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”
  – If my school offers recess, children will be active...right?!

\(^1\)Waite-Stupiansky & Findley, 2001
Ready for Recess: Benefits

• Improves classroom behavior and concentration\(^2\)
  – 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

\(^2\)Beighle, 2012
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
    - 14% of 1st graders and 15% of 3rd graders only receive 1-15 minutes of recess
  - Only 12% of schools require recess
  - Only 20% of districts have wellness policies requiring recess

\[^3\text{National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2005}\]
Recess Offered by Region

- **West**: 5.3%
- **Central**: 8.3%
- **Southeast**: 17.8%
- **Northeast**: 6.8%

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

Percent of Schools Reporting No Recess

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

Source of Data: NCES, Fast Response Survey System, 2005
State of Recess by Gender

- Girls are active 15%-52% of recess time
- Boys are active 16%-68% of recess time
  - Higher percentages only when programs are offered

Source of Data: NCES, Fast Response Survey System, 2005
Percent of districts that decreased lesson time

-60
-40
-20
0
20
40
60
80

Recess Time vs. Other Subjects

Source of Data: McMurrer, 2008
Ready for Recess: Staff Perceptions

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

• 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

• 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
Recess Should be Efficient:
But how?
How to get Ready for Recess

- Train recess supervisors\(^4\)
- Divide the play space into “activity zones”\(^5\)
- Provide recess equipment to encourage children to be active\(^6\)
- Several low-cost approaches can increase student physical activity\(^7\)

\(^4\) Connolly & McKenzie, 1995; Huberty, Siahpush, Beighle et al., 2011
\(^5\) Ridgers, Stratton, Fairclough et al., 2007
\(^6\) Verstraete, Cardon, De Clercq et al., 2006
\(^7\) Loucaides, Jago & Charalambous, 2009; Huberty, Siahpush, Beighle et al., 2011
Train Recess Supervisors

- Organize
- Supervise with participation
- Integrate new activities
- Offer age and gender appropriate activity
- Encourage and support
Divide the play space into “activity zones”\(^8\)

---

\(^8\) Huberty, Siahpush, Beighle et al., 2011; Ridgers, Stratton, Fairclough, et al., 2007
Provide Recess Equipment

- Fancy equipment not required
- Check out equipment
- Rotate equipment
  - New vs. Old?
Providing opportunities for children to be active at recess: Ideas for zones

- Instructional Videos
  - Walking Trail
  - Dance
  - Four Ball Soccer
Ready for Recess: Process

Trained Recess Supervisors
+ Activity Zones
+ Equipment
=
Low-cost approach to physical activity
Ready for Recess: 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: 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/

• [Facebook icon]

• [Twitter icon]

• Take this quick survey for a chance to win a prize!
“Ready for Recess” works to improve the 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

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

EmSpace Group