**Recess Resources**

**Teachers’ and Educators’ Voices**

* <http://fairtest.org/no-time-recess-no-need-nap>
  + List the different areas around the country that have eliminated recess
  + “more is better” school systems eager to find more time to cram math and English test preparation
  + Resistance mainly comes from **parents** who worry kids overall well-being will suffer since loss of play, exercise & socializing
    - **PTA** President in Nevada – “they need to burn off the energy and get outside”
  + **Educators** question the issue of squeezing out time for recess “bemoaned the limits on recess and other chances to blow off steam”
  + **Expert** dean of the College of Education at the University of Nevada challenged quantity-over-quality approach
    - She blames the **No Child Left Behind Act** and related policies that ignore the benefits to breaks during the school day
* <http://www.npr.org/2013/11/07/243713419/trim-recess-some-schools-hold-on-to-childs-play>
  + With the help of **Playworks** schools are pushing back against recess cuts
    - California mandates 400 minutes of play/month
    - Report that kids in areas of concentrated poverty & low-income neighborhoods are far more likely to see cuts in recess time than schools in wealthier districts
      * More likely to have no recess at all
      * **Kids may not have a safe and secure place to play outside in their neighborhood**
      * Some parents may not emphasize outdoor play – where are they going to get their physical activity?
  + **Teacher** said “it’s a sad testament, to how some schools and neighborhoods have de-emphasized play and recess, just as kids ramp up screen time on tablets and smartphones”
* <http://www.milforddailynews.com/article/20141003/News/141008578>
  + Teachers expressed concern that kindergartener-2nd grade students’ lack of morning recess makes them stressed and unruly
  + Teachers are also concerned that recess and snack time are not considered instructional time
    - “the social skills kids learn at recess – create games, maintain games, problem solve – are things kids can’t learn from a teacher”
* <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/04/04/hard-times-for-recess/?_r=0>
  + Studies of social and emotional learning indicate that students do better socially & academically when they learn how to understand their emotions, empathize with others & make good decisions – recess helps this development as these processes are at work when kids are playing with others (if it is well-run)
  + Principals say that recess is not what it used to be
    - Principal reports that injuries & fights in elementary schools are now more common
    - Oakland principal said “recess is meaner than it used to be”
      * Why they think that they can do without it
    - Article argues that educators can use recess as an opportunity to make the school a happier place, facilitate healthy development and enhance academic performance
  + Playworks program costs about $25,000 to bring the program to a school
    - Sends trained, full-time play coaches who organize play opportunities for kids during recess & lunch but also during class and after school
    - Currently in nearly 250 urban schools of low-income students in 15 cities
  + It may be argued that this structured play is not good, but it argues that “we don’t let children loose in the water before they can swim, so why throw them onto playgrounds before they can structure their own play”
    - Skills that make play possible are not innate, but learned
    - Nowadays children do not spend as much time just playing outside due to the fear of safety issues, so they do not get this proper practice
    - The coaches organize the playground, but want the kids to learn to do it on their own
  + Principals say that within 3 months of Playworks where ¼ of students were previously active in play increased to about 80-90% involved in games by choice
    - They say that the schools feel safer and more relaxed