**Recess Resources**

**From Researchers, Experts, and National Organizations**

* <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220679809597584?journalCode=vjer20>
	+ **1998** research on impact of recess on classroom behavior
		- Within subjects design
			* Differed on recess and non-recess day, becoming more on task and less fidgety when they had recess
		- 60% of children (including all 5 with ADD & balance of boys & girls) benefited
			* They worked more or fidgeted less (or both) on recess days
	+ **Recess** – break in whatever one is doing “a period of time away from the task at hand; an interlude, a change of pace”
		- Adult equivalent of recess, the coffee break, is an opportunity to move around and to socialize
	+ “The need for schoolchildren to be physically active, to talk with peers, and to play freely”
		- Recess is i**nternationally important**
	+ For schools that may have PE and not recess, when the students have PE at the beginning of the day it does not allow them to have an instructional break
		- They also do not get to move freely and interact spontaneously
	+ Jambor and Guddemi (1992) and Pellegrini (1995**) ID 3 major arguments that schools have to justify the abolition of recess**
		- 1. There is no time for recess because more instructional time is needed to raise test scores
		- 2. Recess disrupts the work patterns of children, causing high levels of excitement and subsequent inattentiveness
		- 3. Recess encourages aggression and anti-social behavior
	+ Pellegrini and Bjorklund & Smith (1993, 95, 97) ID several ideas to support recess as useful instructional practice
		- **Surplus of energy** – Herbert Spencer in 1898 accumulates when one is engaged in sedentary activities and that an opportunity for physical activity is needed to blow off steam or use the surplus energy
		- **Novelty arousal** theory – persons function better when they have a change of pace – when they become **habituated** in an activity they become bored and seek novelty
		- Principle of **massed vs. distributed practice** – memory recall improved when learning is spaced rather than massed (distributed over time)
		- **Recess could be seen as spacing between time**
* A Research-Based Case for Recess.

<http://www.playworks.org/sites/default/files/US-play-coalition_Research-based-case-for-recess.pdf>

* Journal of School of Health – Crucial role of recess in schools 2009 <http://www.ohioactionforhealthykids.org/wp-content/documents/CrucialRoleOfRecess.pdf>
	+ Reallocating time to accentuate academic concerns is a growing trend and has put recess at risk
	+ At the same time pressure to increase activity in school has come from efforts to combat childhood obesity
	+ Themes of the articles supported recess as beneficial for children’s cognitive, social, emotional, and physical functioning
		- Optimal recess = well-supervised & safe
		- Crucial components = well-maintained playground equipment & well trained supervisors
	+ “Recess is a complement to, not a replacement for, physical education. Both promote activity and a healthy lifestyle”
		- Recess (unstructured & free play) provide unique contribution to child’s creative, social and emotional development
		- Should not be withheld as punishment
		- The **longest recess time is in rural areas, shortest in cities, shortest for schools where 75% of kids qualify for free lunch**
* <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/131/1/183.full> Pediatrics
	+ Pediatrics stance on importance of recess – various benefits (social, cognitive, physical)
		- Structured vs. Unstructured recess
		- Time to rest, play, imagine, think, move and socialize
		- Students are more attentive and better able to perform cognitively after recess
		- Helps young children to develop social skills that are otherwise not acquired in the more structured classroom environment
	+ Many schools wellness councils adopt “Recess before lunch” stemming from studies that examine food waste by students in relation to timing of recess – CDC supports
		- Japan primary children have 10-15 minute break every hour – fact that attention spans begin to wane after about 40-50 minutes of intense instruction
	+ **Recommendations for recess**
		- Necessary break
		- Cognitive processing and performance depend on regular breaks from concentrating
		- Recess is complement to, not a replacement for physical education
		- Recess can serve as a counterbalance to sedentary time and contribute to recommended 6 0minutes of moderate to vigorous activity/day (AAP)
		- Structured or unstructured, recess should be safe & supervised
		- Peer interactions during recess are a unique complement to classroom
			* Communication, negotiation, cooperation, sharing, problem solving, coping
* <http://www.learningfirst.org/cutting-physical-education-and-recess-troubling-trends-and-how-you-can-help> Cutting PE and Recess: Troubling Trends & How You can Help
	+ **2001 passage of No Child Left Behind Act**
		- Schools have struggled to find ways to meet act’s rigorous assessment standard
		- Cut PE/Recess or time withheld as punishment or extra tutoring
	+ **National PTA** – resolution on recess (<http://www.pta.org/about/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3954>)
	+ National Association for Sport and Physical Education recommend 20 min of recess
	+ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 2007 36% of children receive the recommended amount of physical activity
	+ American Academy of Pediatrics ‘recess crucial & necessary component to child’s development’
	+ National Wildlife Federation Initiative to get 10 million more American children outside since they spend only minutes/day outside but as much as 7 hours in front of computer/TV
	+ Few efforts at a national, state, or district level promoting the adoption of policies supporting recess or PE
		- National Institute of Health – report that recess more likely to be scheduled at schools/in districts/states with a recess policy in place
		- FIT Kids Act – contact congress on Fitness Integrated with Teaching Kids Act
		- NFL Back to Sports – encourage students to join sports teams & get active
		- Fire Up Your Feet by Safe Routes to School National Partnership and Kaiser Permanente
		- Let’s Move – 60 min of physical activity while raising money for schools
* <http://www.nctq.org/docs/school_recess_classroom_behavior.pdf> School recess and group classroom behavior
	+ Findings: 8-9 year olds having at least 1 daily recess period of more than 15 minutes was associated with better teacher’s rating of class behavior scores
* <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1750946711000560>
	+ Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder recess is helpful in allowing them to socialize more with peers and practice social interactions
		- Peers are models of target behavior or therapists with an active role in promoting and reinforcing target behavior
* <http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/bytopics.php?topicid=3120>
	+ This list the existing policies for every state
	+ Lists:
		- General Physical Activity Requirement
		- Recess or Physical Activity Breaks
		- Recess Before Lunch
		- Walking/Biking to School
* <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/pdf/LWP_Recess_Brief.pdf>
	+ CDC Supporting Recess in Elementary Schools
		- Can improve children’s physical, social & emotional well-being and enhance learning
		- Can help children to meet the goal of 60 minutes of physical activity every day
			* (Recommended by the US Department of Health & Human Services)
	+ What actions have school districts & states taken? (2011-2012 BTG Study)
		- Districts:
			* 60% of districts had no policy regarding daily recess for elementary schools
			* 22% required daily recess for elementary school students
			* 18% recommended daily recess
				+ Less than 1/3 encouraged at least 20 minutes
			* <7% required set amount of time for physical activity
				+ 2/3 included recess in definition of PA
			* 3% suggested specific amount of time for PA through school
		- State:
			* 5 states required daily recess for elementary school students
				+ 1 required at least 20 minutes
			* 8 states recommended daily recess
				+ 2 states recommended at least 20 minutes
			* 10 states required a set amount of time for physical activity
				+ ½ included recess in definition of PA
			* 4 states recommended a specific amount of time for PA through school
	+ Lists suggested actions that schools districts and states can make to improve recess
* <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2015/february/recess-benefits-school-021115.html>
	+ Recess may help kids feel more engaged, safer and positive about the school day
	+ Recess can promote a positive school climate that is linked to attendance and achievement (especially in low income elementary schools)
	+ 4 key elements for students:
		- Physical and emotional safety at school
		- Positive relationships with peers and adults
		- Support for learning
		- Institutional environment that fosters school connectedness & engagement
	+ The quality of recess does play a role
		- Adults are important to the recess experience
		- Well-run & well-organized recess seems to be better
* <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ945713.pdf>
	+ Spring 2011 – Recess Makes Kids Smarter
	+ Parent says that nowadays, kids don’t know how to socialize among other groups
	+ Trend of recess cuts dates back to the late 80s, but the No Child Left Behind Act accelerated it
		- Main concerns with recess have been instruction time, safety, lack of supervision, and subpar playground equipment
	+ All work no play has not settled well with **parents and teachers**
	+ Bringing back recess has been prompted by the obesity epidemic & Michelle Obama’s spotlight on childhood health
		- New brain research showing links between physical activity and learning
		- Coaches setting up new games that make recess run more smoothly
		- Parents banding together with teachers to change policy
	+ The decision of whether or not to have recess is usually a local school decision
	+ 2/3 of principals report taking away recess as punishment for behavior problems or not finishing work “The State of Play” 2009 survey
	+ Recess has taken hardest hit in urban areas & less likely to get recess for African Americans (39% don’t get recess; 15% of whites)
		- Living below poverty line (44% poor children; 17% others)
		- Struggling academically (25% scored below mean on standardized test; 15% who scored above)
		- 2003 Research issue of “Teachers College Record”
	+ ¾ **Parents** say that recess should be mandatory
		- Survey by the “National Parent Teacher Association”
	+ 8/10 **Principals** 2009 say recess has a positive impact on academic learning
	+ Ultimate goal in many states is to pass legislation so that recess could not be eliminated by individual schools
	+ Improving Recess for better supervision and equipment
		- **Teachers** in schools that partner with Playworks said that they reclaim up to 40 instructional hours/year because students return without the same drama from recess
	+ It is important that kids have free time to play outside of adult parameters