



School: **St. Patrick's School, Washington, IL**

Date: **Winter, 1996**

Grade: **Kindergarten**

Principal Expands School's Brain Gym® Program



Sister Mary Ann Schmitz, principal of St. Patrick's Grade School, showing students how to put their fingers behind their ears for Brain Buttons, a Brain Gym® exercise.

Washington, IL -- At St. Patrick's Grade School. The kindergarten students have become part of the Brain Gym® program that Principal Sister Mary Ann Schmitz hopes to spread through the whole school. The program is conducted by Options Center for Health and Education, Peoria Heights, and is designed to help the children with integration between the right and left brains.

The school first used Brain Gym® with the first grade class this fall and found the students became more focused, more confident and less stressed when doing the exercises. Behavior problems were also reduced. Sister Mary Ann is finding the same results with the kindergartners.

Options Center made the exercises even more simplified than usual for the benefit of the kindergarten students. The goal is to get the students ready to learn and to provide the basic foundation for the right and left sides of the brain to work together for processing auditory and kinesthetic input of information.

One exercise is the "Lazy Eight", in which the students trace an eight on its side with their hands. This exercise helps the six pairs of eye muscles be able to focus on written language.

Sister Mary Ann is excited about the program with the kindergarten students, because the students are excited and are taking the exercises home to share with their siblings and parents. She hopes to introduce Brain Gym® to the preschool students next then continue spreading the program throughout the school up to the eighth grade.

"It's something that should be in every school," says Sister Mary Ann. "Brain Gym® is an educational tool that should be used every day."