



NASPE Resource Brief **Recess**

Recess and play are an incredibly essential element of a child's development. This developmental enhancement extends beyond the physical component and into the realms of social, emotional, and cognitive development. Ultimately, the inclusion of recess enhances the overall educational experience of the student and the student body. From increasing time spent in active play, to increasing academic achievement, to improving conflict resolution and cooperation, the inclusion of recess into a school's curriculum is fundamental to facilitating a holistic developmental experience. Some of the further benefits to recess are listed below.

Physical

- The daily exercise that results from recess helps to improve health and physical fitness, and helps to control childhood obesity. Because of the continually-growing threat of inactivity in a child's world, the importance of physical activity-promoting recess is at a premium. Further benefits of recess include the facilitating of proper growth and increasing bone mineral mass.

Social

- The use of free play and activity allows children to engage in numerous open scenarios. This element of recess allows children to improve upon sharing, communicating, problem solving, and respecting rules and order. In fact, many of the skills nurtured through the recess and free play experience are those that promote good citizenship and civil discourse – skills salient to succeeding in social environments years later.

Emotional

- Beyond the physical and social benefits derived from the recess experience, children experience emotional benefits as well. Playing at recess reduces anxiety and aids in stress management. It also builds self-esteem and self-worth and promotes relaxation between classes. Similarly, recess allows for solitary play, providing students with an individual outlet away from others, thus, promoting independence and individual exploration.

Cognitive

- Recess facilitates learning in the classroom by enhancing cognitive development. Children who play at recess are provided with a necessary break from the classroom experience which allows the children to improve attention and concentration levels while in class. Free play also encourages creative thinking and provides a medium for imagination development and self-direction.

NASPE Resources

- [Recess for Elementary School Students](#) – NASPE Position Statement on the benefits for recess for elementary school students.
- [Recess Benefits](#) – NASPE position statement on the importance of recess as a component to the overall development of children.
- [Why Children Need Physical Education](#) – Benefits provided to children by a quality physical education program.
- [Is It Physical Education or Physical Activity?](#) – NASPE believes every child deserves both a quality physical education and physical activity program. Understanding the difference between the two is critical to understanding why both contribute to the development of healthy, active children.

Contact Info

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Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

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