIZE LEARNING SPACES



By Dr. Robert Dillon

**Educators understand that movement enhances learning.** It boosts focus, increases oxygen flow to the brain, reduces stress, and elevates student engagement. Yet, despite the growing consensus on its importance, many classrooms remain static. Constraints like limited space, rigid furniture layouts, and clutter often prevent movement from becoming a regular, productive part of the school day.

But with intentional planning, movement can be integrated seamlessly into classroom routines, no matter the space. Below are four practical strategies teachers and librarians can use to embed purposeful movement into daily learning.



### 1. WHOLE-GROUP LISTENING WHILE STANDING

Not every learning moment has to happen while seated. Standing and listening as a class, during read-alouds, brief lectures, or storytimes, gives students a welcome and healthy change in posture. It naturally encourages micro-movements, lifts the eyes from distractions on desks, and provides a subtle energy boost. Consider carving out a standing zone or simply asking students to push in their chairs and rise for short periods of direct instruction. This shift supports attentiveness and helps reset student energy levels during transitions.



### 2. SMALL-GROUP COLLABORATION AT WRITABLE SURFACES

Writable surfaces, whiteboards, butcher paper, or chalkboard paint on walls or tabletops, invite active engagement. Invite students to stand and collaborate in small groups around these surfaces to brainstorm, summarize learning, ask questions, or sketch new ideas. Movement becomes a natural part of thinking.

If space is tight, even rotating one group at a time through a vertical board space can encourage motion without disruption. Libraries can adapt this by using whiteboard easels or mobile dry-erase boards to keep the activity flexible and accessible.



### 3. SEATING MOVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are times when students must remain seated, but that doesn't mean they can't move. Seated movement can include chair yoga, breathing exercises, or guided hand and arm motions. This simple shift supports attentiveness and re-energizes students during transitions. Many tools and videos offer short, structured sequences that can be easily woven into routine, which can help students release tension without disrupting instruction.



### 4. MOVEMENT AS A MENTAL RESET

Cognitive overload is real. Regular movement breaks support emotional regulation and renewed focus, especially for younger learners and those with sensory needs. These breaks might include walking to a window for natural light, shifting to a carpeted area, or doing simple stretches. When embedded consistently, even a few minutes of movement can help students stay grounded and engaged.

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Making movement part of your daily rhythm doesn't require a complete redesign — just a mindset shift and a few intentional choices. Start small, build routines, and observe how your students respond. A learning space that invites motion is one that better supports wellness, creativity, and joy. 🌞