

# ACTIVE RECESS!



**Recess should never be denied, withheld as punishment, or used as a time to make up incomplete academic work.**

Active recess means kids are getting real physical activity during recess, rather than sitting and talking. Active recess periods allow students to release energy and reduce stress. This helps improve classroom attention and decreases disruptive behavior! Aim to have all students be physically active during the majority of recess time through age appropriate games and other organized activities.

## Help ensure your school's recess periods are active:

- Commit to active recess as a school-wide practice. Everyone can play a role! The classroom teacher can help teach new rules of activities, while the physical education teacher can help teach new activities. The art teacher may help develop new rules posters. The school counselor and school nurse can help integrate safety and social rules.
- Review and improve, if needed, recess areas. If possible, establish safe grassy, blacktop, and playground equipment areas. Paint colorful markings on blacktop.
- Allow all children to participate in recess activities. Avoid withholding recess from students who misbehave in other academic classes.
- Allow children at different developmental levels private use of large equipment area (swings, climbing equipment, and slides). For example, avoid having fifth grade students play on the large structures at the same time as the first grade.
- Provide a consistent set of rules for each area of the playground. Post them where all can see.
- Plan out age-appropriate activities and obtain needed supplies and equipment.

- Teach kids appropriate use of each area of the playground.
- Increase the use of games and equipment during recess by providing equipment choices for each area of the playground.
- Teach appropriate games at each grade level.

**TIP:** Both physical education and classroom teachers can integrate games into units.

- Examples of some popular games include: Four Square, Longball, Basketball, Around the World, Tetherball, Multi-Use Circle, Wallball, Alphabet Track, Running Track-Painted Line, Tricycle Track, Volleyball, Prisoner Court, Skipping Track, US Map, and Hopscotch.

- Let kids use pedometers at recess. Track movement as a classroom activity!
- Consider having recess before lunch (students play and then eat).
- Develop an active recess handbook for the school and orient all playground supervisors.

