

Promote Active Recess

Kids
Can Do
it!



Active Recess – It’s More Than Just Good Fun!

After a long decline, recess is making a comeback in many schools. For years schools have been cutting back on students’ “free time” to devote more attention to core subjects. But now regular vigorous movement is being recognized as important to students’ health, as well as their ability to learn. While school time allocated to PE is limited, recess is scheduled for more periods each day, making it important for the promotion of physical activity.

Outside of PE classes, recess is the only time during most school days that kids can be active. While recess provides excellent opportunities for kids to be active, studies have found that kids spend less than 50% of recess time engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity. Training teachers, playground supervisors, and peer leaders to promote physical activity during recess is a practical solution to reducing inactivity in children.

Encourage Active Recess!

- Encourage all kids to be physically active during recess.
- Recess supervisors can promote active play during recess by:
 - walking around the playground and encouraging kids to be active
 - explaining and demonstrating active games to kids
 - being great role models by participating along with kids whenever possible
- Have peer leaders, teachers, and parent volunteers lead active games and activities during recess.
- Provide space, facilities, equipment, and supplies that can make active participation in physical activity during recess appealing to kids.
- Have lots of playground equipment readily available and kids will play!
- Play fun, movement-motivating music during recess.
- Create a playground games activity card box. Post cards around the playground that describe different games and activities – use games and activities that kids have developed themselves.

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- Teach kids traditional playground games. Many kids seem to have lost the art of playing and many of the once traditional games seem to have disappeared.
- Designate areas for specific activities. This ensures that certain sports don’t dominate the playground and allows room for other activities to take place.
- Schedule recess before, rather than after lunch. Studies have shown that kids eat healthier, perform better academically, and have improved behavior on the playground, in the cafeteria, and in the classroom when recess comes before lunch.
- Don’t take away recess, equipment, or any form of physical activity to discipline kids. Avoid making kids run laps or do push ups as a form of discipline.
- Give kids extra recess as a reward.

Benefits of Active Recess...

- Increases kids' physical activity levels (energy expenditure) which improves fitness and health
- Teaches movement and dexterity skills
- Promotes FUN and participation
- Promotes development of social skills such as negotiating, decision making, and cooperating with minimal adult interference
- Promotes fair play
- Reduces bullying
- Promotes creativity and problem solving skills
- Teaches cooperation and respect for others
- Provides equal opportunity for all students
- Is co-ed and inclusive of all students
- Promotes multiculturalism
- Emphasizes having fun, not winning or losing



If You Build It, They Will Play

If we want kids to be more active, we need to build fun playgrounds. A study of 24 public middle schools in San Diego County revealed that boys and girls who attend schools with enticing play areas and adult supervision were the most physically active. Conversely, an absence of fun, inviting play areas was associated with near-zero levels of student physical activity.

Source: Sallis, et al., American Journal of Public Health, 2001; 91, 618-620

Support Active Recess

Providing age-appropriate equipment, fun playground markings, and physical activity games and ideas are great ways to help kids be active during recess.

Active Recess Kit!

- Balls of every kind: utility balls, soccer balls, basketballs, beach balls, foam balls, softballs, whiffle balls, tennis balls
- Jump ropes (long and short), Jumpsies (elastic)
- Soft frisbees, rubber animals
- Sidewalk chalk, lawn bowling balls and pins
- Hackey sacs, bean bags
- Flags, scarves, parachutes
- Racquets, soft bats, scoops, hockey sticks, broom ball sticks
- Hula hoops, pool noodles
- Nets and hoops of every kind - target nets, basketball hoops, hockey nets

Creative Play Zones!

More than likely your school has some empty pavement waiting to become an exciting play area! Paint your school's tarmac with fun games such as hopscotch, four square, dodge ball, court games, mazes and tracks.

Creative Activities!

- Create a "dance zone", play music and have a dance contest
- Play "spaghetti and meatballs" with pool noodles
- Balance bean bags on your head
- Play "flying rubber chickens"
- Create fun relay games
- Do activity circuits to music
- Hula hoop

Resource:

Active Playgrounds:

A resource featuring over 100 playground games. www.mohawkcollege.ca/external/circa/template/resources.html

CanDo – Coalition for Activity and Nutrition to Defeat Obesity
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