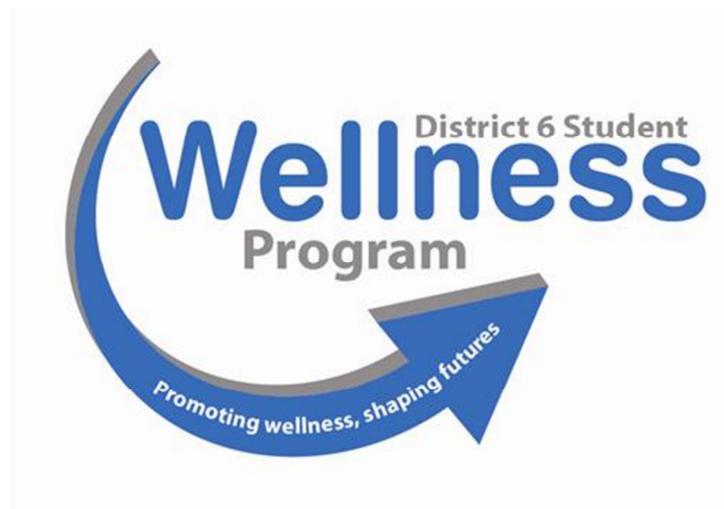


Make Recess Matter



Benefits of Recess

Recess is beneficial for children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical functioning and is a crucial addition to the school day.¹⁻⁵

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that elementary school children participate in recess at regularly scheduled periods during the school day. Recess should be supervised by trained adults who can encourage physical activity, enforce rules, and prevent bullying.⁵

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends elementary school children have unstructured play time in order to increase physical activity and encourage enjoyment of movement. Recess should not replace PE and should not be withheld as discipline.^{2,5}

Students Benefit:

- **Cognitively**
 - Children fidget less and stay more on task when they have recess.
 - Recalling concepts and ideas improves when learning is spaced out rather than concentrated. Recess provides time for the brain to regroup, make connections, and work through concepts.⁴
- **Socially/Emotionally**
 - On the playground, children exercise leadership, teach games to one another, take turns, learn to resolve conflicts, and improve social skills.
 - In a free choice situation, children learn negotiation skills to keep the play going.
 - On supervised playgrounds, particularly where children are taught games and conflict resolution skills, there can be little fighting.⁴
- **Physically**
 - Recess before rather than after lunch leads to healthier eating.
 - Children who are active during the day are more active after school, whereas children who are sedentary during the day tend to remain sedentary after school.⁴

1. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Research Brief. Increasing Physical Activity through Recess. January 2012. www.activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR_Brief_Recess.pdf.
2. Ramstetter CL, Murray R, and Garner, AS. "The Crucial Role of Recess in Schools." *Journal of School Health*, 80(11): 517-526, 2010
3. Anthony D. Pellegrini and Catherine M. Bohn-Gettler. The Benefits of Recess in Primary Schools. *Scholarpedia*, 8(2):30448. 2010.
4. Jarrett O and Waite-Stupiansky S. Recess – It's Indispensable. National Association for Educating Young Children. *Young Children*. 2009
5. Occupational Therapy's Role in Mental Health Promotion, Prevention, & Intervention with Children & Youth. Recess Promotion. The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. Prepared by AOTA School Mental Health Workgroup. 2012

Improving Student Participation

Ensuring students' active participation in school recess can be a difficult task. Following are some ideas for promoting play and activity to all students.

1. **Provide students with active supervision** – Playground supervisors can engage students in activities; teach and participate in playground games to model active behaviors. To that end, greater support on the playground offers supervisors better opportunity for involvement.
2. **Peer Leaders** – Designate responsible older students to act as leaders of activities or games for younger students. Encourage and instruct them in involving students, supervising play, and managing conflict. Provide support to and recognition of these students.
3. **Develop Play Zones** for specific recess activities and games, to avoid interference between activities, conflict, and fighting. Consider blacktop areas for different activities; basketball, 4-square, hopscotch, US Map, chalk art canvases, etc. (see p. 7)
4. **Create Recess Kits-** Kits can include various games and equipment to be used during recess, encouraging greater participation in play. Ensure that students understand the importance of respecting equipment and ensuring that all equipment is maintained and returned after recess is complete. (see p. 6)
5. **Instruct students in recess games and activities.** In order to encourage activity it is important to provide students with options. Take time at the beginning of the school year to teach students various recess games, as part of PE curriculum or during a designated "Play Day" in which time is set aside to allow students to visit various activity stations and learn games from volunteers, playground supervisors, or peer leaders. (see p. 5 for ideas)
6. **Create and enforce playground rules.** Make sure that all students know and understand the rules. Display playground rules prominently in classrooms and cafeterias. Explain that rules are important in allowing all students the opportunity to actively enjoy recess.
7. **Involve students in developing activities.** Make students part of the process to find out their ideas for recess games. Use the Recess Survey. (see p.4)

Recess Survey

Please read each question carefully and answer as completely as you can. The answers to your survey are completely confidential.

1. During recess, do you participate in any sort of physical activity? YES NO SOMETIMES

2. If you answered **YES** or **SOMETIMES**, please list the activities that you participate in, for example: basketball, tag, flag football, jump rope, etc.

3. If you answered **NO**, please explain why you do not participate.

4. What sort of games or activities do you wish there were during recess?

5. If the school had the activities that you listed above, would you participate in recess? YES NO

6. Please include any other comments that you have about recess.

What Grade are you in? _____

Gender - Female Male

Popular Recess Activities

1. 4-square
2. Basketball
3. Soccer
4. Wall-ball
5. Tetherball
6. Walking/running track
7. Hopscotch
8. Football/Flag Football
9. Chalk Art
10. Frisbee
11. Lawn or Blacktop bowling
12. Tag
13. Beach ball Volleyball
14. Capture the Flag
15. Red Rover
16. Kickball
17. Jump Rope/Double Dutch
18. Freeze Tag
19. Hula hoop
20. Additional Blacktop games (see p. 7)



Recess Kit Ideas

A plastic tub or mesh bag can be filled to contain any or all of the following items to encourage active play.

- Sports balls – basketball, football, soccer, volleyball, tennis
- Utility balls – red bouncy balls for kickball, 4-square, etc.
- Flags – for flag football, capture the flag, tag
- Beach balls
- Bean bags
- Hackey sacks
- Hula hoops
- Jump ropes
- Frisbees
- Sidewalk chalk
- Radio/boombox with appropriate music for dancing
- Orange Cones



Blacktop Games

Don't let blacktop areas go to waste. There are many games, activities, and educational opportunities perfect for these areas.

Some Ideas:



- 4-square
- Hopscotch
- Basketball
- Wall-ball
- Blacktop soccer
- Multi-use circles
- US Map
- Checkers/chess

Consider:

- How much space is available for blacktop markings/stencils?
- Which blacktop markings will give you the most options for activities/uses?
- Who will complete blacktop marking projects? Does a work order need to be submitted? Can it be a community or PTO/PTA project?
- What is the best layout for blacktop markings to prevent accident, over-crowding, frustration or fights?
- What is the expense? Is there grant funding available? Who needs to approve the project?

Recess Resources

- www.peacefulplaygrounds.com – Information about recess/playground games, blacktop stencils, grant opportunities, alternatives to removal of recess as discipline.
- www.playworks.org – National nonprofit organization dedicated to providing play and physical activity to schools at recess and throughout the day. Resources for games and activities, implementation strategies, information on trainings and materials.
- <http://www.ciraontario.com/content/RecessRevival.pdf> - Ontario School District's approach to improving activity at recess.
- http://www.candoonline.org/sites/default/files/C7_HealthyParties.pdf - Includes great ideas for healthy activities, both inside and outside.
- http://www.activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR_Brief_Recess.pdf - Summary of research surrounding the benefits of recess and recommendations for implementing stronger recess policy and promotion.
- www.womenssportfoundation.org – options for involving girls in active play.

For more information about improving recess possibilities at your school, please contact: district6-wellness@greeleyschools.org