

Be part of a club

Sport brings people together

“People are more likely to confide, ask small favours and obtain support from their sport and recreation clubs.”<sup>12</sup>

This sort of social interaction and support are brought about by a range of sources which can include:

Being a spectator or fan



Participating in sporting teams

Volunteering



To find a club in your local area, visit [dsg.wa.gov.au/clubs](https://dsg.wa.gov.au/clubs)

<sup>12</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010.



You can find out more about the latest research by reading our publication **Brain boost: how sport and physical activity enhance children’s learning.**



Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries



For more information or to obtain copies of other publications contact:

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Prepared with assistance from the Centre for Sport and Recreation Research, Curtin University.  
[www.curtin.edu.au/research/csr](http://www.curtin.edu.au/research/csr)



Our whole community wins



Brain Boost

How sport and physical activity helps your kids learn better



Activities such as running, swimming, kicking a footy or playing netball can all help your kids do better at school.

We know this because a lot of researchers in Australia and around the world have been investigating the links between sport, physical activity and academic achievement.





At Sport and Recreation (WA), we've done our homework, checked it twice and know their findings add up: being active in the playground and on the playing field helps kids perform better in the classroom.

The majority of research points to more physically active children being smarter, because exercise has biological, psychological and social benefits.



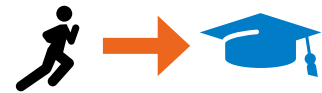
“The evidence indicates that regular physical activity is likely to provide children with the optimum physiological condition for maximising learning.”

**Dr Karen Martin**  
Research Fellow, School of Population Health, University of Western Australia

“In my experience as an educator, there is no question that kids who are physically active are more open to learning.”

**Stephen Breen**  
President, Western Australian Primary Principals' Association

Some of the main research findings are:



There's a positive link between physical activity and academic achievement.



Active boys and girls are more likely to pass exams.



Physical activity leads to improvements in maths and reading.



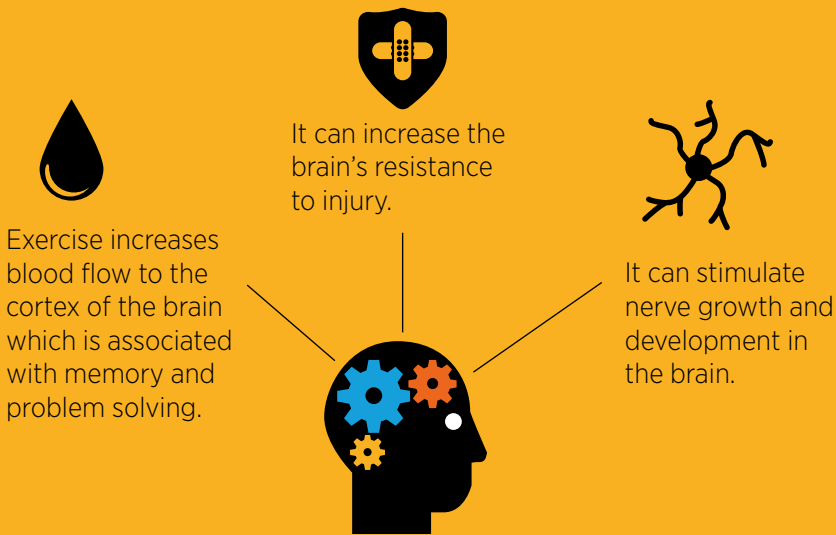
Physical activity is likely to provide children with the optimum physiological condition for maximising learning.

On top of that, the research also finds that:

- ✓ Physical activity improves memory, behaviour, concentration and reasoning ability.
- ✓ Children reckon exercise is fun and they welcome the chance to do it at school.
- ✓ Kids who exercise improve their motor skills and their on-task behaviour in lessons.
- ✓ Particularly with girls, the more vigorous the physical activity, the more success they will achieve academically.
- ✓ Inactivity is bad for children.

Physical activity enhances cognitive function, improving memory, behaviour, concentration and academic achievement.

How does exercise or being active do this?



In other words, if you help your children get regular exercise, their brains will be fitter and will work better at school. And when our kids are fitter and do better at school, the whole community wins.

Wider benefits of being active



**Safer Streets**  
Opportunities exist for community organisations, with government support, to establish long-term viable programs that can deliver positive social outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

Through increased engagement in their local community, youth are less likely to resort to criminal behaviour.



**Mind Matters**  
Participation in organised sport and recreation can protect against mental illness and promote positive mental health.

Researchers believe that participating in sport and recreation and group-based physical activities is the glue that binds people together.<sup>2</sup>



**Connected Communities**  
Promoting the social, physical and mental wellbeing benefits of being active in a community helps create social cohesion, especially amongst disadvantaged groups.

People who belong to a team are generally happier<sup>3</sup> and experience fewer psychological difficulties.<sup>4</sup>



**Brain Boost**  
Research confirms being active in the playground, on the court and on the field helps learning in the classroom.

It points to more physically active children being smarter because exercise has biological, psychological and social benefits.

1 Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008.  
2 CSRR: Sport and Mental Health, March 2015  
3 Donaldson & Ronan, 2006; Huang & Humphreys, 2012  
4 Asztalos et al., 2012; Vella et al., 2014