

# THE BIG Book of ENERGIZERS



Jenny Mosley and Zara Niwano

Positive Press

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## What are Energizers?

Most of us will be familiar with that awful sinking feeling when we realise that our children are drifting away and losing their zest for learning. We all know of occasions when everyone seems to have wandered off-task and we need to find ways to rein them in and get them focused again. The Big Book of Energizers is a toolbox crammed full of quick activities to do just that in a fun and non-confrontational way.

## How can Energizers help?

Learning is about concentrating; retaining information and using it in ever more complex ways. As educators, we ask children to sit at a desk and concentrate for a long time. Sometimes this means that they lose contact with their need to release physical energy and lessons descend into scenes of fidgeting, irritability, children disturbing their neighbours or drifting off into daydreams that have nothing to do with the task at hand. When you notice that concentration and motivation are flagging, you need to stop and do something quick that wakes everyone up and pulls them back to task. You can do this by offering a complete change of scene that revitalizes their brains without utilizing the thoughtful task orientated part of the brain that is needed for your lesson. In other words, you need to give everyone a break, a tiny bit of play-time, a burst of physical joyfulness that brightens everyone up.

It is worth noting that the Calmers book works in a similar way by orchestrating a mental change of direction. With Energizers, this change of direction is away from listlessness and into focused alertness; whereas, with Calmers, children are being redirected away from anxiety or over-excitement and towards calm alertness. In other words, the same result is achieved but the starting points are different. This is why, sometimes, Energizers and Calmers can appear similar.

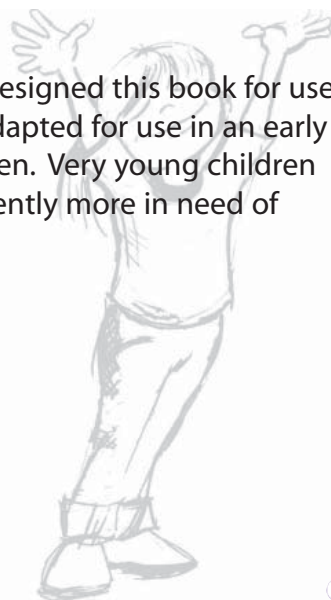
## When can you use Energizers?

Anytime you think it might help! Energizers could be used once, twice or three times a day: any time that you want to enliven, awaken and re-focus your class after they have become fidgety or are feeling sluggish. However, when children come in from play or have become wound-up, we recommend that you use a Calmer from *The Big Book of Calmers*.

## Who can use Energizers?

Anyone who facilitates a group of learners can use Energizers. We have designed this book for use in primary and secondary schools. However, most of the activities can be adapted for use in an early years setting or with children with special educational needs or for older children. Very young children naturally have a shorter attention span than older children and are frequently more in need of Energizers to help them stay focused.

Weary staff and enthusiastic parents can benefit from Energizers too!



## What type of activities do we include in our Energizers?

There are few limits to what you could use, but generally, we like to include physical activity, popular themes and the use of the senses. These can include:

- clapping games
- singing games
- follow-my-leader games
- miming to a story or a theme
- using kinaesthetic learning opportunities
- games or activities involving simple touch
- using activities to consolidate classroom or healthy living routines
- using drumming, rhythm and rhyme
- challenges for children who need to stretch their minds as well as their muscles.

Each chapter of Energizers is grouped in a particular order. You will find them by the following symbols:



1. **Thumbs up** = activity can be played quickly and easily



2. **Index finger on the chin** = game will take a bit of organising by the teacher



3. **Pointing outside** = game will need a large space





# 14. What a stretch

*This energizer teaches children that stretching movements are useful between sedentary activities because they improve circulation.*

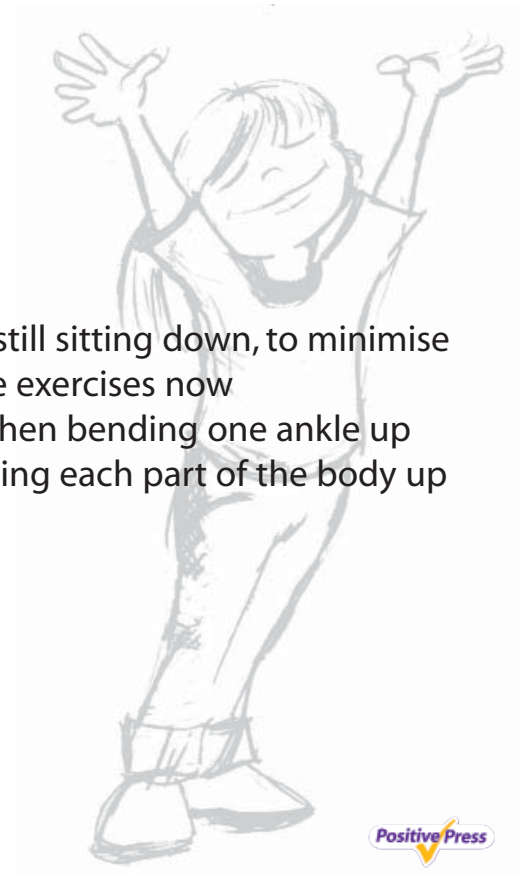
**What you need:** nothing

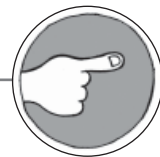
## What to do:

Make sure the children are not standing too close together. Ask children, while standing, to:

- reach up for the sky
- bend over to flop to the floor
- reach to the right
- reach to the left
- reach out in front
- reach up with their right hand
- reach up with their left hand
- reach down sideways with their right hand
- reach down sideways with their left hand
- shake out their hands and then their feet
- ending with a turn-about.

**Tip:** You could develop a little routine they could do whilst still sitting down, to minimise disruption between activities. For instance, you could try the exercises now recommended on airlines: circling one foot, then the other; then bending one ankle up and down, then the other; flexing each knee; and so on, moving each part of the body up to the head and down the arms.





## 25. Best foot forward

*In this energizer, children have to cross the room using movements called by the teacher. The movements require balance and control.*

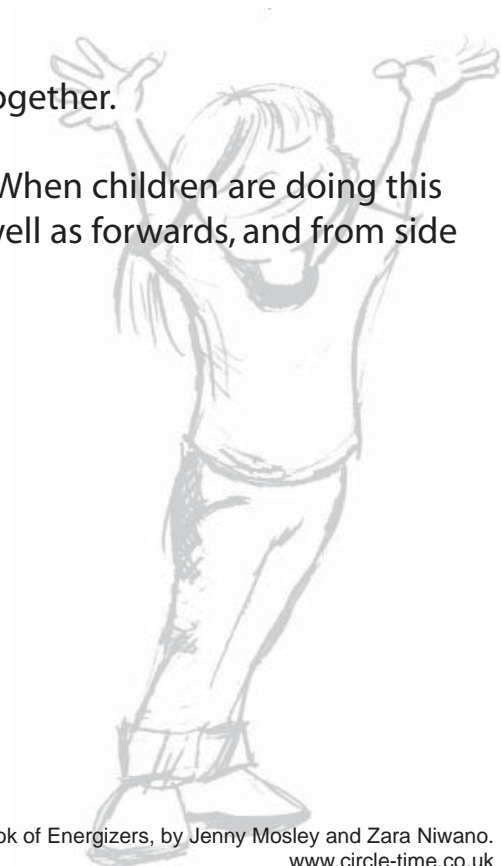
**What you need:** nothing

### What to do:

Start with children standing in a space. Explain that they are to move from one side of the room to the other using variously measured paces. Explain that this is not a race. They are to use Tiny, Small or Large movements forward, as follows:

Toes	Moving forward one set of toes ahead of the other toes
Feet	One foot in front of the other foot
Step	One normal small step forward
Stride	One very large pace forward
Jump	One jump forward, with both feet together.

Vary and randomise the steps forward to make it more fun. When children are doing this easily, ask them to vary their direction, going backwards as well as forwards, and from side to side.







## 76. Class song

*In this energizer, children come together to celebrate their sense of community.*

**What you need:** one large whiteboard and markers, or one large piece of flip chart paper

### What to do:

Tell the children that you think the class deserves its own song and that they are going to choose a tune to use that they all know. Get the children to come up with some positive things they want to say about their class and use their ideas to write a first verse. Then have fun singing it.

**Tip:** This can be put to one side and worked on whenever there is a spare moment to refine the verse and to write other verses, until a whole little class song is ready, for singing all together at the end of the day.



# THE BIG Book of ENERGIZERS

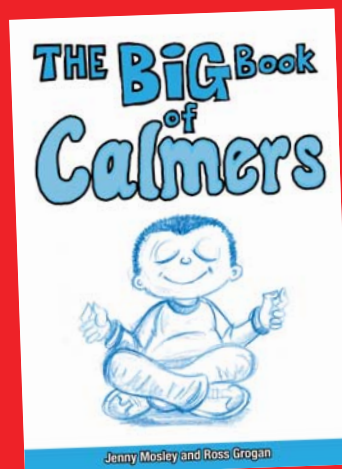
Everyone has those troubling moments when suddenly the levels of energy drop and it is difficult to get children motivated and enthusiastic. Everyone experiences times when some children seem listless and difficult to engage. These are times when everyone needs to take a quick break and do something to revitalise and refresh themselves.

The activities in this book are designed to do just that. A wide range of ideas are included so you will always be able to find something new and exciting. No equipment or planning is needed for most of them and many can be used in confined spaces so you don't need to go to the gym or hall to try them out.

Whenever your children need a quick simple tonic, this book will provide you with a wealth of activities to choose from.

*Jenny Mosley has written the circle time guidance for S.E.A.D.*

*(Social & Emotional Aspects of Development – DCSF 2008) and S.E.A.L.*



We have written The Big Book of Calmers to create a balance!

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