

Comments from the survey:

“Not sure where we lost the importance of allowing our children the time to play? We’ve basically exempted our kids from unstructured play time and focus our attention solely on either preparing or taking a standardized test.

“It is the number one thing students lose in the school. They get it taken away if they are behind or struggling on work. And they get it taken away if they get in trouble.”

“I wish recess was available for students at the middle school level. It used to be allowed as an activity time after lunch, but no longer is due to time constraints and the pressure to have students do well on state testing.”

Recess Recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics

- Recess is a necessary break in the day for optimizing a child’s social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. In essence, recess should be considered a child’s personal time, and it should not be withheld for academic or punitive reasons.
- 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.
- Recess can serve as a counterbalance to sedentary time and contribute to the recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day, a standard strongly supported by AAP policy as a means to lessen risk of overweight.
- Although schools should ban games and activities that are unsafe, they should not discontinue recess altogether just because of concerns connected with child safety.

Kansas Recess Survey Fact Sheet

“Class size. Standardized testing. The three Rs. When most people talk about how to improve education, they tend to focus only on what happens in the classroom. But the most unexpected opportunity to boost learning lies outside the classroom: on the playground at recess.”

From the “State of Play”, a Gallup survey of principals on school recess .



For more information on the survey, go to KAHPERD.org

The Kansas Health Foundation provided grant funding designed to obtain data on recess in Kansas schools. The web-based survey was completed by 487 schools out of 951, a 51% response rate. This grant was coordinated by Healthy Kansas Schools, the Kansas State Department of Education and the Kansas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

Recess Survey Findings

- Daily recess rates:
 - 72% of preschool students get a total of 0-20 minutes.
 - 63% of elementary students get a total of 0-20 minutes.
 - 54% of middle schools do not have recess.
 - Of middle school students who do have daily recess, 85% get 20 minutes or less.
- 8% of Kansas Pre-K/Elementary students do not have any scheduled recess time.
- 50% of Pre-K students receive only one daily recess.
- 30% of elementary students receive only one daily recess.
- 68% of respondents said their school had not taken steps to make recess more physically active.

***The Kansas Health Foundation is a private philanthropy dedicated to improving the health of all Kansans. For more information about the Kansas Health Foundation, visit www.kansashealth.org.**



Recess Survey Findings Continued

- 66% of Pre-K/Elementary students did not have lunch recess before they ate, and 80% of middle school students did not have lunch recess before they ate.
- Nearly 60% of schools do not have a policy against withholding recess as punishment. Of those schools who did have a policy against withhold recess as punishment, nearly 40% said their school did not enforce the policy.
- 76% of physical education teachers described the recess at their school as unstructured free play.
- 54% of physical education teachers believed unstructured free play was most beneficial to students.
- 41% of physical education teachers believed students should have specific options from which students could choose.
- Only 5% of physical education teachers felt structured activities led by school staff was the form of recess most beneficial to students.
- 36% of respondents said there was no budget for recess equipment and supplies at their school.

Recommendation for Lunch Recess

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the US Department of Agriculture support the concept of scheduling recess before lunch as part of a school's wellness policy. Schools that schedule recess before lunch report that students eat more fruits and vegetables, drink more milk, waste less food, and are better behaved on the playground, in the lunchroom, and in the classroom, according to an article in the Journal of Child Nutrition and Management, Issue 2, Fall 2006.