"I can’t remember how I actually learned to read, write, or do numbers…but I received a university degree and teaching certificate…but I remember everything I did at recess, most kids do. Trust me, it’s the best part of most children’s school day." – Pat Doyle, CIRA Ontario

Recess Revival is an implementation guide for the promotion of physical activity and cooperative play for elementary-aged children. As a supplementary resource to CIRA Ontario’s Active Playgrounds, this guide is meant to assist teachers, playground supervisors and peer leaders in the promotion of fun and cooperative play on the playground.

An organized approach to an active recess will be different for every school! Existing programs, staffing resources and the playground itself will affect how “Recess Revival” takes shape at your school.

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A recent study of 277 Montreal schools published in the journal Health Education and Behaviour, showed that children are active for as little as 14 minutes a day. At worst they are essentially sedentary for a staggering 23 hours and 46 minutes a day.

Schools where the children get the most exercise not only place an emphasis on play at recess and during free periods, but they also encourage students to join school clubs and sports teams.

Recess gives children a daily window of opportunity to be active. Before and after school, during lunch hour and at recess, most Canadian children spend at least one hour each day on the school playground. Outside of physical education classes, recess is the only time during school days that children can be physically active.

“Children don’t become brighter because they’re physically active, but they are less tired, less agitated, less stressed and less sick. Physically inactive kids are in a better condition for learning.” – Professor Graham Fishburne, University of Alberta in Edmonton (Globe and Mail, Jan 2007)

An organized approach to recess activity, through the introduction of games and activities, will also assist in reducing negative social interaction.

An active recess will assist in achieving the following outcomes:

• Increase physical activity levels
• Teach movement and manipulative skills
• Promote fair play
• Reduce bullying
• Promote creativity and problem solving skills
• Teach cooperation and respect for others
• Provide equal opportunity for all students
• Be co-ed and inclusive of all students
• Incorporate safety guidelines
• Promote multiculturalism
• Promote FUN and participation!

“I’m not saying they were good old days (the programs today are as good as they have ever been), but we didn’t have structured lives like kids today. I think our real challenge in school today is to plant a seed so that physical activity becomes part of the lifestyle as children grow up.” – Ian Bailey, Physical Education teacher at Oakenwald Elementary School in Winnipeg (Globe and Mail, Jan 2007)

Instead of being idle at recess and during lunch hours, boys and girls can become involved in games of skill, balance and agility.
An enthusiastic team is essential to putting “Recess Revival” into motion. Principals, teachers, staff, parents and student leaders must be willing to translate their concern about declining physical activity levels into action. Because no two schools are alike, the team will vary from school to school.

Prior to organizing the initiative, the concept should be introduced to Administrators, School Council and Staff. Once support for the project is secured, an organizing meeting should be held with several key individuals including a principal, teacher, health nurse, and parent.

The Administration will play a key role in making “Recess Revival” a reality; even the most enthusiastic teacher will have difficulty mobilizing the entire school without the principal’s support.

Teachers’ enthusiasm for physical activity will affect the entire student body! Teach the teachers by introducing games at a staff meeting and use the Active Playgrounds resource to assist.

The greatest challenge in bringing the games to the playground is ensuring that the children understand the rules so they can initiate activity. Teaching the skills of Four Square, Hopscotch and other playground games during physical education classes is key to ensuring the success of the project. At recess, teachers should provide the necessary prompts to encourage physical activity. Posting rules and pictures on the inside of classroom windows facing the yard would be helpful.

The School Council or Home & School can be true “champions” of the project. Not only can they assist as volunteers on the playground, but they can take a leading role in organizing fundraising initiatives that will help cover costs for having games painted on the playground or purchase extra equipment.

Lunchroom/Playground Supervisors already play an important role on the playground. Whether the supervisors are teachers, paid employees or parent volunteers, include them in the planning process. They should be familiar with the games and rules of play, providing in-servicing where necessary.

Custodial Staff are another resource that cannot be overlooked. In addition to retrieving balls off the roof and making storage space available, they play an integral role in maintaining a safe playground and need to be kept up to speed with developments on the playground.

Solicit support from a Public Health Nurse or Physical Activity Promoter. Not only can they assist in providing resources on physical activities, they may be willing to play an active role on the organizing team. Some may have knowledge of programs elsewhere that may benefit your own. They also have contacts that may lead to grants or other support.

Bring together a team of senior students as “Recess Ambassadors” or “Play Leaders” or utilize your Peer Mediator or Student Leadership Program if one is in existence. Student leaders can encourage their peers to be more active.
The “Play Leaders” can also assist teachers in physical education classes to demonstrate games to primary grades.

The “Recess Ambassadors” should be trained in a variety of leadership principles including teamwork, communication, fair play, conflict resolution and safety awareness. The Waterloo Region District Public and Catholic School Boards run a P.A.L.S. program (Playground Activity Leaders in Schools) that evolves around student leaders working as playground ambassadors to teach playground games and be peer mediators. They have an excellent student handbook to assist Teacher leaders. (Kathy Doherty-Masters, kathy.doherty-masters@wcdsb.edu.on.ca)

CAPHERD has 17 leadership resources available in English and 7 available in French on its site including:

- Playground Leadership Program
- SLDP – Elementary Guide
- Team Building Activities for Every Group

www.excelway.ca (Books: Leadership Development)
More than likely, your school has some empty pavement waiting to become an exciting play area! Four Square and Hopscotch combined with other exciting patterns can help turn your tarmac into an invitation to be active!

Well marked and designed playgrounds can provide increased motivation for children to be physically active and significantly reduce the number of confrontations at school.

Active Playgrounds is an excellent resource for tarmac patterns. The book contains a variety of Hopscotch, Four Square, Wall Games and other tarmac markings.

Although you can paint the tarmac yourself, hiring a contractor is the recommended method. To find a contractor in your area, look under “Pavement Marking” in the phone book’s yellow pages. Most companies have a minimum charge of $250.00.

Former CIRA Ontario President, Pat Doyle runs his own business (Creative Playgrounds) and has painted over 500 schoolyards. He can be reached at lacrosses@rogers.com or 519-590-1167.

Tips for Success if Painting Your Own Games or Having a Professional Do It:

- Visit a school with a painted tarmac before deciding on what markings to paint.
- Distribute the activity evenly throughout the playground.
- Monitor the playground for traffic and patterns. The middle of a “path” to a play structure or the area near school entrances may not be good places for patterns.
- Do not worry if the pavement has a few rough spots! A fun play area can even be created on pavement that needs to be re-surfaced.
- Choose a warm dry day when there will be no traffic on the yard (i.e. Sunday morning)
- Sweep the areas to be marked.
- Use chalk or upside down paint cans and string to mark straight lines.
- Use upside down paint cans and a proper gun to hold the cans to paint the lines (you’ll need several cans).
- Paint all numbers free hand unless you have stencils.

Markings for a traditional game of “Fox and Goose”, basketball courts, schlockey, foot hockey, wall ball games, and tetherball can be welcome additions to the tarmac.

Play areas can be assigned by grades on certain days i.e. basketball hoops are for grade 4 students on Mondays, and four square for grades 1 and 2 on Tuesdays. Having a schlockey game available for each grade is also recommended. Schlockey is outlined in Active Playgrounds and CIRA Ontario sells a mini resource on the game.
Suggestions for Successful Implementation

An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

Every school who wishes to successfully implement a Recess Revival program will approach their goals somewhat differently. The following are useful ideas that have proven successful.

Recess Ambassadors

Leadership programs like P.A.L.S. in Waterloo and Peel, P.R.O.P.S. in Durham, R.A.P. in St. Thomas, and Schools in Motion in the Toronto District School Board all have student leaders actively involved in introducing playground games to their peers.

Introducing New Playground Games:

- **Assemblies** – Playground leaders can kick off an assembly by demonstrating an Active Playground game in the form of a skit.

- **Staff Meetings** – Playground leaders or a staff member can introduce a new game to begin each staff meeting.

- **Gym Classes** – Teachers can request playground leaders to teach games in a gym class.

- **Recess and Lunchtime** – Playground leaders can introduce games each week during the students’ free time.

- **Physical Education Unit** – The administration can designate a week or two in early fall for teachers to teach ONLY playground games using the Active Playgrounds resource.

- **Play Day**

Other Initiatives:

- **Fundraising** – Invite the Parent Council to raise funds for painting games on the playground and buying outdoor equipment or play structures.

- **Promoters** – Invite a Public Health contact to speak to the students on the benefits of physical activity. In a “do you know” format, have them tell the students alarming facts about activity. Directory of Public Health contacts: www.alphaweb.org/ont_directory.asp.
An Active Playgrounds Free Flow Play Day would be an exciting way to bring the entire school together at the culmination of teaching the playground games. It is recommended, as it allows the students the chance to choose what stations they would like to participate in and in what order. Set up activity stations around the play area, on both the tarmac and on the schoolyard’s green spaces. The number of stations to be included is limited only by the time and the number of volunteers available. The students should be encouraged to look for short line-ups and come back to the more popular events when the line-ups are shorter. Each student can be given a passport which is stamped at each station to indicate they have been there. Children try and have all events stamped by the end of the play day. Parents, playground supervisors, teachers and Recess Ambassadors will be required to monitor each of the stations.

**Suggested Play Day Activity Stations:**

- Hopscotch
- Four Square (Ball)
- Four Square Switch
- Clapping Games
- Skipping – Single Ropes, Long Ropes, Jumpsie or Chinese Ropes
- Schlockey
- Wall Games (Tennis Balls) – Donkey, Tosser, One Hundred
- Wall Games (Fox Tails) – Are You Coming Out Sir, All in All Out
- Foot Hockey
- Basketball Bump
- Play Structure
- Fox and Goose
- Chalk Art
- Tetherball
- Tic-Tac-Toe
- Target Toss
What to do When the Snow Flies
An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

In Canada our winters of snow, ice and cold weather offer the ideal setting for a variety of outdoor activities. Though children are often less active during the winter months, the season presents unique opportunities because of the natural “playground” of snow. By participating in activities outdoors in the winter, children can pump up the heat and learn to be active all year round!

*Suggested winter games with minimum preparation:*

- **Schlockey** – The game is even better in the winter.
- **Fox and Goose** – Use your feet to shape a snow wheel complete with hub and spokes. Designate one or two to be the fox. The fox chases the geese around the wheel using the spokes to cut across the circle. A goose that is tagged becomes a fox. The game ends when all geese are caught.
- **Snoccer** – Use a softer ball so it doesn’t become hard in the cold.
- **Ice Cube Scavenger Hunt** – Hide several trays of coloured ice cubes in a designated area. Send your students on a treasure hunt.
- **Snow Pile** – Each team has five minutes to build the highest snow pile.
- **Dog Sled Race** – Students (drivers) take turns being pulled by their teams (dogs) around a marked course on a toboggan.
- **Hopscotch in the Snow** – Use a spray bottle filled with water and food colouring to outline a hopscotch board on the snow. Use coloured snow balls as “taws” and away you go.

Using either of the two resources below you can easily organize a Winter Play Day.

CAPHERD’s Snow Fun resource is a collection of Canadians’ favourite winter activities. Gathered from teachers and students across Canada, the book is divided into categories such as: relay, tag teams, targeting and cooperative/team building. The book also includes information on safety, equipment, and inclusion of persons with a disability. www.excelway.ca (Books: Physical Activity – Active Living)

CIRA Ontario’s Winter Active Playgrounds will be available in the fall of 2007.
Involve Everyone
An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

Children with Disabilities

All children should be able to play, including children with disabilities. Students with a disability should be challenged to set personal goals and focus on their ability, not their disability. In planning program modifications, think about equipment, skill complexity, the rules of the game and the space and distance in which the activity takes place.

When adapting activities, modify the games so that the inclusive version is the children's first experience with the activity. Adapted activities will increase successes and provide greater opportunity for independence.

On the playground, all can enjoy Active Playgrounds! When playing hopscotch, someone in a wheelchair can toss the marker while a friend hops. A visually impaired student can be guided verbally through the markings. Others can direct games, by calling out equations for Playground Calculation. With minor adaptations, Four Square is another game ideally suited for children with a disability.

CAPHERD has 11 resources on inclusion, including:

- The Student Who Uses a Wheelchair
- The Student Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- The Student with Visual Impairment

www.excelway.ca (Books: Inclusion)

Program Modifications that Really Work:

Equipment:

- Using lighter, softer, larger balls will slow the game and allow more time to prepare for executing a skill.
- Choosing shorter, lighter bats and racquets gives greater control for those with less arm strength.
- Choosing larger goals or target areas reduces the number of misses and makes it easier for everyone to succeed.
- Substituting bean bags for balls makes catching and throwing easier for participants with limited use of their hands.
- Partially deflating balls for dribbling and kicking activities makes the movement slower and allows the player more time to prepare.

Skills:

- Substitute wheeling for running, rolling a ball off a lap for kicking, striking a soccer ball with a floor hockey stick instead of a foot.
- Simplify games by having players drop the ball and catch it rather than asking that they bounce it consecutively.
- Use props to enhance the player’s skills. For example, using a towel can extend a player’s reach in a game of tag.
**Distance/Space:**

- Use a smaller playing area to make it easier for players of all skill levels to participate and be in on the action.
- Lower the target or move it closer to the players and you will reduce the number of misses and increase everyone’s feeling of success.
- Consider having a different starting or finishing point for the player with a disability to make the competition more equal.
- Choose a function on the team that requires less or more mobility. For example, a player in a wheelchair could be a pitcher, a goalie or a designated foul shooter.
- Reduce the number of players on each team to increase the participation of each player.

**Are Jack and Jill Both Active?**

Boys tend to be more active than girls during recess time and receive more encouragement from adults and peers to participate in activity. The difference widens with each passing year, leading up to the teenaged years when two times more boys reach the recommended energy expenditure than girls. Early on, girls begin to participate in passive activities while the boys spend recess playing organized sports with large groups. (Jaffee and Sickler, 1997)

During recess, many girls take their cues from the playground supervisor and senior students. Supervisors and “Recess Ambassadors” play an important role in encouraging increased activity, leading by example.

Participation, not competition, should be promoted at recess. This attitude shift will encourage more participation from both genders and create an atmosphere more conducive to fair play and maximum participation.

Offering “girls only” activities such as Intramural Kickball program may encourage increased participation.

Emphasize more activities like skipping, yogi ropes, fox tails, and clapping games into your recess program. (See Active Playgrounds)

Use your grade 7 and 8 girls as Recess Ambassadors to teach and encourage the younger students to play at recess.

Invite the Public Health Nurse to speak with the students about the pros and cons of activity during their formative years and maintaining healthy lifestyles into the teenage and adulthood.

**Directory of Public Health Contacts:**

www.alphaweb.org/ont_directory.asp

Both boys and girls should be given the equal opportunity to be active during recess. Activities suitable for all children should be encouraged for maximum participation.
The Senior Kids

Current trends indicate that activity levels decrease with age. Often the oldest students in a school are the least active.

A more organized approach may be required with students in senior grades. Lunch hour Intramural programs stressing participation not competition are recommended.

Encourage games of “Bump” Basketball rather than 2-on-2, as it encompasses more students, is fast paced and turns over quickly.

Monitor the trends and capitalize on what’s hot.

Senior students can act as role models, providing the necessary prompts to encourage active participation by the younger students.

Leadership Programs, where students run and organize activities can develop leadership skills in senior students and provide a mechanism for younger children to become active in organized programs.
Playground Rules

An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

Safe and fun equipment is not all that you need to have a great recess. Acceptable behaviour and appropriate use of play structures and equipment are important.

Use posters and/or bulletin boards to promote and reinforce playground rules. Daily announcements should address concerns and highlight successes.

Playground supervisors must move around the play area and anticipate problems. They should promote safe behaviour by using eye contact and reminding the children of the rules as necessary.

Designate certain areas for specific activities:
- Large wall area for wall ball and fox tail games.
- Open area for skipping and 4-square.
- Basketball only around all hoops.

Schools can reduce overcrowding on the playground by staggering recess times or offering intramural games in the gym at lunch.

Ensure that playground supervisors know the whereabouts of the first aid kit.

Playground Rules:
- Listen to the Supervisor or “Recess Ambassador.”
- Play fairly.
- Respect others.
- Do not push, shove, fight or bully.
- Don’t interfere with the activities of others.
- Use equipment for its intended purpose.
- Report anything unsafe to the supervisor.
- Use normal voices and positive language.
- Tie up shoelaces.
- Running games are allowed only on the field.

Studies show that bullying usually takes place on the playground, away from adult eyes, and episodes last about 38 seconds. Suggested strategies to combat unacceptable behaviour include the following:

- Identify hot spots for problems on your playground with the help of the children.
- Ensure a high adult to child ratio during recess. Be visible.
- Develop a coordinated plan for reporting aggressive/bullying concerns.
- Always approach and assess groups of kids hanging out together. If you think bullying may be occurring, trust your instincts. Witnesses often side with the bully.
- Differentiate between rough and tumble play from bullying and teasing. Everyone should be having fun, but never at the expense of others.

It is inevitable that all schools will have problems during recess. It is essential that playground rules are followed and a clear set of consequences established. The problem, not the game, should be removed from a troublesome situation. “Recess Ambassadors” can play a vital role in reducing the problems.
Make your Creative Playground an important part of recess activity. Playground structures must be safe to prevent accidents. The Canadian Standards Association (C.S.A.) sells a book of playground structure standards as well as other playground safety resources. If your school board does not already own a copy of the standards, it can be ordered by phone at 1-800-463-6727 or from their website at www.csa.ca (CAN/CSA-Z614 Children's Playspaces and Equipment Standard)

A C.S.A. certified professional should check the equipment once a year. Some school boards have staff members who are Canadian Certified Playground Inspectors. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (C.P.R.A.) has established the Canadian Playground Safety Institute, which offers training and certification in playground safety. For dates and locations, check the CPRA website at www.cpra.ca/e/training/cpra/index.htm, or call 613-523-5315. Otherwise companies like the one below can check your play structures:

*Insurer’s Advisory Organization, 1-800-463-6727 ext 4527*

Equipment must be used properly to be safe. Strings on hoods and hats should be tied up, jackets zipped up, shoelaces tied up, scarves tucked in and all loose clothing should be avoided.

A staff member should monitor the playground daily for glass, garbage and ice and for ropes tied to the equipment. They should also check the equipment for protruding, loose or rusting screws or any other defect that could cause injury. Any problems should be fixed immediately!

Put the children on red alert! When danger exists such as icy surfaces, place a large red pylon on the playground. The pylon will immediately alert the children that a walk-and-talk recess is in effect.

*Additional safety resources include:*

- Safe Kids Canada has information about safe structures and use of playground equipment. Their website is www.safekidscanada.ca and their phone number is 1-888-723-3847.
- The Ontario School Boards Insurance Exchange site looks at playground injuries, prevention, and recommended daily, weekly, and annual safety checks; these can be accessed at their website, www.osbie.on.ca, under “Risk Management Advisories” or by phone at 1-800-668-6724.
- Health Canada is actively involved in injury prevention. More information can be found on their website at www.hc-sc.gc.ca.
At Morton Way P.S. in Brampton students participate in Summer Active and Winter Active for six week periods. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at lunch recesses, grade 5 leaders take equipment and music out to the playground so everyone can get active and have some fun. They have target nets, parachutes, rubber animals, pool noodles to play “spaghetti and meatballs”, bowling, hula hoops, scoops and balls, and of course music for dancing. In the spring, they also add skipping ropes, hurdle jumping, and the agility ladder. On a daily basis, they provide six mini hockey nets, three or four schlockey arenas, and five basketball hoops. There is something for everyone.

Kirstin Schwass 905-452-6116

At Sheridan Park P.S. in Mississauga every classroom is equipped with an outdoor active living bin. Thanks to a generous and supportive parent council, each bin is filled with lots of equipment to keep children active during recess. In the fall, all classrooms receive a soccer ball, a basketball, tennis balls, individual and long skipping ropes, and two play balls of different sizes. Junior classes also receive a football, while primary classes get a set of scoops and a wiffle ball. Equipment is clearly marked with the teacher’s name and grade level. If need be, the outdoor active living bins are “topped up” with equipment again in the spring.

We also had our tarmac area painted with many new games that need little or no equipment. The children are not lacking for active things to do.

Carolyn Evans 905-822-2401

At St. Mary’s French Immersion School in Sault Ste. Marie there are junior and senior hockey stick racks and another for broom ball sticks set just inside the backyard entrance. Students going out for recess look like hockey players coming out of the dressing room and picking up their sticks and heading out onto the yard where three co-ed games continue until the bell rings and the sticks are replaced like at the end of the period.

At Baden home of Castle Kilbride there are six schlockey games on the yard all year long, two for each primary, junior, and senior students. Vice Principal Peter Berndt keeps a supply of extra sticks and pucks in his office.

Peter Berndt 519-634-9320
At John Sweeny Catholic Elementary School, Kitchener student leaders called PALS (Playground Activity Leaders in Schools) organize fun games and activities for primary students. The leaders have been trained on how to engage young students, conflict resolution techniques and playground games. A visitor to the playground might see children engaged in Inuit skipping, Cross Canada tag, Octopus, and of course, flying rubber chickens. Everyone is always included because “There is always room for one more!”

Kathy Doherty-Masters – kathy.doherty-masters@wcdsb.edu.on.ca

The school council at Rosedale Heights P.S. in Thornhill made old games new to help re-energize their playground. The students brought home forms for parents or grandparents to fill out with the instructions for their favourite childhood games.

Rosedale Heights P.S. 905-882-1864

At Lisgar Senior P.S. in Mississauga the primary outlets for the older students at break time are 4-square and basketball. Gym teacher Any Raithby teaches the students the Quick Hands version of 4-square where all hits must be underhand and no catching, cradling, or slamming is allowed thus allowing the lower skilled child a more equal chance. He has taught many of the shooting games from his newest CIRA Ontario resource 40 Shooting Games, and they are continually being used on the baskets.

Andy Raithby 905-785-0105

At St. John’s Catholic School in Kitchener the PALS leaders meet every Tuesday at lunch with their supervisor to outline the new playground game to be taught that week. On Thursdays the leaders meet on the playground with those interested students and introduce them to their new games which may be a form of 4-square, a clapping game, a wall ball game, a new skipping chant, a rock-paper-scissors game, or a circle dodgeball game. They get many of their new games from CIRA Ontario’s Active Playground resource.

Pam Garbutt 519-745-7793

Many different types of cultures are represented at West Hill P.S. in Scarborough. Many new immigrants attend this school, so the school helps them to become settled in their new surroundings by pairing them with a “Child Ambassador”. These Child Ambassadors are a group of students who are part of the school population. The Ambassadors wear specially designed t-shirts at recess to emphasize their teamwork, develop respect for their position, and to help the students recognize them. In addition to welcoming and helping new students, they have a responsibility to promote a positive active recess. They are trained to determine the areas of the playground that could be problematic and to prevent problems by beginning activities that involve marginalized children. They often get the games started then allow the children to take over. This spontaneous programming works well in a school where the student turn over is very frequent.

Connie Henderson 416-396-6630
When I was at John Darling P.S. in Kitchener years ago we had a small track painted on the pavement when we had the new games done. At our school we had a small class for the developmentally challenged students who had a “buddy” take them outside in their wheelchairs at recess. The track became their domain. We also included them in games of Fox and Goose. The child would simply be pushed from corner to corner while the able-bodied children ran.

Pat Doyle – lacrosses@rogers.com

At Wallace P.S., a JK to 8 rural school of 270 students, the anti-bullying policy focuses on keeping students actively involved during the recess break on a balanced school day schedule. There is playground equipment purchased by the playground committee plus two ball diamonds and a soccer field. The tarmac is painted with a variety of hopscotch, dodge ball, and 4-square games. There is an outdoor storage shed which keeps balls, skipping ropes, mini hockey nets, and small bikes and tricycles for the younger students. There are also two large sandboxes with lots of sand toys to use. In the winter months tetherball, schlockey, and mini hockey continue. They have also introduced snow shoeing, intramural outdoor cosom hockey, snowball throwing targets, and sledding down the hills with crazy carpets. There are four peer mediators from grades 5-6 on the playground to help supervise and solve minor conflicts.

Shelley Blackmore 519-291-2380

At Northlake Woods P.S. we have moved to two 40 minute nutrition breaks like many schools in province. This enables each grade group to get into the gym twice a week. We can accommodate the large numbers because we have two full gymnasiums, and there are a large number of participants each day. We have found that on the days that students do not have intramurals they are engaged in active play on the school ground. The skills and games they learn in intramurals are being taken outside with them. Our playground is marked for various games and activities as well.

Merrill Pierce 519-885-1115
The success of Recess Revival is dependant upon an effective mix of both human and physical resources. Ongoing evaluation and communication with staff, students and parents will assist in achieving success. Recess Revival involves getting the necessary resources and using them to their fullest potential. Ideally, every playground will be a place where students are voluntarily participating in physical activity.

- Was an organizational meeting held?
- Who played the key role in organizing the initiative?
- Do students play the tarmac games?
- Which are most popular?
- Did teachers teach the classes the activities?
- Are the “kits” being used?
- What equipment is being used most often?
- Are the children taking responsibility for the equipment?
- Did fundraising efforts provide enough money?
- Are the playground structures in good condition?
- Is rule enforcement effective?
- Which rules are broken most often?
- Which activities were most popular?
- Are the students active during the winter months?
- Are children with disabilities finding opportunities for activity?
- Are both boys and girls active at recess?
- Are the senior students active?
- Was a Student Leadership/Recess Ambassador Program introduced?
- Did the initiative activity levels at recess?
- Who were the biggest supporters of the initiative?

Comments: 
Acknowledgements

Recess Revival – An Implementation Guide to An Active Recess was prepared and produced by Michelle Harkness, Judith Byl, and Pat Doyle.

The project was funded with support from the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation and the Active Schools Plan.

Lyn Ingham, a retired school teacher from South River, deserves recognition for her efforts in promoting an active recess throughout her teaching career and for coining the phrase “Recess Revival.”

Thank you to everyone that assisted in the project by providing ideas and guidance.

Bibliography


CIRA Resources

To order any of CIRA Ontario’s Resources, contact the CIRA Ontario Office at office@ciraontario.com, 905-575-2083 or by fax at 905-575-2202.
The blacktop playground at John Darling Public School has been painted with boundaries for games ranging from hopscotch to an assortment of throwing and passing games.

Schoolyard fun and games
Painted pavement an invitation to come and play

Playing on the schoolyard at John Darling Public School in Kitchener has become a daily treat since games were painted on the pavement to entertain students at recess.

Some of the games include alphabet hopscotch, a clock for the younger children, square games, a track for special education students and "schlockey".

Schlockey players use hockey sticks and pucks, but the sticks don't have blades.

The game was introduced to Waterloo Region's public schools about five years ago by Pat Doyle, a Grade 5 teacher at John Darling and the current Ontario president of the Canadian Intramural Recreation Association (CIRA).

During a recent recess, Doyle counted 85 students playing games, some of which are painted on the wall of the school.

The games are so popular at the Kitchener school that principals from other schools have visited to check them out, says principal Dave Lane.

The $500 cost of painting the game markings was covered by the school council.

Doyle said the CIRA office in Hamilton has received many orders from Ontario schools for resource manuals outlining the rules of schlockey. The manuals were written by Doyle.
Keeping the student body fit

School is more than academic exercise at Brampton’s Morton Way

Unlike many schools facing the new scooter craze, Morton Way Public School in Brampton not only lets kids scoot to school, it encourages it, as part of a lively new focus on fitness.

"If we believe in getting kids active, we have to support what we believe, even if that means having to find somewhere to store kids’ scooters during class," said principal Mirella Aglio.

Because their awkward shape makes scooters tricky to lock up outside, Aglio often keeps the trendy contraptions safe in her office for kids during class.

"We need to take responsibility for developing students’ bodies as well as their minds," added Aglio, who is learning to use inline skates herself.

At lunch time three days a week, the schoolyard erupts into a festival of sound and motion, as 600 students dance, juggle and skip to the thunderous backdrop of a stereo cranked full blast.

It’s part of a six-week push by the province’s gym teachers to get kids active for summer — and Morton Way is taking the challenge seriously.

The active lunch program has kids playing with everything from parachutes to rubber chickens, from giant balls to homemade hockey games.

Under a popular Walking Wednesday program, more than 94 per cent of the school’s students walk to school each Wednesday, rather than arrive by car — which not only boosts fitness, but reduces traffic congestion around the school.

Students end each school assembly with an active routine performed to a techno-ditty familiar from NFL games.

Students take swimming lessons at a nearby community pool as a way to broaden their physical education program.

"Not only has it got the kids moving, but our schoolyard discipline problems have dropped since we started the active lunchtime program," said Aglio.

"And we have the Grade 5 kids running the games for the younger kids, so there’s a whole leadership component as well."

As warnings mount about the health of Canadian children — the number of obese young people has doubled in 15 years — this is one school that has decided to get kids moving.

And it has a timely new focus, as physical education programs are threatened by budget cuts and the school system’s new focus on core subjects rather than “optional” subjects such as gym.

"We explicitly teach math skills and reading skills, but we also need to explicitly teach activity skills," said Aglio.

Physical education teacher Kirsten Schwass launched the school’s new focus on fitness after attending a conference of the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association and learning about the association’s new Active Schools Award Program, which challenges schools to get kids active.

Schools that sign up receive kits suggesting activities both in and out of class, and qualify for achievement stickers for an incentive poster mounted in the school.

"We know kids are getting obese, and the risk of heart disease is hitting younger and younger, and that kids as young as 10 are now suffering from high blood pressure," said Schwass.

"So we need to get kids more active, even just by turning off the television and computer for a while in our own homes."

Already many of Schwass’ students understand the need for fitness.

"Do you know what our school’s doing?" asked Shauna Kerr, 10, who helps run the skipping at lunchtime.

"But if you do keep active," adds her friend Mira Baker-Gelderman, 10, "it can reduce your chance of getting diseases like high blood pressure.

As well as being healthy, the kids admit such programs are downright fun.

Once you start skipping and doing double-dutch, you get really good at it," said Shalima Mehta, 10, "and you never want to stop."

For information on the Active School program go to www.gpeanet and for information on Walking Wednesday programs go to www.greenestcity.org.

If you have an idea for Cool Schools, you can reach Louise Brown at 416-868-4196 or Kristin Rushlow at 416-868-4638, or by e-mail at lbrown@thestar.ca or krushlow@thestar.ca.