

AAP emphasizes importance of recess in schools

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(HealthDay)—Recess in school serves a necessary and important role in the development of a child's academic, physical, and social well-being, according to an American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) policy statement published online Dec. 31 in *Pediatrics*.

Noting the growing trend toward reallocating time in school to accentuate more academic subjects at the expense of recess, Robert Murray, M.D., and colleagues on the AAP Council on [School Health](#), discuss the benefits of recess in school, and provide recommendations for parents, teachers, school administrators, and policy makers.

According to the report, recess is a necessary break that can optimize social, emotional, physical, and [cognitive development](#). Recess should be

considered personal time and should not be withheld. Regular breaks from concentrated classroom work are necessary for academic performance and cognitive processing; this applies to children of all ages. Recess complements physical education and can promote a [healthy lifestyle](#) as well as provide social, creative, and [emotional benefits](#) of play and peer interaction. Recess can offset sedentary time and can contribute to, but not replace, the recommended 60 minutes of activity per day suggested by the AAP to reduce the risk of overweight. Recess should be safe and well supervised.

"On the basis of an abundance of scientific studies, withholding recess for punitive or academic reasons would seem to be counterproductive to the intended outcomes and may have unintended consequences in relation to a child's acquisition of important life skills," the authors write.

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