



Listen!

Comments about Recess Before Lunch:

“Recess Before Lunch has eliminated the ‘rush to eat and get outside’ ...Students enter the cafeteria more calmly, they eat more calmly, and they have fewer office referrals once they return to the classroom. Our faculty and staff have 100 percent agreement that this is a better way to structure the school day. We are glad it was suggested!”

— *Dr. Teresa VanDover*
Principal, Lee Expressive Arts School
Columbia Public Schools

“We are very happy with the recess before lunch. Our kids eat better...our kids behave better...and it just makes sense.”

— *Dr. Sheila Logan*
Principal, Moreau Heights Elementary
Jefferson City Public Schools

“I would recommend Recess Before Lunch; milk sales have increased and students eat more since no one is racing to finish their lunch to get to the playground first.”

— *Carmen Fischer*
Director of Child Nutrition Services
Rockwood School District

For more information:

download the Recess Before Lunch Guidebook from the Montana Team Nutrition Program

www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/recessBL.html

Recess BEFORE LUNCH

playtime before lunchtime!



Benefits!

Improved cafeteria atmosphere

- students are more relaxed and focused on eating rather than the playground
- less supervision in the cafeteria
- students have improved behavior

Fewer classroom discipline problems

- students are calmer when they return to the classroom

Increase in classroom time on-task

- students return to the classroom ready to learn

Increased milk, vegetable, and entree consumption

- less plate waste, less trash
- increased nutrient and fluid intake; decreased number of nurse visits

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- Include Recess Before Lunch as part of your wellness policy
 - Low cost to implement
 - After a morning of classes, kids are ready to play





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playtime before lunchtime!



Ready, set...

Seek input from the school and community

Gain a commitment from administrators, food service staff, parents and teachers

Observe schools that have Recess Before Lunch

Plan recess and lunch schedules that allow adequate time to eat

- incorporate a hand-washing plan into the schedule
- encourage students to prepay for lunch to avoid losing money on the playground

go!

Focus on the benefits rather than the obstacles

- think about what's best for the students

Students are likely to be hungrier and thirstier

- have cold water available
- promote the school's breakfast program

Anticipate some resistance to change

Expect the schedule to be a work-in-progress

- practice the new routine and trial for at least a year



Healthy eating
and activity can improve

attendance
energy levels
participation
school behavior
test scores
academic success

P.O. Box 309
Columbia, MO 65205
healthykidsmo.org

Create a lunch atmosphere that supports healthy eating

Recess after lunch often finds the student focused on the playground, not his or her lunch. Enhanced nutrition and better behavior go hand-in-hand; recess before lunch offers an opportunity for students to benefit from both.

Supporting research for Recess Before Lunch programs

A Montana Recess Before Lunch pilot study documented improvement in the mealtime atmosphere and students' behavior. Discipline problems on the playground, in the lunchroom, and in the classroom decreased.

A 2004 study by Bergman and colleagues of recess before lunch showed comparable results to a previous study by Mary J. Getlinger, et al. After implementing recess before lunch, plate waste decreased from 40 percent to 27 percent. In addition, consumption of calcium-rich foods increased 35 percent along with significant increases in most other vitamin- and mineral-rich foods.*

Research repeatedly shows recess before lunch can help students perform better in school, eat healthier, and promote a lunchroom atmosphere conducive to eating.

*Bergman, E.A., et al, "Relationship of Meal and Recess Schedule to Plate Waste in Elementary Schools." National Food Service Management Institute. Insight, Spring 2004.

*Getlinger, M.J., et al, Food waste is reduced when elementary-school children have recess before lunch. J Am Diet Association 1996; 9:906-908.