The Importance of Recess

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Goals and Objectives of this presentation

By the end of this presentation, the teachers present will understand...

- The **Psychosocial** benefits of recess
- The **Sensorimotor** benefits of recess
- The **Social** benefits of recess
- The **Cognitive** benefits of recess
- The **Health** benefits of recess
Introduction

- 40% of elementary schools in the United States
  - Reducing, deleting, or considering deleting recess

- Research shows:
  - Children learn through play

- Interconnectedness of areas
  - Various areas overlap; all benefited by recess
Play enables kids to experiment with bodily sensation with objects and people.

For example, infants push and grab objects to make interesting things. They may push a ball and crawl after it.
Motor Skills

Through recess, children
- Learn about their bodies’ capabilities and how to control their bodies (body awareness, motor planning)
- Practice physical skills, such as running, climbing, jumping, chasing, traveling, batting, kicking, catching, balancing, hanging, swinging, stretching, pushing, and pulling.
Perceptual Skills

- The senses of smell, taste, touch, and the sense of motion through space are important to learning.

- These perceptual abilities may suffer because children watch TV, play computers, video games, etc.
Vestibular

- This area is critical to our attention system, because it regulates incoming sensory data.
- Helps us keep our balance, turn thoughts into actions, and coordinate movements.
- Playground activities stimulate inner-ear motion, like swinging, rolling, and jumping.
Proprioception

- Kinesthetic awareness, or the ability to know where your body parts are in 3-dimensional space, is required for every movement we make.
- It's an awareness of time, space, and place.
- It allows for posture and balance to be performed in the most energy efficient manner.
- Proprioceptive sensory organs are found in two distinct groups which are located in either muscles or tendons, or within the connective tissues.
- When there is a communications breakdown, or when improper information is supplied by one or more of these sensors, efficiency of movement decreases.
- This is harmful and possibly injurious to the muscles and joints, and results in problems with postural coordination and/or joint alignment.
Children learn best through play
- Until at least age 9
- Because of
  - Involvement of multi-systems
  - Use of hands-on, manipulative, exploratory behavior
  - Children view play as meaningful

“Children can remember more, focus better, and regulate their own behavior better in play than in any other context” (Guddemi et al., p. 5).

Children then transfer that which is learned in play to other contexts.

Social interaction + Physical Activity facilitates cognition
- Increase of blood flow to brain helps with retention of material during learning
Cognitive
- children learn through play

- **Physics**
  - see-saw, merry-go-round, swings

- **Architecture and design**
  - building blocks

- **Math and numbers**
  - counting, keeping score

- **Language development**
  - explaining, describing, seeking information
Problem Solving Skills

- The unstructured play of the recess environment
  - Assists children in expressing and working out their own problems
  - Helps children develop skills of empathy
  - Increases cooperative, helpful behaviors
Creativity and Pretend Play

- Pretend play allows children to carry out active roles and transform objects into something else. They can express their ideas and feelings about different things.
- It helps them to develop a good imagination.
Attention Span

- “Multiple studies show that, when recess time is delayed, elementary-school kids grow increasingly inattentive. Goodbye recess, hello Ritalin.” (Education Reporter, 2001)
- Having a break separates learning material from one class to another. Thus, it allows the children to retain the information better.
- Recess gives them a chance to run around and burn off energy and relieve stress.
Video Clip

http://www.lewiston.k12.me.us/~dletournreau/classroom/movies/recess.mov
Alertness and Emotional State

- Manage stress and gain self-control
- Express self to others
- Develop friendship
- Self-direction
- Responsibility
- Self-acceptance
Coping Skills

- Sharing or choosing a new activity when the desired one is not available
- Agreeing to play by the rules
- Accepting accidental motions by others
- Expressing frustrations to others
- Following other children’s leads
- Tolerating physical play with each other
- Accepting boundaries placed by parents, teachers, and caregivers
Self Esteem

- Self-esteem, so crucial to one's long-term happiness and success, also is enhanced when children achieve goals through play.
- Pretend play builds self-esteem when a child discovers they can be anything just by pretending!
- Helps children feel better about themselves
- Reduces the risk for depression and the effects of stress
Social Skills

- Social competencies (cooperation, sharing, language, conflict resolution)
- Self-discipline
- Follow rules
- Take turns
Physical Fitness

- Diabetes
- Help prevent obesity
- Increase test scores
- Lower blood pressure
- On-task attention increase