

Restoring a Research-Based 20-minute Daily Recess For Alabama's Elementary School Students

Alabama Families for Recess Intent:

We seek to assure that

- Each district school board shall be required to provide 100 minutes per week of supervised, safe, and unstructured free-play recess* for all elementary school students (unstructured outdoor play, or unstructured indoor play for inclement weather); at least 20 consecutive minutes daily.
- Free-play recess may not be withheld for academic or punitive reasons.
- Recess shall not be a substitute or replacement for daily P.E. requirements.
- There is a review of [Virginia HB1419](#) which requires acceptance of free-play as instructional time.

The current Alabama Course of Study for Physical Education recommends "that both recess time and Physical Education be included in the daily elementary school curriculum," and that "recess time should not replace, interfere with, or be scheduled before or after physical education instruction."

*The Center for Disease Control describes recess as, "regularly scheduled periods within the elementary-school day for unstructured physical activity and play."

A Small Sampling of Research-Based Support:

- "Following recess, children are more attentive and better able to perform cognitively... 9,15,20,21,24"
Ramstetter, C. L., R. Murray, et al. (2010). "The Crucial Role of Recess in Schools." *Journal of School Health* 80(11): 517-526.
- "Minimizing or limiting recess can negatively affect academic achievement, as growing evidence links recess to improved physical health, social skills, and cognitive development." American Academy of Pediatrics. 31 December.2012, www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/AAP-Considers-Recess-a-Necessary-Break.aspx. Accessed 27, May 2018.
- "Research has shown that play enhances cognitive, social-emotional, and motor skills...and that play can help develop many of the skills necessary to function successfully in the older grades. It is in the school's best interest to continue to support recess..."
Jones, R. B. (2005). "A Cognitive Approach to Elementary School Recess." *Teaching Elementary Physical Education* 16(2): 33-34.
- "We found no research to support administrators' assumptions that test scores required by No Child Left Behind could be improved by keeping children in the classroom all day."
(2009). "Recess--It's Indispensable!" *YC: Young Children* 64(5): 66-69.
- "... off-task behavior may offset any potential benefits of an increase in allocated instructional time. Although recess does take away time from the classroom, optimal recess period(s) may potentially promote academic achievement by increasing on-task behavior or academic engaged time."
Ridgway, A., J. Northup, et al. (2003). "Effects of Recess on the Classroom Behavior of Children With and Without Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder." *School Psychology Quarterly* 18(3): 253-268
- A nationwide, scientific survey of principals enlisted through the National Association of Elementary School Principals found that, "principals unequivocally see recess as an asset to learning..."
Robert Wood Johnson, F. and P. National Association of Elementary School (2010). *The State of Play: Gallup Survey of Principals on School Recess*, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

2018 Alabama Families for Recess

For more information contact a recess parent or Alabama PTA:

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Daily Recess Supporters Include (Among Others):

Alabama Legislator, Representative Barbara Drummond (103rd District)

Alabama PTA

American Academy of Pediatrics

"Cognitive processing and academic performance depend on regular breaks from concentrated classroom work. This applies equally to adolescents and to younger children. To be effective, the frequency and duration of breaks should be sufficient to allow the student to mentally decompress."

American Academy of Pediatrics, Alabama Chapter

Center for Disease Control, US Department of Health & Human Services

Recess benefits students by

- Increasing their level of physical activity.
- Improving their memory, attention, and concentration.
- Helping them stay on-task in the classroom.
- Reducing disruptive behavior in the classroom.
- Improving their social and emotional development (e.g., learning how to share and negotiate).

National Association for Sport and Physical Education

"...all elementary school children should be provided with at least one daily period of recess of at least 20 minutes in length."

National Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

"National PTA and its constituent associations support at least one period of recess for at least 20 minutes for each elementary student every school day..."

State Statutes:

Arizona: Two recess periods.

Connecticut: No less than 20 minutes,

Florida: 20 consecutive minutes free-play recess, daily.

Missouri: Minimum of one 20-minute period daily.

New Jersey: Minimum 20 minutes daily.

Virginia: Unstructured recess to be considered instructional time

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