**TAKE 5 AND EXERCISE!**

The brain needs to be oxygenated every 15 to 20 minutes and the best way to accomplish that is to “get off your seat and onto feet.” When we physically move, we are sending blood and glucose to the brain, thus providing much needed oxygen and nutrients that help the brain to retain information, improve concentration and focus attention. So, start your day or intersperse throughout the day five different stretches or exercises. As you lead each movement have the children count out loud to five. For example, start out with five ***Toe Touches***. Instruct children to bend over at waist and touch their toes as they say, “One.” Then say, “Up,” as children raise their arms over their heads. Then say, “Two,” as children bend over and touch their toes again. Continue until you have completed 5 Toe Touches. Ask the children to show you with their fingers/hands and shout out loud how many Toe Touches they have completed. Ask the children what other exercise they can do five times. Here are some suggestions --

***Tummy Twists*** -- hands on waist as children twist from side to side 5 times

***Arm Circles*** -- arms out to sides and make big circles while counting to 5

***Jumping Jacks*** -- arms at sides, feet together. Jump up while spreading arms and legs apart at the same time. Lift arms to ears and open feet a little wider than shoulder width. Clap or touch hands above head. Return from jumping up by bringing arms back down to side and feet back together. Continue with 4 more jumping jack repetitions.

***Cross Laterals*** -- Cross-lateral movements are those in which arms and legs cross over from one side of the body to the other. The left side of the brain controls the right side of the body, and the right side of the brain controls the left side. Both sides are forced to communicate when arms and legs cross over. This “unsticks” the brain and energizes learning. Stand with arms at sides. Bend and touch right elbow to left knee as you raise your leg. Stand and then touch left elbow to right knee.

Remember, after each exercise, to ask the children to show you and tell you how many exercises they did. It reinforces learning and perhaps will encourage you and the children to include some physical activity when waiting for the next activity or including throughout your day a much needed “brain break!”