

Recess



Recess is a time during the day where children can move and interact with their peers. This time contributes specifically to the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the child.

General Guidelines

- All schools are required to schedule a minimum of 20 minutes of recess every day.
- Recess should not be scheduled directly before or after physical education.
- Teachers may not withhold recess as a consequence for incomplete homework or use as a group punishment. Instead, consider:
 - [Choice boards](#)
 - [60 Alternatives to Withholding Recess](#)
 - [PBIS](#)
- When recess is indoors, limit screen time and consider the [Indoor Recess Toolbox](#).

Benefits of Recess

- Improves students' learning and overall academic achievement
- Increases classroom engagement
- Reduces disruptive behavior in the classroom
- Lowers stress in students
- Leads to greater on-task behavior
- Improves students' memory, attention, and concentration
- Supports social-emotional development by improving social skills such as negotiating, decision making, and cooperating with others
- Promotes fair play
- Allows students to learn which physical activities they enjoy, fostering lifetime activities
- Supports the normal growth and physical development of students
- Helps students meet the nationally recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity

Benefits of Recess Before Lunch

- Improves cafeteria atmosphere—students are more relaxed and focused on eating rather than the playground
- Improves student behavior because they have expended energy outside at recess
- Can reduce classroom discipline problems—students are calmer when they return to the classroom
- Increases food consumption—more nutrients and fluids are consumed; less plate waste = less trash

Supervision Responsibilities

Administrators

- Ensure that playground inspections are completed
- Check the grounds before and after recess
- Be sure there is adequate supervision

Administrators and Teachers

- Have a working knowledge of the playground equipment and precautions needed for safe use
- Be sure that communication is available between the office and the playground (i.e., walkie talkie, cell phone, etc.)

Teachers

- Provide 100% attention to the area you are supervising
- Rotate around the play area; be sure you can see all the students
- Report concerns with equipment/grounds to the administration
- Have a first aid kit readily available

Weather-Related Guidelines

- Decisions relating to scheduling indoor recess should be made by the principal or their designee.
- Consider the following when making the decision to go out or to stay in for recess:
 - *Temperature* – *Wind Chill*
 - *Humidity* – *Air Quality*
 - *Condition of the play space*
- Students will not be outdoors when the temperature—inclusive of the wind chill factor—is below 32 degrees.
- Children with special health conditions may need special accommodations during cold weather. Parents of those children are to provide medical documentation and/or be consulted to determine if other arrangements are necessary.
- Refer to the [heat-related restrictions](#) from the Athletic Handbook.

“Recess is important because it is one thing that helps me stay calm throughout the day because I know I will eventually have a break. It helps with stress and meeting new friends.”

—Seth, 5th grade, Marley Elementary

Recess



Recess is a time during the day where children can move and interact with their peers. This time contributes specifically to the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the child.

General Guidelines

- All schools are required to schedule a minimum of 20 minutes of recess every day.
- Recess should not be scheduled directly before or after physical education.
- Teachers may not withhold recess as a consequence for incomplete homework or use as a group punishment. Instead, consider:
 - [Choice boards](#)
 - [60 Alternatives to Withholding Recess](#)
 - [PBIS](#)
- When recess is indoors, limit screen time and consider the [Indoor Recess Toolbox](#).

Benefits of Recess

- Improves students' learning and overall academic achievement
- Increases classroom engagement
- Reduces disruptive behavior in the classroom
- Lowers stress in students
- Leads to greater on-task behavior
- Improves students' memory, attention, and concentration
- Supports social-emotional development by improving social skills such as negotiating, decision making, and cooperating with others
- Promotes fair play
- Allows students to learn which physical activities they enjoy, fostering lifetime activities
- Supports the normal growth and physical development of students
- Helps students meet the nationally recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity

Benefits of Recess Before Lunch

- Improves cafeteria atmosphere—students are more relaxed and focused on eating rather than the playground
- Improves student behavior because they have expended energy outside at recess
- Can reduce classroom discipline problems—students are calmer when they return to the classroom
- Increases food consumption—more nutrients and fluids are consumed; less plate waste = less trash

Supervision Responsibilities

Administrators

- Ensure that playground inspections are completed
- Check the grounds before and after recess
- Be sure there is adequate supervision

Administrators and Teachers

- Have a working knowledge of the playground equipment and precautions needed for safe use
- Be sure that communication is available between the office and the playground (i.e., walkie talkie, cell phone, etc.)

Teachers

- Provide 100% attention to the area you are supervising
- Rotate around the play area; be sure you can see all the students
- Report concerns with equipment/grounds to the administration
- Have a first aid kit readily available

Weather-Related Guidelines

- Decisions relating to scheduling indoor recess should be made by the principal or their designee.
- Consider the following when making the decision to go out or to stay in for recess:
 - *Temperature* – *Wind Chill*
 - *Humidity* – *Air Quality*
 - *Condition of the play space*
- Students will not be outdoors when the temperature—inclusive of the wind chill factor—is below 32 degrees.
- Children with special health conditions may need special accommodations during cold weather. Parents of those children are to provide medical documentation and/or be consulted to determine if other arrangements are necessary.
- Refer to the [heat-related restrictions](#) from the Athletic Handbook.

“Recess is important because it is one thing that helps me stay calm throughout the day because I know I will eventually have a break. It helps with stress and meeting new friends.”

—Seth, 5th grade, Marley Elementary