

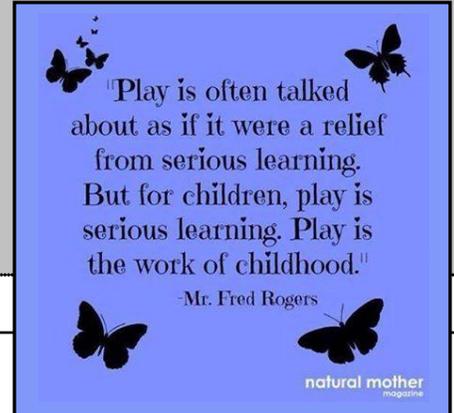
Public School Recess – H833/S1002

Why is recess important?

Recess as a part of the school day is well researched and supported by leading national organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, the National Wildlife Federation, National PTA, Florida PTA, the Florida Education Association, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education. Recess is also supported by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services.

Some of the benefits/information associated with recess and listed below were found by researchers to be a critical component of healthy child development and include:

- Lifelong skills acquired for communication, negotiation, cooperation, sharing, problem solving, and coping are not only foundations for healthy development - but more predictive of future success than any other measure.
- Optimizes social, psychological, emotional, physical and cognitive development.
- Maximizes learning effectiveness and retention.
- Improvements in classroom behavior, memory and attention.



What do child health experts say?

The American Academy of Pediatrics

- "Recess is unique from, and a complement to, physical education—not a substitute for it. Recess is a crucial and necessary component of a child's development and, as such, it should not be withheld for punitive or academic reasons."
- "Physical education is an academic discipline. Whereas both have the potential to promote activity and a healthy lifestyle, only recess (particularly unstructured recess) provides the creative, social, and emotional benefits of play."
- "Optimal cognitive processing in a child necessitates a period of interruption after a period of concentrated instruction. The benefits of these interruptions are best served by unstructured breaks rather than by merely shifting from 1 cognitive task to another to diminish stresses and distractions that interfere with cognitive processing."
- Recommend that districts provide at least 20 minutes of daily recess for all students in elementary schools.

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

- Educational Leaders can feel confident that providing recess to students on a regular basis may benefit academic behaviors, while also facilitating social development and contributing to overall physical activity and its associated health benefits.

National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education

- Recess is an essential component of education and that elementary school children must have the opportunity to participate in regular periods of active, free play with peers.
- The disturbing phenomenon of reducing/eliminating recess has no serious research to back it up, and is actually counter-productive to increasing the academic achievements of students.

National Association for Sport and Physical Education

Recess and physical education are different.

- "Physical education provides sequential instruction to enhance the development of motor skills, movement concepts, and physical fitness. Recess provides unstructured play opportunities that allow children to engage in physical activity."
- "Quality physical education and daily recess are components of the elementary school educational experience that enable students to develop physical competence, health-related fitness, personal and social responsibility, and enjoyment of physical activity so that they will be physically active for a lifetime."

National Association for the Education of Young Children

- "We believe that recess is a right, not a privilege."
- "Depriving a child of recess as punishment is similar to depriving a child of lunch. It is not only unfair, it is also unhelpful. Just as hungry children cannot concentrate well, children deprived of breaks cannot concentrate well either. Sometimes the most disruptive children need recess the most."