

Gymnastics

Brains Under Construction



Flip on the Focus

Any time a child participates in activities that require moving large muscles and the compression of joints, this is referred to as heavy work. Heavy work is a term used in the therapy world to describe the types of activities that help focus the brain. Vaulting, hanging, flipping, climbing, and leaping are examples of phenomenal heavy work opportunities for children. Focusing with ease leads to learning with ease.



Hang Ten for Handwriting

Observing children swinging on uneven bars seems as far away as one can get from observing a child trying to write a paragraph, but actually, the two require remarkably similar skills. For children to have good handwriting skills, they must have strong muscles that work together for a common cause. Mighty abs, back muscles, shoulder muscles, forearms, wrists, and fingers are essential for good writing skills. When children have poor upper body strength and weak core muscles, they have trouble sitting upright at a desk, holding a pencil, and writing legibly. Bar work strengthens all muscle groups responsible for writing with ease.



Roll Into Reading

Brain connections are made through the activation of an important system that lies deep within the inner ear. This system is called the vestibular system (ves-tib-u-lar) and is the Olympic gold winner when it comes to brain development. Working in tandem with the brain, the vestibular system integrates auditory, visual, and tactile input. Specific types of movement common to gymnastics help the vestibular system develop properly. These include the back and forth movement in swinging, the rotational movement as in twisting, and the up and over movement used for rolling.



Magnificent Moves for Math

Math is a spatial sport! The more children move in different ways, the more connections are made in the brain that improve spatial awareness. For children to be able to understand mathematical equations and geometric principles, they need good spatial skills. All gymnastics moves improve body awareness and wire the brain for math success.