Changing Policy and Practice to Support Students’ Physical Activity
Recess

• The Fourth R\(^1\)
  
  - “Time scheduled during the school day, but outside the classroom allowing students to participate in both physical and social activities of their choosing”

\(^1\)Waite-Stupiansky & Findley, 2001
Benefits of Recess

• Improves classroom behavior and concentration\textsuperscript{2} – May improve academic achievement
• Provides an opportunity to have fun, socialize and play
• Helps children accumulate recommended amounts of activity and supports a healthier lifestyle
• Recess can contribute as much as 40% of a child’s daily physical activity

\textsuperscript{2}Beighle, 2012
Why should we have recess?

96% of principals say recess has a positive impact on social development.  

Retrieved from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [RWJF], 2010
97% of principals say recess has a **positive** impact on **general well-being**\(^3\)

\(^3\)Retrieved from RWJF, 2010
The state of recess in our schools today

- All elementary school children should have recess daily
  - What are they really getting?
    - 7% of 1st graders and 8% of 3rd graders have never had recess\(^4\)
    - 14% of 1st graders and 15% of 3rd graders only receive 1-15 minutes of recess\(^4\)
  - Only 12% of schools require recess
  - Only 20% of districts have wellness policies requiring recess

\(^4\)National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2005
Percent of Schools Reporting No Recess

Source of Data: NCES, Fast Response Survey System, 2005
Percent of Schools Reporting No Recess

Source of Data: NCES, Fast Response Survey System, 2005
Percent of Schools Reporting No Recess

Recess Offered by Minority Enrollment

- >50%: 16.67%
- 21-49%: 5.72%
- 6-20%: 6.3%
- <6%: 3.3%

Source of Data: NCES, Fast Response Survey System, 2005
Recess Offered by Free and Reduced Lunch

- >75%: 21.7
- 50-74: 6.23
- 35-49%: 5.38
- <35%: 4.3

Source of Data: NCES, Fast Response Survey System, 2005
Time Spent in Recess by Gender

- All children should be given opportunities to be active during recess
  - Girls are active 15%-52% of recess time
  - Boys are active 16%-68% of recess time

Source of Data: NCES, Fast Response Survey System, 2005
Recess Time vs. Other Subjects

Percent of districts that decreased lesson time

- Recess
- Art/Music
- Science
- Social Studies
- PE

Percent of districts that increased time

- Math
- ELA

Source of Data: McMurrer, 2008
The decline of school recess

40% of school districts have reduced or eliminated recess to free up time for core academics

Retrieved from RWJF, 2010
The decline of school recess

25% of elementary schools no longer provide **recess** to all grades\(^3\)

\(^3\)Retrieved from RWJF, 2010
Get Ready for Recess with Research-Based Solutions

• Now what?
Ready for Recess: How it Works

• Train recess supervisors\(^5\)
• Divide the play space into “activity zones”\(^6\)
• Provide recess equipment to encourage children to be active\(^7\)
• Several low-cost approaches can increase student physical activity\(^8\)

---

\(^5\) Connolly & McKenzie 1995; Huberty, Siahpush, Beighle et al., 2011
\(^6\) Ridgers, Stratton, Fairclough et al., 2007
\(^7\) Verstraete, Cardon, De Clercq et al., 2006
\(^8\) Loucaides, Jago, & Charalambous, 2009; Huberty, Siahpush, Beighle et al., 2011
Ready for Recess: Research Results

- Recreational equipment + staff training = Improved physical activity

![Bar chart showing physical activity outcome during recess and school day](chart.png)

Source of Data: Huberty, Siapush, Beighle et al., 2011
Ready for Recess: More Research Results

• Recreational Equipment & Staff Training
  – 6% more time spent in MVPA in overweight girls
  – 19% more time spent in MVPA in healthy weight boys

• Staff Training
  – 4.5% more time spent in MVPA in overweight boys

Source of Data: Huberty, Beets, Beighle et al., 2011
Ready for Recess: More Research Results

MVPA Increase During Recess

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Increase in Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonwhites</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source of Data: Siahpush, Huberty & Beighle, 2012
Ready for Recess: Staff Perceptions

• Physical activity is important
  – After recess children were: “ready to learn more instead of being so hyperactive in class…”

• Physical activity is the responsibility of the school
  – “…we don’t have as much recess as we used to.”
  – “Pretty much just PE.”

Source of Data: Huberty, Dinkel, Coleman, et al., 2012
Ready for Recess: Staff Perceptions

• Staff responsible for encouragement & behavior
  – “I jumped rope with the kids the other day…they were really excited because that was their teacher."
  – “…just get them out of their seats now and then to do jumping jacks. Do something.”

• Academic time limited recess time
  – “We don’t have the time.”
  – “..you have to teach and if you are out at recess you’re not teaching.. can’t meet the standards.”

Source of Data: Huberty, Dinkel, Coleman, et al., 2012
Ready for Recess: Policy Details

• Employ qualified persons
  – All staff should be trained to implement physical activity for youth

• Support staff with professional development training
  – Engage in activity to encourage and promote physical activity
  – Modify for specific populations (i.e., girls)
  – Equipment use during recess
Ready for Recess: Policy Details

• Policy requiring a safe environment with activity promoting equipment
  – Fancy equipment is not needed
  – Offer recreational equipment and train staff on how to use to encourage physical activity
  – Consider asking youth what they would like to have on the playground
Ready for Recess: Policy Details

• Partner with community stakeholders to enhance physical activity during recess
  – Stakeholders can contribute funds for equipment and trainings, and volunteer to supervise and mentor during recess
  – Utilize university students in need of experience
    • Help with physical activity trainings
    • Teach new activities
  – Partner with corporations
    • Many corporations have volunteer programs for employees to work with schools
Ready for Recess:
Policy Details

• Designate a school physical activity director to oversee recess offerings
  – Assist in planning environment and assure equipment is available
  – Help to engage community stakeholders
How do I get staff to buy-in?

- Model enthusiasm
- Provide professional development
- Emphasize attention and behavior benefits of recess
- Provide funds for equipment
- Encourage teachers to provide recess and play with the kids to see them in a different light
Ready for Recess: Final Thoughts

- More frequent, but shorter, recess periods
- Activity time should not be taken away during recess for punishment
- Temperature policies
- Extra recess as a reward or party “treat”
References


References


Ready for Recess: Resources

• livewellomaha.org/ReadyforRecess/

• Take this quick survey for a chance to win a prize!
“Ready for Recess” works to improve physical activity of children by encouraging school administrators, educators, staff and parents to maximize the benefits of recess

Jennifer Huberty, Ph.D.       Aaron Beighle, Ph.D.
jennifer.huberty@asu.edu       aaron.beighle@uky.edu
Thank You!

NATIONAL Physical Activity SOCIETY

ASU School of Nutrition & Health Promotion

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Active Living Research
Using Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity and Create Active Communities

live well omaha
Douglas County Putting Prevention to Work

UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Omaha

emspace GROUP