

Healthy Movement Furniture Guidelines for Students©

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When introducing new classroom furniture that provides the type of motion we all need to stay awake and alert, we can expect a short “settling in” period. The children will be understandably excited about their new furniture. The following rules have helped to ensure that children use the furniture appropriately:

1. Chairs stay at your desk and in your personal space
 - a. Show children what their personal space is
 - b. Highlight examples of not being in personal space
 1. Rolling away from desk
 2. Rolling onto friends bags or friend’s space
2. Chairs are for sitting and learning (it is a special privilege that they are allowed to try these new chairs)
 - a. Explain that children should be facing their desks and focusing on the teacher or assignment
 - b. Talk about how the children tend to move in traditional stable classroom chairs
 1. Swinging legs
 2. Tilting chair
 3. Leaning
 4. Have children name how they moved
 - b. Show how each new chair can move and explain that different people like different types of chairs and different types of movement, and that we are all different.
 1. Relate new chair movements to old movements in classroom chairs
 - a. Children who like to lean back might like chair with flexible back or rocking chair
 - b. Children who like to wiggle might like the chairs that swivel
 - c. If a child’s feet are not touching the ground, adjust the height of your chair so that feet do touch the ground, or put something like a box or stool under their feet
 - d. Children who like to stand or walk around during instruction might like a standing desk as an option
 - c. Ask children to identify ways NOT to use the chairs and discuss the consequences that might be used (e.g. warning card). Some examples to discuss with the children include:
 1. Spinning
 2. Playing with height of chairs instead of using height adjustment for correct purpose (to increase physical comfort and feet touching the ground)
 3. Rocking really far back so that you almost tip over
 4. Rolling chairs across room when not moving to a new location
 - d. Show different chair backs and explain how everyone has different body shapes.
 1. May find that one chair feels better than another chair
 2. Just because one chair is comfortable for your friend, it doesn’t mean that it will be comfortable for you
3. If available, show standing desks and let them know they are available if the children want to stand up while working.

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