Inside/Outside: Practicing attention control

*This activity develops a greater awareness of their SENSES- (eyes, ears, body feeling of movement like breathing, or moving the arm without looking, etc.)

*This is a great activity to do when you need them to calm down, re-focus or transition in between different activities

This is a script for you to follow- each number is a direction you give to the students:
1. Close your eyes
2. Move your attention to your ears – rub them – stay with the sound of my voice
3. Keep your eyes closed, move your attention to your legs and without looking at them, notice whether they are crossed, folded, straight, etc. (pause your talking here) and just take that observation in
4. Keep your eyes closed (tap your finger) and move your attention to the tapping sound
5. Open your eyes and move your attention to---- (go a head and pick something for them to find with their eyes- repeat as many times as you want)
6. Close your eyes, move your attention to your body – take a deep breath, and slowly let the air out. Notice how your body fills up like a balloon when you breathe in, and then shrinks when you let the air out.
7. Keep your eyes closed, pay attention to the feeling of your body moving and raise one arm straight up in the air (pause)- now gently put that hand that’s up in the air on top of your head.
8. Now move your attention to the sound of __________ (in the room, the hall, outside, etc.)

**This activity can be difficult to do with K – 2. Feel free to do two steps at a time and repeat them (eventually working up to all eight). Keeping the eyes closed is the hardest task! For 3 – 5, feel free to add in steps of difficulty-
experiencing multiple sensations at once. It is important for them to be aware of their own bodies at all times and this activity re-enforces this idea.

**Listening Warm Up:**
*Listening is about “taking in”.
*To “listen”, we must prepare both the physical hearing structures and their connecting nerves, and also tune the core muscles of the torso, which allow us to experience (for instance, experience our emotional response to the words of a story we are listening to).

Here are some exercises to do to get our bodies ready to “listen”.

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**Do the Brain Warm Ups in order**

**Writing Warm Up:**
1. WOMMP
2. CLOSE YOUR EYES- Teacher guides to “see picture in head” of where the story is happening, who is in the story and their appearance, what they are doing or going on, and when is this happening (*visual*)
3. FINGER TOUCH DANCES- Happens while students are listening to the teacher (*kinesthetic*)
4. TALK INTO YOUR EAR- Describe to yourself what you are “seeing” (*auditory*)
5. Now WRITE!!
**Reading Warm Up:**

*To read with comprehension requires the following:
- Brain needs to have BOTH HEMISPHERES ON
  - Left = Logic (Syllables, Individual Words)
  - Right = Creative (Whole Picture or Context)
- And BOTH sides to talk to each other so . . .

1. WOMMP

   *The eyes must be relaxed, warmed up and moving smoothly left-to-right across the midfield so . . .

2. EYE RELAXERS
   - Raindrops on Forehead
   - Thumb Massage inside of upper eye socket
   - Massage the Temples
   - Massage Outside of Nose Nostrils
   - Massage Transmandibular Joint→ Jaw
   - Massage Occipital Lobes→ Where the Head meets the Jaw
   - Thumb Yes/No→ Eyes follow the thumb as the thumb moves up & down (yes) and left to right (no)- Head stays still (hold chin if needed)

   *All the nerves directly connected to the CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (brain/spine) must be activated/awake/sending signals, so . . .

3. BIG SHOULDER SHIFTS
   NECK STRETCHES
   - Stretch throat & fake chew, ear to shoulder, chin to chest
   CHIN SWEEPS
   - Slowly drag chin from one shoulder across the chest to the other shoulder, repeat
   YES/NO/MAYBE
   BUTT WALKS
   - Can be done in the chair or on floor
**Math Warm Up:**

1. WOMMP

2. Yes-No-Maybe (do this slowly, make it big)
   - Yes = Chin to Chest, then Throat Stretch, Repeat
   - No = Turn head slowly and eyes look over one shoulder, Repeat
   - Maybe = Nose remains FWD, Ear moves down to Shoulder, Repeat

3. Shoulder Moves
   - LIFT shoulder up the ear lobes, then lower- 4 times
   - PUSH shoulders FWD and then BKWDS- 4 times
   - Move shoulders UP-DOWN-FRONT-BACK- 4 times

4. Seated Ice Cream Licks (Forehead/Nose/Chin/Chest/Push)
   - With one hand, touch your forehead, then your nose, then the chin, then the chest- REPEAT
   - Then place the hands flat and apart on the desk
   - Lower (but DO NOT touch) forehead to desk, then the nose, then the chin, then the chest, then PUSH with the hands and sit up
   **REPEAT this action SLOWLY for 5 – 6 times

5. Butt Walks- in Chair
   - Be sure to SHIFT weight from one side to the next and LIFT!

6. Seated Heel Pushes
   - LIFT one leg straight forward from the seat
   - PUSH the heel away from the chair (toes will draw back to body)
   - RELAX the heel, then PUSH the heel again- REPEAT 4 times & change legs
**WOMMP:**

* Helps kids brains and bodies get ready for learning—should be done at the BEGINNING OF EACH DAY and AFTER LUNCH

W= Water  
O= Oxygen  
M= Marching  
M= Midline  
P= Pretzel

1. Make sure your students have water available ALL day long  
2. Oxygen—take a deep breath in (thru nose) and blow out hard (thru mouth)- do this 7 times  
3. March—move each side of the body at a time, repeating mirror movement  
4. Midline Cross—Do similar to #3, but do movements that cross your midline and touch the other side  
5. Pretzel—Twist arms together and grab palms from underneath your wrists, keep hands clasped and twist up onto your chest. Cross legs, hold this pose- balanced and take 10 deep, calming breaths!

**Follow the Leader:**

*Use when you are walking down the hallway or in the classroom during transition moments.  
*How QUIET can you do these movements??

High Step  
Quick Feet  
Cross Arms  
Play Piano in your Hand
Finger Wiggles ("air piano")
Head Movements
Tip Toes
Bend Down Walking
Shoulder Shrugs

Heel-Toe Walks
Cross-Over Stepping
Slap or Tap Opposite Thighs
Sideways Walking
Tight-Loose Walking
→ Hold
arms and legs way out or close

**Chair Stretches:**
*Use this as a break when kids have sat too long—they can begin to do some of these on their own when they feel the need. Make sure they don’t hold their breath!!

Shake Head for Yes/No
Shrug Shoulders
Stretch Face- Pull Chin Down
Scrunch Face
Stretch Up/Down/FWD/BKWD

Spinal Twist
Stretch Legs Out- Flex Feet
Slide Hands Down Legs

**Sweet Sixteens:**
*For children who are having difficulty controlling their bodies

- Designate four “directions” in your room (front, back, windows, door)
- Nominate a starting place, run there for 16 counts and rotate clockwise, continuing to run 16 in each new facing
- Then repeat with 8 counts, then 4, then 2, then 1
- **Repeat** going counterclockwise

**If students get antsy quite often in your classroom, designate a corner in your classroom for them to do “Sweet 16’s” in.

**Constructive Rest:**
Lay on the floor with head under a desk or chair, to give students a sense of not being stepped on, knees bent and resting on each other. Cross arms over chest then relax and put in a position of comfort. Remain this way, with eyes closed and soft, deep breathing, for 5 – 10 minutes.

**Eye Exercises:**
*Children's eye muscles develop and strengthen just as do the other muscle groups in the human body. Attention must be given to frequent periods of relaxing and exercising the eyes gently. The younger the children, the more care is required.*

Adding one or two eye relaxers whenever you move between close-work activities is a most worthwhile plan!

1. **Slow Squeeze**
   Slowly squeeze the eyes shut (3 seconds), then open wide and blink 3 times fast. Repeat this action, while BREATHING DEEPLY!

2. **Tracking**
   Hold your right thumb at arm’s length out to the right, so you can see it with your peripheral vision. Slowly bring the thumb around to the center, having your eyes track the entire time. Lower the right arm and repeat with the left.

Continue activity by:
- Stretching right arm straight out in front of face, eyes track as the thumb moves up and down
- Moving the thumb in a circular motion (reverse direction)

3. **Clock Tracking**
   Beginning with the right thumb extended up high, away from the face (12 o’clock), eyes track as the thumb slowly circles around the clock, stopping at 6 o’clock. Switch thumbs and have the left thumb continue to move back up to 12 o’clock as eyes track.

4. **Focused Stretching**
Hold one thumb at easy reading distance (about 12 inches). Keep looking at the thumb as you:
- turn your head slowly, first to the right and then left
- keep looking at the thumb as you tilt your head upward and then downward
- keep looking at the thumb as you draw a circle slowly in space with the tip of your nose

5. **Hard Eyes/Soft Eyes**
   Find a small object on a far wall or space. Look closely at the details (color, shape, size). Without looking away from the object, allow your peripheral vision to see the whole wall or scene. Blink naturally as you stay with the scene for a count of 3. Then return to seeing only the small object and see it for a count of 3. KEEP BREATHING!

6. **Tromboning**
   Hold your thumb about 8 – 12 inches in front (the distance where you would hold reading material) and focus on it. Slowly extend your arm out to its full length. Then let the eyes travel beyond your thumb outward to the far wall, or object. Focus on the far wall for 5 seconds (notice that you may seem to have 2 thumbs when you focus out on the wall), then slowly bring the focus back to the thumb at the end of your extended arm. Stay with the extended arm focus for 5 seconds, and then slowly bring the thumb in to 8 – 12 inches in front of your face. Repeat this action SLOWLY several times, so that the eyes get to practice the change in focal distance covering upper/middle/lower left side at blackboard distance, upper/middle/lower mid blackboard distance, and upper/middle/lower right side blackboard distance.

7. **Eye Massager (relaxer)**
   - Raindrop run with your finger tips across the eyebrows 2 – 3 times
   - Draw your forefingers or thumbs slowly from inside to outside underneath your eyebrows (vary the pressure)
   - Massage under the bone ridge at the inside corners of the eyebrows with your fingers.
   - Massage temples
   - Massage your TMJ (transmandibular joint) → jaw
-Cap both hands over the crown of your head so that your thumbs can rest in the dent just above your occipital lobes of the skull (where your neck meets your head). Massage those dents with a circular motion of your thumbs.

**Hand Exercises:**

Fine motor development of the hands and fingers occur when young children have the opportunity to play with blocks, marbles, jacks, tinker toys, etc. But children don’t do enough of this to develop fine motor skills of the hands- they spend their time indoors watching television or playing videogames, and/or they might not have access to these manipulative toys in their homes.

The neurons in the sensory/motor area of the brain that communicate with the hands and fingers lie right next to the neurons that communicate with the tongue, lips, throat, facial muscles (all the muscles that control our speech). This is one reason that some of us seem to “talk with our hands”, and why singing is so effective as a means of communication.

*Chatty talker in your room?? Give their hands something to play with- if the hands are busy moving, the talking will start to decrease.*

*These hands exercises can be used as children walk down the halls to another classroom or as a “warm up” prior to a writing activity.*

1. **Play the Piano**

   On the top of the desk they can slowly play the fingers of both hands at the same time. Or standing in the lunch line, they can turn one palm upward to become the playing surface, and then play the fingers of the other hand. Changes hands.

2. **Finger Brushes**

   Softly curl the fingers in toward the palm (make a fist) and place on desk. First, brush the forefinger(s) away from you- as if you were
flicking a crumb off the table. Then brush the forefinger back toward the palm. Repeat these two actions for the rest of the fingers.

3. **Trace the Outline of the Hand**
   With the forefinger of one hand, slowly trace the outline of the other hand. First, start with the base of the thumb and move slowly up and over to the pinky. At the bottom of the hand on the pinky side, draw the forefinger across the wrist to the base of the thumb and repeat the trace. Then reverse your direction- starting at the pinky side and tracing over to the thumb. Change hands.

4. **Thumb Taps (Squishing Grapes)**
   Slowly and on a steady beat, tap the forefingers on the thumbs. Continue to tap the rest of the fingers on the thumbs. Then start at the pinkies, and tap moving back down the hand.

You can tap each finger as many times as you would like!

5. **Climb the Ladder**
   Hold the pinky finger of one hand against the thumb of the other hand. Then hold the NEXT finger on EACH hand together, continuing through all the fingers until you have the OTHER pinky against the OTHER thumb. Go one direction several times.

   Then go the same direction (up), but starting with opposite thumb and pinky.

**When going UP is mastered- continue the same exercise as above, except flip the hands (the hand with palm facing you flips over, the top of your other hand flips over to palm up) once the next pinky and thumb touch, so the ladder never ends.**
**Mat Work:**
*Acquisition of a nervous system sufficiently developed to provide a solid foundation for learning is achieved solely through movement experiences!!

*The following movement sequences, designed to be performed on mats, are intended to be used 3 – 4 times each week!!

- Improves reading scores
- Helps students that have “attention” issue

*Movement appears to aid the child in paying attention and sustaining attention for longer periods of time, and to generally calm the active students.

**LOG ROLLS**
**For Vestibular System, to strengthen & develop core muscles**
-Lie across the mat, with arms folded across the chest. Perform slowly, with legs straight and held together. Repeat other side.

**BELLY CRAWLS (Army Crawls)**
**To experience body halves alternating in stabilizing and/or mobilizing roles, to experience body weight propulsion**
-Lying flat on the mat, RT arm reaches as LFT leg bands. Then LFT arm reaches as RT leg bends.

**BUTT WALKS**
**Uses quadratus lumborum muscle as well as muscles of the pelvic floor to “awaken” the body’s center of gravity and evolve the horses tail nerve bundle nerve pathways**
-Sitting up and facing the length of the mat, cross arms over chest and lift each hip up at a time, walking the distance of the mat on his/her butt. Repeat going backwards.
SWEEPS
**For upper/lower body core development and for whole-sidedness coordination**
-Children lie down on the mat, with legs straight and arms extended straight overhead on the floor. Keeping the torso FLAT, sweep arms and legs to the right (stretching the LFT side torso), and switch-sweeping the arms and legs to the left (stretching the RT side torso).
→ R/L = one round trip

X CRUNCHES
**To extend movement initiated in the core muscles out to the limbs**
-Children lie across the mat with legs and arms extended so that the body forms an “X” shape. Slide the right elbow and knee toward each other, letting the head roll left. Return the right side limbs to the “X” position. Repeat the same action on the left side. Do 8 round-trips
→ R/L = one round trip

Repeat the exercise lying on the belly.

SUSPENSIONS
**To use/develop gluteus, muscles of the pelvic floor, hamstrings and obliques – all essential for back/front balance which leads to ability to focus/sustain awareness**
-Lying on back with knees bent, lift pelvis so there is a straight line from the knees to the shoulders. Hold this position for 10 slow counts. Increase the counts on repeated suspensions.

Once mastered, repeat this action with one leg extended- allowing the weight of the pelvis to be supported on one leg.

ICE CREAM LICKS (Face/Chest Sweeps)
**To move the head/spine sequentially to practice/program sequential movement through the spine and to stretch the core muscles**
K - 2
-Lying on your belly, with arms supporting the torso off the ground, drop the top of the head down and let the weight lead the whole torso
down and forward- sweeping the face forward and up. Pause here. Repeat.

3 – 5
-Sitting on the heels, drop the top of the head down and let the weight lead the whole torso down and forward, sweeping the face (top to bottom) forward and up- followed by the chest, stomach, and finally the pelvis, as the torso weight is pressed up through the hands and arms. The body arrives lying on the pelvis, with the spine and head arched backward. Pause here. Then pull the pelvis backward, pushing off with the arms, and return to the position seated on the heels. Repeat this sweep 12 times.

The following exercises are GREAT for boys- especially after a period of several days with no out-door recess due to cold or rain. Will help improve behavior and increase learning.

IRON BRIDGE
**To use/develop abdominals in order to strengthen core, and to connect upper/lower body – essential for upper/lower connection to support comprehension, and grounded presence
-Lying on your back with arms crossed over the chest, lift head only and hold. Then lift straight legs off the ground at a level that allows the student to hold this position, keeping the middle of the spine on the floor (no arching). Hold this for a slow 10 counts, with deep breathing. Repeat 2 – 3 times.

PUSH-UPS and FULL WEIGHT PUSH-UPS
**To require use of full-bodied energy expenditure and build core muscle strength
-After students have completed 5 usual push-ups, instructor holds students legs off the floor. Students must keep the torso from sagging on the floor.

PUSH-AWAY LEGS
**To require use of both core and of outer abdominal muscles
-Instructor stands by students heads, as they lie on their back with hands gripping the instructor’s ankles. With STRAIGHT LEGS and flexed feet, students raise legs up (body creates an “L” shape).
Instructors push the legs away- student must stop their legs from touching the floor. Repeat 5 – 8 times.