



S.M.A.R.T. learners spinning up success in the classroom

MINNEAPOLIS -- Teachers continue to adopt a Minnesota-based educational curriculum that uses a variety of physical activities to enhance a child's mental ability to learn in the classroom.

Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training (S.M.A.R.T.) is based on the principal that movement anchors learning. It is a curriculum of the [Minnesota Learning Resource Center \(MLRC\)](#), the teacher-training institute of the Minneapolis non-profit agency A Chance To Grow.

"They say that the average 4-year-old has spent 1,000 hours in a car seat. We know that computers and TV kind of rob kids of normal outside activity," MLRC Director Nancy Farnham said.

Farnham says without that activity, the brain stem isn't able to develop enough for a child to be ready for classroom learning.

"The S.M.A.R.T. program works with getting that brain stem developed, stimulated, so it is able to do its work and the cortex is able to do its work as well," Farnham continued.

S.M.A.R.T. activities train the brain and give students the skills they will need to succeed in school. Kids from S.M.A.R.T. classrooms find themselves on everything from balance beams to the monkey bars. Students creep, crawl, spin and bounce. There are also fine motor activities like tracing. Each activity is connected to enhancing a skill the child will need in a school setting.

"These big movements help us with our small learning and small movements," S.M.A.R.T. Coordinator Julie Neumann said of the activities. "Their eyes are getting ready to track, to learn how to look at the board, how to look at their papers, how to read across a line."

Workshops have been used to train more than 3,000 teachers in S.M.A.R.T. techniques. According to the MLRC, the curriculum is now being used in at least 12 states.

More information is available on the [MLRC website](#).

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