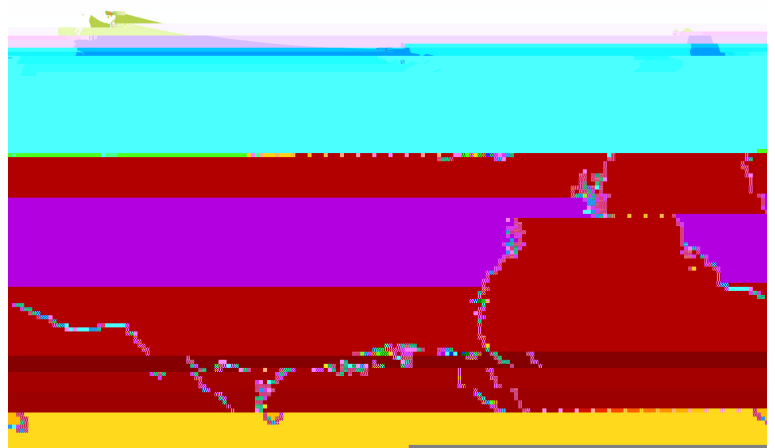




KEEP RECESS IN SCHOOLS



On average, elementary schools schedule students to have 27 MINUTES of recess each day.**¹

***Among elementary schools in which students participate in regularly scheduled recess.*

While elementary schools are meeting the national guidance to provide at least 20 minutes of daily recess, there are still many that do not offer recess. Even for those that do, school recess practices can be stronger and more comprehensive.

54% of elementary schools prohibit or actively discourage staff from excluding students from all or part of recess as punishment for bad behavior or failure to complete class work.¹

11% of elementary schools have all their classes schedule recess immediately before lunch.¹

30% of elementary schools have students participate in physical activity in the gym, multi-purpose room, or cafeteria when the weather does not permit outdoor recess.¹

49% of elementary schools use the safety checklist and equipment guidelines published in the Handbook for Public Playground Safety.¹

What are ways to improve recess?

National guidance for recess in schools

The following can guide policies for recess:

- Provide all students K-12 with at least 20 minutes of recess daily (or similar daily period of physical activity).
- Prohibit replacement of physical education with recess or using recess to meet time requirements for physical education policies.
- Provide schools and students with adequate spaces, facilities, equipment, and supplies for recess.
- Ensure that spaces and facilities for recess meet or exceed recommended safety standards.
- Prohibit exclusion of students from recess for disciplinary reasons or academic performance in the classroom.
- Prohibit use of physical activity during recess as punishment.
- Provide recess before lunch.
- Provide staff members who lead or supervise recess with ongoing professional development.

Practical strategies and resources