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| STRATEGY 4 | Active Recess |
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| “Snapshot” | | | | |
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| Description: | | | | |
| The goal is to have all students engaged in physical activity during the majority of recess time through age appropriate games and other organized activities. | | | | |
| Resources Needed: | | | | |
| Funding | Staff Time | Prep Time/Materials | Training | |
| Varied according to current supplies and playground. | Variable depending on how recess has been managed in the past. | Summer break is the best time to prepare the playground. Community and staff working together will help with preparation time. | Staff training for Playground aids and teachers for playground games/activities/rules. | |
| Facilities and Equipment Needed: | | | | |
| Facilities | Equipment | Set up / take down time | Transportation | Custodial |
| Safe locked storage of all recess equipment. | Bouncy balls Basket balls Jump ropes Chinese Jump ropes Soccer balls Hop Scotch Striking equipment Tether balls | Initial preparation of the playground is needed. | None | Blacktop and grassy play area must be kept clean of debris; large playground equipment must be checked for safety seasonally. Any fencing must be routinely checked for safety. |
| Evaluation: | | | | |
| Observation and children being more active during recess. | | | | |

Description and Rationale:

Active recess involves purposefully designing the playground and recess activities to encourage physical activity for all students. It also involves including a minimum of 20 minutes of recess each day for students in elementary and middle school. Active recess incorporates activities on the grassy areas or fields, blacktop surfaces, and playground equipment. Active recess provides children with a guarantee of non-structured play each day, with equipment and supplies needed to be physically active on the playground. It provides some structure to recess and may include several activity stations scattered around the playground and green spaces.

For maximum impact, use active recess as a school-wide practice for all students. For greatest success, all school personnel must take an interest in the play and activity of children. 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.

Many playgrounds include three play areas: blacktop, grassy areas, and playground equipment. Following are ideas to increase activity in two of the three areas:

- **Blacktop:** Games and activities safe for the blacktop are generally bouncing and jumping games. Examples include: Four and Two Square, jump rope activities, hop scotch, basketball, net games, and all activities where markings have been painted on the blacktop. For safety reasons, most educators avoid kicking games or striking games on the blacktop.
- **Grassy areas:** Grassy areas are safe for kicking, running, striking, and fast paced activities including but not limited to: soccer activities, striking games or field games, tag games, and running type challenges. Areas for kicking games must be separated from playground equipment.

Active recess provides standards-based and progressive instruction of movement skills. Recess provides children with much needed unstructured activity time. Recess is not a replacement for physical education. It should be considered an important activity supplement, and another opportunity for children to accumulate 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Recess also allows children to release energy and reduce stress, both of which help improve attention in the classroom and decrease disruptive behavior.

An active recess will include children participating in developmentally appropriate play where they may explore, stimulate their imagination, and develop critical thinking skills as they take a break from a structured classroom.

The benefits of active recess include the following:

- Unstructured play helps children manage stress and reduce anxiety.
- Recess creates a setting in which children learn and practice social skills and must be creative with how they choose to spend their free time.
- Children who take breaks between performing school tasks are more attentive and alert afterward.
- Recess allows children to explore, which stimulates their imaginations and fosters critical thinking skills.
- Breaks between rigorous studying or working improve brain function and memory.
- Children who receive more recess behave better and are likely to learn more.¹

CDC Recommendation: Schools should incorporate at least 20 minutes of recess per day in addition to physical education classes.²

Active recess relates to NASPE Standard 3: Participates regularly in physical activity; Standard 4: Achieves and maintains a health enhancing level of physical fitness; and Standard 5: Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.

¹ *Huntington Learning Center Glendale Feb. 1, 2010 – Global Press Release Distribution* citing a 2009 study at Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine

² Burdette et al, 2007 [Strong inverse association between physical fitness and overweight in adolescents: a large school-based survey](#). *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act.* 2007 Jun 5;4:24.

Action Steps:

1. Commit to active recess as a school-wide practice.
2. Review and improve, if needed, recess areas. If possible, establish safe grassy, blacktop, and playground equipment areas. Paint colorful markings on blacktop.
3. Develop an active recess handbook for the school and orient all playground supervisors.
 - Allow all children to participate in recess activities. Avoid withholding recess from students who misbehave in other academic classes. Recess should never be denied, used as punishment, or as a time to make up incomplete academic work.
 - Allow different developmental levels private use of large equipment area (swings, climbing equipment, and slides). Avoid allowing fifth grade to play on the large apparatus at the same time as the first grade.
4. Provide a consistent set of rules for each area of the playground. Post them where all can see.
5. Select appropriate activities and obtain needed supplies and equipment.
6. Teach children appropriate use of each area of the playground.
7. Increase the use of games and equipment during recess. Provide equipment choices for each area of the playground.
8. Teach appropriate children's games at each grade level. 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 Hop Scotch.
9. Consider pedometer play at recess.
 - Integrate math and physical activity while challenging the children to more physical activity.
10. Consider recess before lunch (students play and then eat).

Examples:

Portland area schools integrated recess as a school project to make recess safe and give students ownership of their recess, while all school personnel helped in the transition from a chaotic recess to a time well spent.

http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2009/04/portland_schools_make_recess_f.html

Gibraltar's Active Recess

Our activity time is actually an extension of PE. It is not recess time. It is a 30 minute structured time with many cooperative games, aerobic games, and skill-related games to encourage use of skills used in PE. I have created all my lessons. I have used many sources. I have taken time to teach some games that could transfer to the playground during recess.

Contact Chris Zvara
Physical Education teacher, Gibraltar Elementary School

Resources:

School playground design. Information on the planning and design of playgrounds for varying age levels, including resources on safety, accessibility, equipment, surfaces, and maintenance.
<http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/playgrounds.cfm>

Games. [Ultimate Playground and Resource Game Book](#) offers a variety of activities for an active recess.
<http://www.gameskidsplay.net/>

Peaceful Playgrounds <http://www.peacefulplaygrounds.com>

Pedometer resources

Lesson plan <http://www.uen.org/Lessonplan/preview.cgi?LPid=16271>)

Log It Home, a pedometer recording program for 3rd grade and up.
<http://www.peclogit.org/logithikepreview.html> <http://www.peclogit.org/logit.asp>

WE Count Walking Program integrates walking programs and pedometers into recess.
<http://www.peacefulplaygrounds.com/pedometers.htm>

Playground Passes:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20030802120604/http://www.prairie.ca/~roakden/playpass.htm>

Lunch before recess http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin389.shtml

Rules of play http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin519.shtml

SPARK After School <http://www.sparkpe.org/after-school/>

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| STRATEGY 5 | Active Classrooms |
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| “Snapshot” | | | | |
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| Description: | | | | |
| The goal is to have schools build into their daily schedule at least two 10 minute physical activity breaks, not including PE or recess, that are led by the classroom teacher. | | | | |
| Resources Needed: | | | | |
| Funding | Staff Time | Prep Time/Materials | Training | |
| Minimal for supplies. | Two 10-minute activity breaks integrated into the school day. | Resource books with appropriate activities | Teacher In-service | |
| Facilities and Equipment Needed: | | | | |
| Facilities | Equipment | Set up / take down time | Transportation | Custodial |
| Classroom | Varied according to grade band and activity. | None | None | None |
| Evaluation: | | | | |
| Wellness breaks, energy breaks, and academic integrated movement activities are present in the daily schedule. | | | | |

Description and Rationale:

Active classrooms means integrating movement breaks, also known as energizing breaks or brain breaks, outside of physical education and recess, into the school day. The goal is to have schools build into their daily schedule at least two 10 minute physical activity (energizing or brain) breaks, not including physical education or recess, that are led by the classroom teacher. Regular breaks improve learning because they give students time to make sense of information. In the classroom, children need breaks for learning to be effective.³

Active classrooms helps meet NASPE Standard 3: Participates regularly in physical activity.

Action Steps:

1. Talk with school administration regarding what a movement (brain or energizing) break is and how to implement them in the classroom.
2. Purchase or develop a document that has numerous movement break strategies and give it to every teacher.
3. Train staff on when and how to do these breaks in a staff development experience.
4. Have staff implement one strategy per week until every staff member feels comfortable with the practice.
5. At staff meetings, periodically share movement break ideas.

³ Lamprecht, Clinton. 2004. *Teaching Expertise*. Optimus Professional Publishing.

6. Place movement break time slots in the school schedule as appropriate.
7. Develop grade level movement break booklets to be used each year.

Examples:

Physical Activity Breaks across the Nation: <http://www.healthiergeneration.org/schools.aspx?id=3459>

Yoga as a School-Wide Intervention

Hawley Environmental School, a K-5 Milwaukee Public School serving about 330 children, provides mental health services, which are part of a larger health initiative. Survey results from staff, students, and parents about mental health concerns indicated that it would be a priority to provide a stress reduction intervention. After some research and discussion with staff, we decided to pursue yoga as a primary prevention strategy. A local program called YogaKids provided training to three school staff to teach yoga to school-aged children. Teachers provide yoga in grades K4 – 2nd, 4th, and 5th grades. Third grade will be added later. For more information, contact Patriq DuSaint, PhD.

Resources:

1. Promoting Physical Activity and Health in the Classroom. Pangrazi R., Beighle, A., Pangrazi, D. (2008). http://wps.aw.com/bc_pangrazi_classroom_1/97/24889/6371694.cw/index.html

This contains individual lesson activity cards for the classroom teacher.

- Implementing the Instructional Activities (11 cards)
- Classroom-Based Activities (68 cards)
- Large Area Activities (46 cards)
- Basic Skills (36 cards)
- Sports on the Playground (37 cards)
- Multicultural Activities (28 cards)
- Nutrition and Sun Safety Activities (18 cards)
- Health and Fitness Activities (24 cards)

2. [Brain Breaks](http://www.emc.cmich.edu/brainbreaks/), A Physical Activity Idea Book for Classroom Teachers. <http://www.emc.cmich.edu/brainbreaks/>
3. [Classroom Energizers](http://www.ncpe4me.com/energizers.html) for elementary and middle school classrooms helps teachers integrate physical activity with academic concepts. <http://www.ncpe4me.com/energizers.html>
4. [JAMmin' Minutes](http://healthetips.com/archive.php): a free resource that is emailed to the teacher each week. The JAMmin' Minute is a series of five exercises that take only a minute to do. Teachers or students can lead these energizing breaks. <http://healthetips.com/archive.php>
5. [You've Gotta Move](http://www.healthyschoolsms.org/ohs_main/youvegottamove.htm): an activity-based program designed and delivered as an engaging combination of dance, activity and music for kindergarten to second grade students. http://www.healthyschoolsms.org/ohs_main/youvegottamove.htm
6. [Lift Off! 10-Minute Physical Activity Breaks](http://www.toniyancey.com/liftoff.html): a teacher activity resource. <http://www.toniyancey.com/liftoff.html>
7. Yoga Tools for Schools <http://www.yogakids.com/tfs-overview.php>

8. Disarming the Playground Through Movement and Pro-social Skills.
<http://www.hancockcenter.net/disarm.html>

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| STRATEGY 6 | Open Gym Time |
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“Snapshot”

Description:
The goal is to have the gym and perhaps other physical activity facilities available to students, staff, and family members to be physically active before and after school and during the lunch hour. The facilities must be conducive to physical activity, which would include adequate space, time, equipment, and supervision being available.

Resources Needed:

| Funding | Staff Time | Prep Time/Materials | Training |
|------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| For staff. | Supervision of facility. | To organize facilities and staff, to schedule and monitor. | Supervisor in-service may be needed. |

Facilities and Equipment Needed:

| Facilities | Equipment | Set up / take down time | Transportation | Custodial |
|---|---|-------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Gym, field house, pool, and/or strength center. | Varies according to grade band, activity, and facility. | Varies | None | Varies |

Evaluation:
Students actively participating in properly supervised open gym activities outside of school times. Gym, field house, pool, and strength center are open for all students, not only student athletes. Calendars of open facility times and activities are easily accessible and updated.

Description and Rationale:

Open gym provides access to the gym and/or other athletic facilities of the school to all students, and perhaps staff and family members. The facilities are used for self-directed or minimally structured physical activity before and after school and during the lunch hour. The gym environment must be conducive to physical activity, which means that adequate space, time, equipment, and appropriate supervision are available.

Open gym provides another opportunity to promote general physical, mental, and emotional well being for students and families, and helps form student and family attitudes toward leisure time activities.

Open gym helps meet NASPE Standard 3: Participates regularly in physical activity.

Action Steps:

1. Conduct a needs assessment to determine available time, available facilities in school, interest by students and families, school and community commitment support, including staffing, for open gym and other facilities.
2. Determine which groups will be allowed to use the facilities. In addition to students, this may include staff and/or family members.
3. Develop a schedule that includes the following: available facilities such as a field house, gym space, pool, or weight room, available time (both in school and out of school), and activities that could be done during this period.
4. Develop and obtain approval for a budget that includes the cost of supervision and equipment.
5. Assign or hire and orient gym supervisors.
6. Develop promotional pieces to make the community aware of open gym availability. Consider having the students develop promotional posters. Promote the availability and publish the schedule.
7. Monitor open gym to help prevent and solve any problems.
8. Count attendance for each open gym period to help promote continuation of this strategy.

Examples:

Since open gym and access to school physical activity facilities are common practices, examples are not provided here.

Resources

Please refer to after school programs section for programming ideas, if desired.