

Some Schools Replace Desk Chairs With Ball Chairs



Some schools are replacing wooden and plastic desk chairs with ball chairs made of rubber. The ball chairs help kids learn better, some teachers say. Kids must concentrate in order to balance on their ball chairs. That means their brains are active and they are paying more attention to lessons. Kids who sit on ball chairs are less restless and have better posture too, because they must sit upright in order to stay “on the ball.”

So what is it like to teach a bunch of kids who are bobbing on ball chairs? Katie Messina, a third-grade teacher at Central Elementary School in Grandville, Michigan, says her students are taught to use the ball chairs like a chair, not a ball. They can roll side to side, but they save the real bouncing for special “bounce breaks.”

“Sometimes kids don't get enough physical activity to work their wiggles out,” Messina told the *Muskegon Chronicle*. “They really have to be active to have bodies ready for learning.”

NEWS WORDS
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“Ball chairs are fun,” one student said, “and they really work out your abs.”

Students in Messina’s class get to choose between a chair and a ball chair.

Ball chairs can look different in different classrooms. Some classrooms have ball chairs with wheels, and some of those chairs even have backs (see picture) and arms. In Messina’s classroom, kids use colorful exercise balls that might be found in any PE class. Her students’ “chairs” have no wheels, backs, or arms.

Companies that sell ball chairs have seen a big boom in business. Use of the chairs has spread to hundreds of classrooms, they say.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

What are some new rules that might be needed in a classroom where ball chairs have replaced chairs of wood and plastic?