**THE WALKING CLASSROOM**

According to Carolyn Johnson, a

Portland, Oregon elementary teacher,

"just about anything you teach in the

classroom can be done on a walk."

Carolyn, a serious walker herself, "takes

her classroom beyond four walls" by

integrating walking into all areas of her

curriculum. She divides walking into

three categories: fitness walking, "take a

break" walking, and walking field trips

and games.

**Fitness Walking**

When Carolyn takes her class on a fitness

walk, she emphasizes a pace that is

consistent, steady, and relatively

uninterrupted. She works on warming up,

cooling down, stretching, appropriate

pacing and good posture with her

students. During fitness walks, she

exposes her class to different walking

paces and varying terrains.

**Take A Break**

Carolyn takes her class on short walks as

a type of mental break. "Studies show that

short walks can give us an energy boost

and help to improve our mood," states

Johnson. She gives her class walking

breaks before an assembly when quiet

sitting will be expected, when they need

a "breather," and when they have been

working hard and need a change of pace.

She also walks with her class the first few

minutes of each recess.

**Discovery Walks**

Carolyn incorporates academics into

walking by taking discovery field trips

around the school neighbourhood. Her

students become meteorologists—

observing, graphing, and measuring

weather, evaporation rates of puddles,

and creating big books based on their

findings. They watch trees change

throughout the seasons, note different

colors, shapes, sounds, and different

types of transportation. After a visit to a

farm, the class walks to a neighbourhood

grocery store to see where the harvested

food goes (and later develop a classroom

grocery store based on their newfound

knowledge).

Carolyn naturally incorporates her

teaching of nutrition and healthy

lifestyle habits into her classroom walks.

"Perhaps the greatest reward from our

daily walks is the growth of each child's

self-esteem. Everyone is successful at

walking and everyone has fun," she

emphasizes.

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