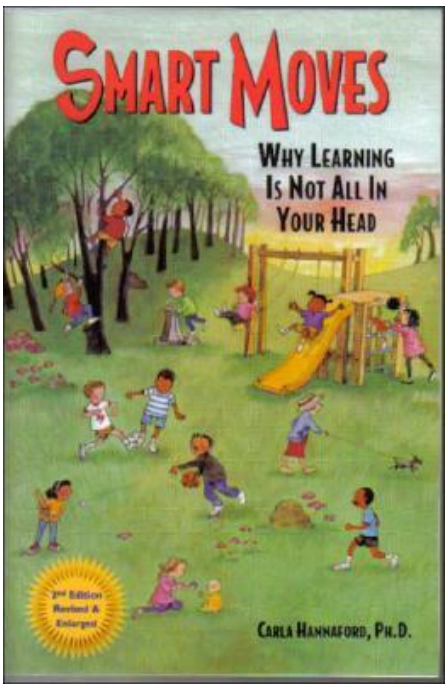


# Smart Moves: Why Learning Is Not All in Your Head

*Carla Hannaford , Candace B. Pert (Introduction)*

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**Smart Moves: Why Learning Is Not All in Your Head** Carla Hannaford , Candace B. Pert (Introduction) Neurophysiologist and educator Dr. Carla Hannaford brings the latest insights from scientific research to questions that affect learners of all ages. Examining the body's role in learning, from infancy through adulthood she presents the mounting scientific evidence that movement is crucial to learning. Dr. Hannaford offers clear alternatives and remedies that people can put into practice right away to make a real difference in their ability to learn. She advocates more enlightened educational practices for homes and schools including: a more holistic view of each learner; less emphasis on rote learning; more experiential, active instruction; less labeling of learning disabilities; more physical movement; more personal expression through arts, sports and music; less prescribing of Ritalin and other drugs whose long term effects are not even known.

## Smart Moves: Why Learning Is Not All in Your Head Details

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# From Reader Review Smart Moves: Why Learning Is Not All in Your Head for online ebook

## Shari says

Technical, yet informative book on using all the resources of the body to support learning. The author suggests a variety of exercises that she calls, "Brain Gym." Her case studies yield incredible results. I am eager to try them out.

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## Pauline says

This book was originally intended for use with children who suffer learning issues due to brain pattern function. It is such a successful method that it is being used in many schools along with newer-developed mindfulness training to help children develop their thought patterns in ways that ultimately teach them how to learn, how to use thoughtful behavior analysis about their own actions in order to help them become self directed in their lives. However, the technique is not limited to the assistance of special needs children...adults of all ages can improve their own brain pattern and behavioral issues using the "brain gym" techniques listed in this book.

References for further information, studies and techniques are included if you need to be convinced of the authenticity of this approach to training one's brain to overcome attention disorders, balance issues and a wealth of other obstacles many people face day to day.

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## Diane says

Amazing book! I learned something new and/or was amazed with almost every new page. I was so impressed I bought it for my own library. Great info on how physical activity can enhance learning for everyone. From making learning easier for kids & adults alike, to keeping the brain sharp & preventing memory loss/dementia in older adults. And much more. One of my favorite reads & I recommend it especially for teachers and parents.

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## Angie says

Great info. It's helpful to find many of the exercises outlined in the book on YouTube. While the photographs included in the book do help translate her explanations of the exercises a bit, videos are the best way to learn these exercises and make them an integral part of the school day.

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## Catherine Mikkelsen says

If you lift the hood on what happens as a child develops, things get really complex, really fast. A baby/to/child's brain is crazily complex.

But we have all sorts of new learning from neuroscientists, and one thing that the new learning has done is absolutely validate what we've been hearing from a group of people for thirty years now: the occupational therapists and movement therapists.

It turns out that many of the pre-academic developmental stages have to do with movement. As Anat Baniel says "Movement is the baby's brain developing." And it turns out that letting your kid fall down, crash into things, learn to balance, and to tie shoes before school starts, is based on really good, if inadvertant, science.

There's a lot of information in this book. Truthfully, it's a bit overwhelming. But if your child has troubles in school, or if your child is going to an OT, pay close attention to the issues, and then look them up in this book to start.

Fascinating and well done.

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## Joyce says

Children need to MOVE throughout the day, not mainly sit still, in order for optimal learning to be facilitated. The author explains why.

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## Katherine says

I agree that (1) movement is important for learning, (2) different people learn and different ways, and (3) that our current educational system needs improvement to address these facts. As for this book, I found it a strange combination of basic neuroscience and brain gym advocacy with a bit too much speculation and reliance on case studies.

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## Cindi says

A fascinating look into brain development and function. I had to buy this book. I'm not quite sure what to do with the Brain Gym exercises. I'm not sure I buy into that part of the book, but I still think anyone with kids should read this book!

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## Cathy says

"Play is the important work of childhood and the base from which all learning grows. Environments that include pleasure, movement and creativity are truly the most successful for learning" Oh yes!!!

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## Carolyn Wilhelm says

The author proves with facts, research, and studies of schools world wide that traditional schools do not

reach all learners, and why. She states, "It is time to see each child and every person as unique learners with their own specific time line and pace of learning."

From labeling children, problem behavior, care of infants and life long repercussions of stress on families, she tells what we must do to fix our schools. Important read!

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## Jane says

I Love this book! It show how movement is so importantly related to learning. I would recommend this book for teachers and anyone else who is interested in how people learn.

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## Robin says

This was a good book on learning and how to view things from a child's perspective with reading aloud versus silent reading. I could go on and on about examples that were beneficial. It is a book I recommend to teachers, parents and advocates. It gives a treasury of information a must read for anyone interested in education.

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## Marcy says

Carla Hannaford is extremely scientific as she explains the "whys" of the difficulties students have as learners. She has helped many students activate their capacity for learning by having students participate in "movements" that will assist brain growth. "Movement facilitates the development of increased blood vessels that carry learning-essential water, oxygen and nutrients to the brain."

There are multiple ways students can awaken and activate their mental capacities which Carla describes in detail in each chapter. " Drama/theater and music will allow students to express their emotions through play and learn via the entire sensory-motor system."

Stephanie Harvey's "toolkit" is a wonderful learning tool that supports Carla's learning research. "Words can only be understood when they provoke some kind of image in the mind of the learner." Stephanie Harvey and Lucy Calkins recommend that students "turn and talk" before they commit to paper. "Talking allows us to organize and elaborate our thoughts. When we talk about what we've learned, the physical movements internalize and solidify it in nerve networks."

Personally, I intend to do many more exercises with my first grade class next year. Carla recommends many simple "Brain Gym" exercises that have proven to enhance children's learning. "It is simply movement, free and easy." Rich sensory and hands-on learning is essential to a child's growth. As a teacher reads to a child, children are totally engaged and listening. "In their brains they are elaborating internal pictures and emotions connected to their already acquired understanding. They are actively forming new nerve networks."

Carla makes many references to the Denmark school system which honors a child's growth, both mentally and physically. "The Danish school system, respecting natural brain developmental patterns, does ot start children in school until six or seven years of age. They teach writing and reading from a holistic, gestalt processing format and then move to the details later, around age eight, when the logic hemisphere is ready to

handle it. Reading is not taught until age eight - and Denmark boasts one hundred-percent literacy." Kindergarten children in the U.S. are learning to read now. It has become so much more academic, leading to stress that directly impacts student learning.

Sipping water throughout the day is essential to a child's well-being. Next year, I am also going to ask parents to pack at least two bottles of water for children to sip. When the water levels in the body are low..."a drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, low energy, grogginess, trouble with basic math, and difficulty focusing on the computer screen or on a printed page."

It is up to parents and teachers to see that their children need to move, (less TV and computer time), in order to think, create and learn. A healthy body plays an essential role in all learning. Carla Hannaford has given me a lot to think about as I continue to teach children and do what is right for them. This is not an easy read, but it is a must read for parents and teachers.

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## Natasha says

The author of Smart Moves, herself a once-struggling student and now a successful biologist, does a good job discussing the strong ties between physical movement and learning. Several things bother me about the book, however. The least offensive is the way the book is illustrated. A good half of the book discusses the intricate workings and physiology of the brain, which is accompanied by hand sketched drawings and very difficult to read, hand written labels. Clearer, more readable diagrams would be a huge plus. Another issue I have with the book was the author's distaste for any sort of learning by rote or memorization. For reasons that are too numerous for me to delve into here, memorization is an excellent skill that needs to be cultivated at a young age *along with* understanding of subject matter. A balance between the two must be struck, but the overwhelming trend in modern education is total avoidance of any memorization whatsoever and Ms. Hannaford seems to subscribe to that point of view. My final complaint is a general tone the author sets that seems to imply that we should only demand of children the things that come naturally and easily to them. Of course children will all have different strengths and talents, but in addition to accepting and celebrating these strengths- which Ms. Hannaford wholeheartedly encourages- we need to develop and fortify the areas in which they are weak. Yes, children should have time to move and shout and play, but they also need to be taught to sit quietly and attentively. Yes, some children are weak in math and strong in art (or vice versa), but that means we should not only foster their art education but also redouble our efforts to improve their math skills.

Many things in this book are done superbly, however. The descriptions of the biological functions behind learning are easily approached by the non-scientist yet are also not overly simplified. Remedies and exercises for various common learning disabilities are presented with easy-to-follow steps and photographs. The author is quite comprehensive, yet concise, in scope, covering movement of the eyes, vestibular system, digestive system, etc.

In summary, an interesting and highly informative but certainly not flawless read.

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## Magda says

I started getting really enthused, but then I looked up "Brain Gym" online and found an overwhelming

number of articles reporting its failure to use actual science. So I feel kinda dumb for being so excited about the methods described in this book. But it did motivate me to empty the dishwasher. Yeah...