

Recess Resources



2025-2026

Why is Recess an Important Part of the Day?

Research shows that recess can have a positive effect on students' social, emotional, and physical health. Quality recess has been shown to correlate with increases in desirable classroom behavior and academic achievement. Better recess can promote a better experience in school in four significant areas:

1. Less bullying
2. Increased feelings of safety
3. Increased vigorous physical activity
4. Enhanced readiness to learn

This document has resources that you can use at your school for recess. There are slides on playground expectations that you can use as an example, links to great webinars for recess supervisor training, examples of what equipment works out at recess, and much more. Hopefully this document is helpful to you!

[10 Reasons Why Recess is so Important](#)

[Washington State law re: recess](#) - Number of minutes **RCW 28A.230.295**

Slides:

[Slides to "Playground Expectations"](#) - These are sample slides for you to use at your school. Make a copy of these slides to make them your own!

[Slides to "Recess Supervisor Training"](#) - Slides for recess supervisors on the importance of a safe playground and how to implement simple tips to make it a successful playground.

Conflict Resolution:

"CREED"

C = [Conflict resolution](#) - teach students the skills

R = Rules - clear and consistent

E = Equipment - adequate and not too much

E = Expectations - consistent throughout the whole school

D = Designs - create zones and activities for students to do when at recess

3 Ways to Solve Problems:

1. Teach students to walk away from the problem
2. Talk with the person re: disagreement
3. Rock, Paper, Scissors if you cannot agree

"Tattling vs. Telling":

Tattling = Getting someone in trouble

Telling = Getting someone out of trouble

Resources:

"Recess before Lunch"



Recess before lunch (RBL) is currently being offered in a few of our schools and it has been found to be successful for many reasons, mainly student behavior.

What are the benefits?

- Nutrition - Students eat more fruits and vegetables and drink more milk
- Less waste – Students are found to eat more thus less waste of food
- Better behavior – Students are calmer if they have had recess first, behavior was better on the playground, in the classroom, and in the lunchroom

What are the drawbacks?

- Changing the school schedule!
- Paraeducator time – are the paraeducators available for recess/lunch?
- Parents worry that it is too long for a child to wait to eat lunch (especially if the child doesn't eat breakfast)

There have been many studies about having recess before lunch and principals say that students make better choices about what they eat and always drink their fluids. Principals have also reported that behavior is always better in the classroom if they have recess first because students come into the classroom more settled, calmer, and ready to begin eating lunch.

[Peaceful Playgrounds](#)

This organization has a ton of resources and is extremely helpful when planning on what is important to include in your recess plans. [Top 5 Tips for Making Your Playground Kid Friendly](#)

Webinar: There is a webinar recording on the Peaceful Playgrounds website about how to conduct a peaceful playground. Highly recommended to view with a team of recess supervisors!

[Implementation Packet: Guide to an Active Playground](#)

[Reducing Chaos on the Playground](#)

[Playworks](#) - Great resource! Game library along with conflict resolution strategies.

[Dr. Recess](#) - Great resource with a good blog to follow on the importance of getting students to move during recess time!

Recess Activities:

- Maximize space = Minimize conflict
- More choices, less problems
- Use the blacktop, the play structure, and the grass areas as activity zones

[How to Play 4 Square](#)

[5 Essential Games for Outdoor Recess](#)

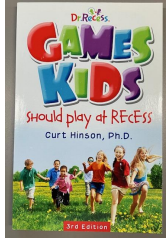
[How to Play Ga-Ga Ball](#)

[Games for Recess from Playworks](#)

[How to Play Recess Soccer](#) - Great video to show at the beginning of the school year!

Games Rules:

- Consistent
- Game of the Day or Week - change it if there are daily issues or when students get bored
- Show a powerpoint/slides in the classroom on recess games and rules
- Post rules
- Safe use of equipment
- ALL games are open to anyone!
- A book recommendation for recess games, "Dr. Recess: Games Kids Should Play at Recess" by Curt Hinson, Ph.D



Equipment:

1. Make sure there is enough but not too much “goldilocks rule”
2. 1 piece of equipment per 10 kids
3. Establish a tracking system with a sign in and sign out. Have a clipboard, an equipment manager (student job), and a simple sign out/in sheet with a pencil.
4. When a student checks it out, they are more likely to be responsible for the equipment.

Ideas for Recess Equipment:

[School Specialty](#)

[Gopher Recess Equipment Packs](#)

[Noah's Playground](#)

[Discount School Supply](#)

[Recess Bags](#) - What's in the recess bags? How to organize the recess bags?

[Best Recess Equipment](#) - Good recommendations for equipment at recess.

[Sensory Path Ideas](#) - Looking for ways to get kids moving?

Behavior:

When a student has misbehaved, give a warning. If the student keeps offending, they need to complete a “think lap” to think about their behavior and how to change it. A “think lap” is a walk, jog, or run around the field (or on the jogging path). Sometimes students need to complete multiple “think laps” but that is okay because it is much better for their brains to keep moving instead of standing on the wall in time out.

If it is a serious threat or issue, complete a playground report. When a student has violated the unsafe behavior then action needs to be taken. The recess supervisor needs to complete the playground report and give it to the classroom teacher (not the student). If a student receives 3 reports, then communication needs to go home. If your school doesn't have a playground report, create one and make copies handy to have ready in the recess supervisor's pack.

“Good Sport Award” - Reward good behavior! Create a simple ticket or reward system for catching good behavior out at recess. Create positive relationships with students by pointing out

when a student is successful, kind, helpful, and demonstrates good sportsmanship. Use students as leaders at recess time! Students love to help and they can be great referees, equipment managers, recess coaches, and mentors to the younger students.

Indoor Recess Activities:

1. Ask your PE teacher if they have cup stacking. If so, the kids can have contests on how fast they can build a cup stack of 3-6-3. Give them a timer and they can race. They can also compete as teams. [link to cup stacking video here](#) - Have students watch the video to get inspired.
2. Yoga with Adrienne - [link here](#) Turn off the lights, let kids take their shoes off, and have them do some yoga. It's so good for them!
3. Silent Ball - [link here](#) - Make it a competition and they will love it!
4. Rock-Paper-Scissors Battle - [video link here](#) Show the video and they can play along!
5. Go Noodle Indoor Recess - [video link here](#) Go Noodle gets kids moving and they can follow along and it offers a little bit of exercise!
6. Best Games of All Time - [link here](#) Heads Up 7-Up, Hangman, and Telephone - Kids love these classics!