

# Lessons From the Playground: Recess During COVID-19 and Beyond



June 15, 2021



## Special Thanks

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*National Collaboration to Promote Health, Wellness, and Academic Success  
of School-Age Children*

Cooperative Agreement CDC-RFA-DP16-1601 with the Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention (CDC).



# Presenters

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What was your favorite recess game?



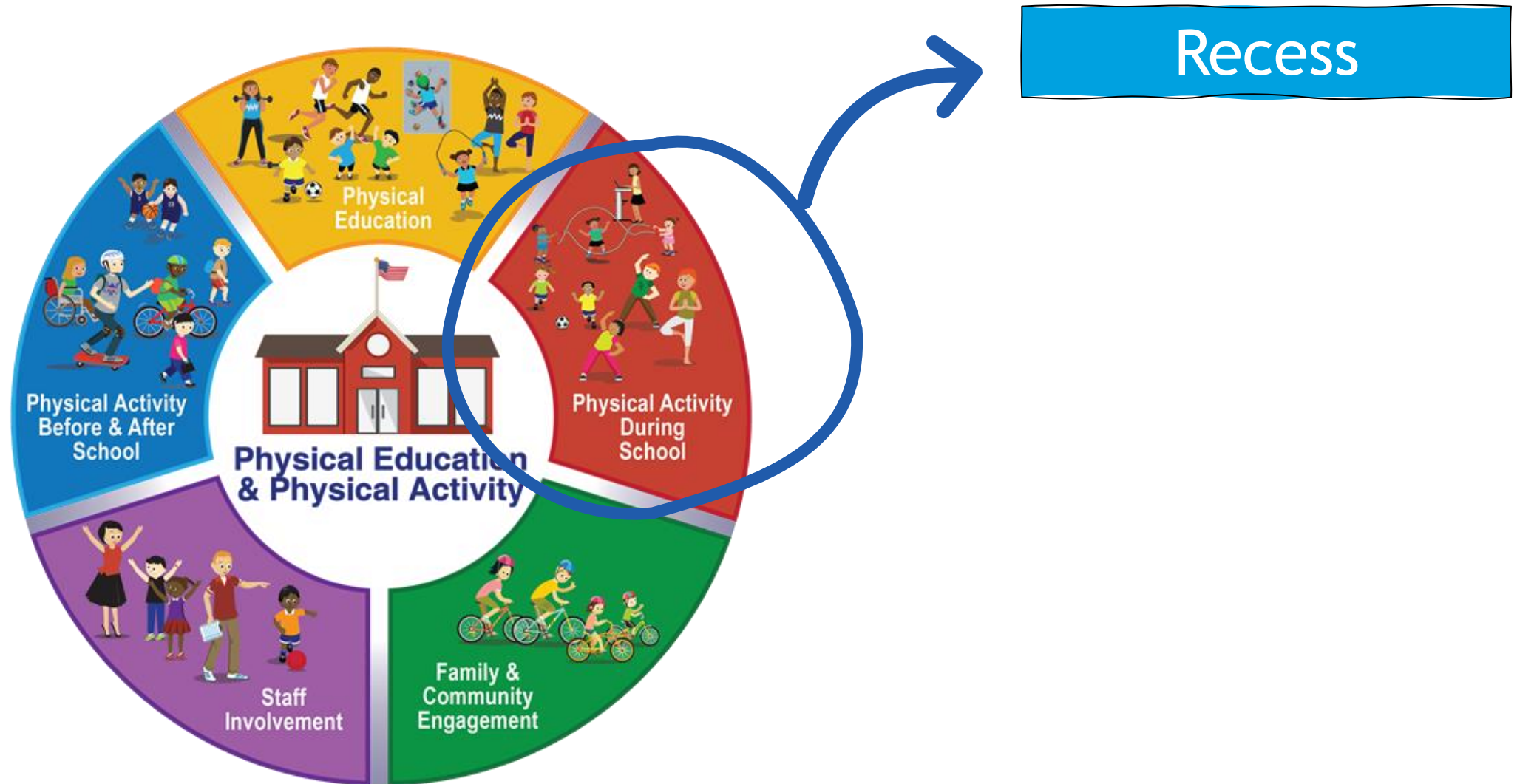
# Agenda

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- Recess Overview
- Lessons from the Playground – Moderated Q&A
- Looking Ahead
- Closing



# Building a Culture of Physical Activity




**Active Students = Better Learners**

[www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/PEandPA](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/PEandPA)





# What is recess?

An aerial photograph of a modern school playground. The play area is divided into sections with bright, multi-colored rubber safety surfacing in shades of blue, yellow, orange, and green. There are several pieces of playground equipment, including slides, climbing structures, and swings. A few children and adults are visible on the playground. A white rectangular text box with a thin black border is centered over the middle of the image, containing the definition of recess.

A regularly scheduled period within the school day for physical activity and play that is monitored by trained staff or volunteers



# Benefits

An aerial photograph of a modern playground with a large, multi-colored rubber safety mat in shades of blue, yellow, red, and green. The mat is shaped like a large 'X' or a star. Various play structures, including slides, climbing frames, and swings, are scattered across the mat. Several children are visible playing on the equipment. The playground is surrounded by green grass and a paved walkway. In the bottom right corner, there is a small number '8' inside a circle.

Improves strength and endurance

Enhance academic achievement

Increase self-esteem

Practice social skills



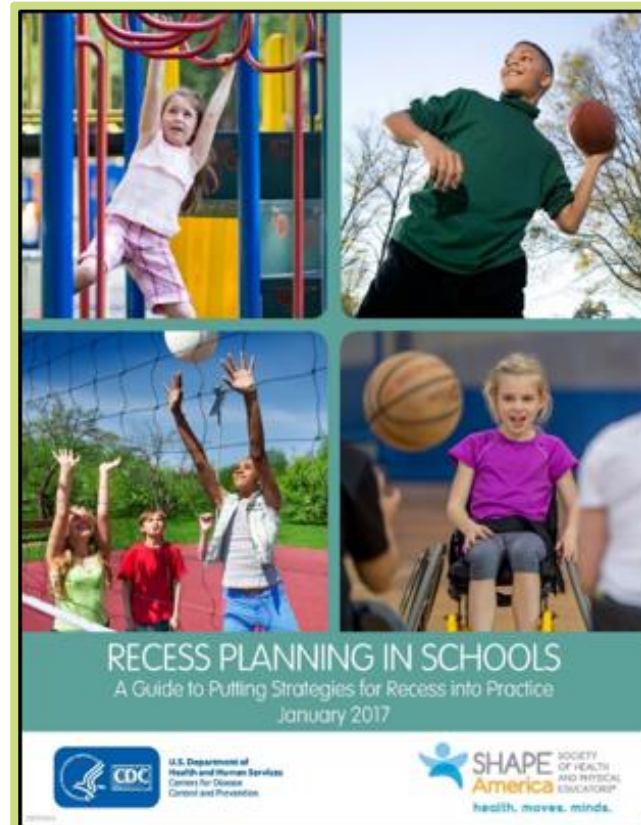
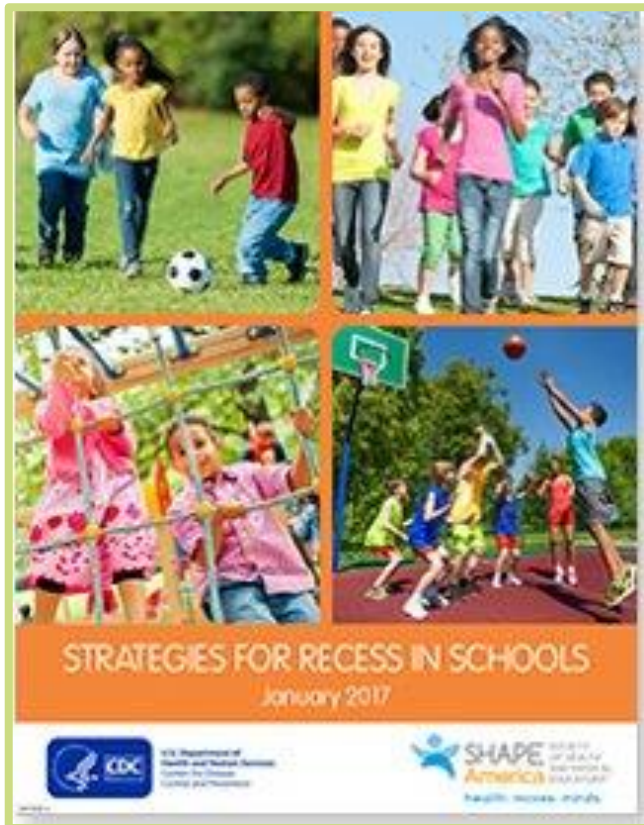
# Key Guidance

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- At least **20 minutes** of recess daily for K-12
- Do not withhold recess or use physical activity during recess as punishment
- Do not replace PE with recess
- Provide adequate resources
- Schedule recess before lunch
- Provide ongoing training
- Ensure spaces and facilities are safe



# Additional Recess Resources



**KEEP RECESS IN SCHOOLS**

**What is recess?**

Recess is a relatively easy and low cost way to help students be physically active. Recess also provides social, emotional, and academic achievement benefits.

**What's happening currently?**

More than 90% of elementary schools had 6th-grade students participate in regularly scheduled recess during the school day.<sup>1)</sup>

But only 35% of elementary schools participate in regularly scheduled recess.<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup>Among elementary schools with students in that grade.

**Recess defined:**

- A regularly scheduled period within the school day for physical activity and play that is monitored by trained staff or volunteers.
- Encourages students to engage in activities of their choice.
- Is offered at all grade levels, kindergarten through 12th grade.

Only 8 states require elementary schools to provide daily recess.<sup>3)</sup>

Since the mid-2000s, up to 40% of school districts across the nation reduced or cut recess.<sup>4)</sup>

**Active students are better learners**

Recess increases students' physical activity and improves educational outcomes.<sup>4)</sup>

**Social & emotional outcomes:**

- Improved ability to share and negotiate
- Better social interactions
- Increased school connectedness
- Improved school climate

**Academic achievement outcomes:**

- Better grades and test scores
- Better classroom behavior
- Better school attendance
- Improved memory, attention, and concentration

This brief highlights national data to describe the state of recess in schools in the United States of America, and identifies key policies and practices that school districts and schools can put in place.





# Continue the Conversation



A promotional graphic for a Twitter Slow Chat. The background is light blue with orange and white geometric shapes (circles, triangles, and stripes). On the right, a circular inset shows a group of diverse children smiling. The text is centered on the left side.



**TWITTER SLOW CHAT**  
JUNE 21 - 25 @ 12 PM ET

**LESSONS FROM THE  
PLAYGROUND:  
RECESS DURING COVID-19  
AND BEYOND**

#SHAPEPA

 **SHAPE** SOCIETY  
OF HEALTH  
AND PHYSICAL  
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 **SPRINGBOARD**  
TO ACTIVE SCHOOLS®



# Thank you! Connect with us

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