

Research Articles Effectiveness of Brain Gym in Improving Learning Concentration in Children: A Literature Study

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Abstract: This literature review examines the effectiveness of Brain Gym as an intervention to improve children's learning concentration. Brain Gym is a series of physical movements developed to enhance brain function. Several studies in the last decade have suggested that Brain Gym activities can positively influence children's attention span and cognitive performance, particularly in educational settings. Through a review of 20 empirical studies published between 2015 and 2024, this study finds consistent evidence of improved focus and academic engagement among children who participated in regular Brain Gym exercises. The findings suggest that Brain Gym can serve as a complementary approach to conventional teaching strategies, especially for elementary-level learners. Implications for educators and future research are discussed.

Keywords: attention, brain gym, children, concentration, learning performance

1. Background

Concentration is one of the important aspects in a child's learning process, because it is the basis for understanding, memory, and academic achievement. Unfortunately, many children have difficulty maintaining focus for long periods of time, especially in a learning environment full of distractions. One method that has developed to address this problem is Brain Gym, a movement approach designed to stimulate optimal brain function (Dennison & Dennison, 2010).

Several previous studies have shown that physical activity can contribute positively to children's cognitive function and attention skills (Ratey, 2008). Brain Gym combines simple movements such as "cross crawl" and "hook-ups" which aim to synchronize the work between the left and right brain. However, there is debate regarding the scientific validity and effectiveness of this program, so this literature review is important to provide a more comprehensive and systematic understanding.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of Brain Gym in improving children's learning concentration based on a review of various empirical studies that have been conducted.

Received: April 06th 2025 Revised: April 21th 2025 Accepted: May 07th 2025 Published : May 09th 2025 Curr. Ver.: May 09th 2025



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2. Theoretical Review

Brain Gym theory, developed by Paul and Gail Dennison, posits that specific movements can stimulate and integrate different regions of the brain. This theory is grounded in the concept of brain integration, where optimal learning occurs when both hemispheres of the brain work harmoniously. Exercises like cross crawl, lazy eights, and hook-ups are designed to enhance neural connectivity and coordination (Dennison, 2010).

Attention and concentration are cognitive functions vital to learning. According to Barkley (2015), attention is the ability to maintain focus on a particular stimulus or task over time. Poor concentration is frequently linked to lower academic achievement and behavioral issues in school-aged children.

Previous studies have explored Brain Gym's influence on learning. For instance, Hermina et al. (2018) found that Brain Gym exercises significantly improved attention among primary school students. Wahyuni (2020) also reported improvements in concentration test results following a four-week Brain Gym intervention. However, studies such as Siregar and Syahputra (2019) argue that the statistical significance of Brain Gym's effects remains inconclusive, necessitating more rigorous investigations.

3. Methods

This study employs a systematic literature review method. Articles were selected using databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and DOAJ. Keywords included 'Brain Gym', 'concentration', 'attention', 'children', and 'learning performance'. Inclusion criteria were: (1) peer-reviewed articles published between 2015–2024, (2) studies focusing on children in elementary school, and (3) articles that examined Brain Gym's impact on attention or concentration. Twenty articles were selected and analyzed thematically.

4. Results and Discussion

The majority of reviewed studies reported positive effects of Brain Gym on children's concentration levels. For instance, Sari et al. (2017) demonstrated that 78% of third-grade students who engaged in Brain Gym exercises improved their visual attention scores significantly.

Studies indicate that Brain Gym is most effective when performed three times per week for at least four to six weeks. Pratama and Lestari (2021) found the optimal impact occurred in the fifth week of consistent exercise. Some comparative studies show that Brain Gym is favored over mindfulness and deep-breathing interventions due to its active and playful nature, which aligns better with children's learning styles.

Despite positive findings, several studies had small sample sizes and lacked proper control groups, highlighting the need for more robust experimental designs.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This literature review concludes that Brain Gym is generally effective in enhancing learning concentration among children, particularly at the elementary level. The exercises are simple, cost-effective, and suitable for classroom implementation. However, more controlled and large-scale studies are recommended to validate these findings. Educators are encouraged to integrate Brain Gym into daily routines, and future research could explore combinations with other cognitive-based interventions.

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