

# Assessing Recess

GROWING CONCERNS ABOUT SHRINKING PLAYTIME IN SCHOOLS

Child's play just simply isn't what it used to be. With the combination of neighborhood safety issues, the proliferation of electronic media and a decrease in recess time, children have less opportunity for physical activity in their daily lives. A new survey shows that Americans generally agree that school recess is in peril and that life-long habits and skills that affect the health and development of children form on the playground. As childhood obesity rates are on the rise and the attention spans of youth are on the wane, it seems making room for more recess is not only fun, but necessary.

## Child's Play Is Serious Business

**An Unhealthy Amount Of Healthy Activity.** Over three-quarters (77%) of Americans believe that children aren't getting enough physical playtime on a daily basis.

### Survey Snapshot

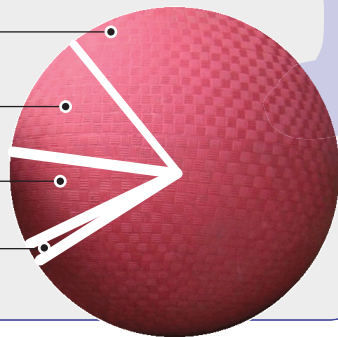
Do you think children are getting more than enough, less than enough, or about the right amount of physical playtime on a daily basis?

77% less than enough

12% about the right amount of time

9% more than enough

2% don't know/did not respond



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**Men Mind More.** Eight in ten (80%) men don't think kids are getting enough physical play on a regular basis, compared to slightly less than three in four (74%) women who feel the same.

**Sure Schools Should Ensure.** Nearly nine in ten (89%) Americans agree that schools should be responsible for ensuring that children partake in a healthy amount of physical activity during the school day.

**Relying On School Responsibility.** Older Americans are particularly adamant about schools taking responsibility for their pupils' physical activity, as nearly six in ten (59%) ages 35 and over strongly agree with this statement, compared to just under half (47%) of those ages 18-34.

**Parents Particularly Disagree.** Americans with children in their households are especially against the cutbacks on recess, as nearly three-quarters (73%) of them disagree with the changes, compared to 67% of those without children in the home.

**Just Not Enough.** A third (33%) of Americans say children don't receive enough time for recess at school as it is.

**Foul Play.** Forget playing for keeps, Americans want to keep play for kids! Nearly seven in ten (69%) disagree with eliminated or shortened recess time in schools.

## Reasons For Recess

**The Truth About Recess.** Americans believe that school recess serves many functions – for both students and teachers. While they overwhelmingly agree (91%) that having a break with physical activity helps children stay focused and learn in the classroom, nearly nine in ten (88%) also believe that it's good exercise for the kids.

**Play Is Important Part Of Life.** And there are more than tangible effects on children, as more than eight in ten (85%) Americans say that recess is an important part of a child's life.

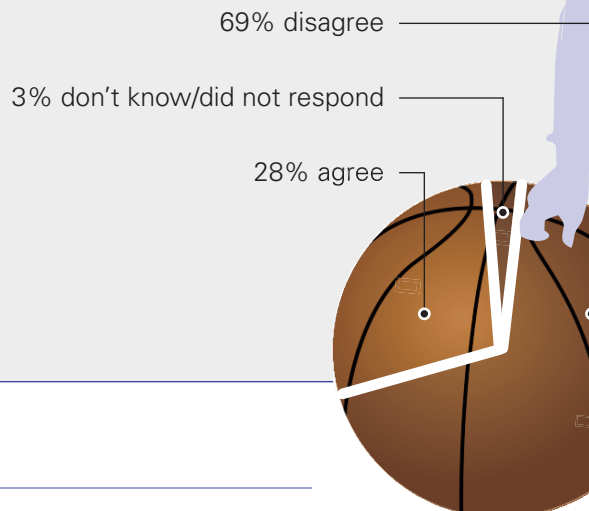
**Teachers Need It, Too.** While Americans agree that recess holds many benefits for children, over two in three (69%) view recess as a break in the day for teachers, too.

**Social Skills Set In School.** Moreover, an overwhelming majority (91%) of Americans believe that recess plays a large role in readying children's social development.

**Free To Make Friends And Have Fun.** More than four in ten (43%) women believe that recess plays an extremely large part in children's ability to make friends and interact with other kids, while more than a third (36%) of men are on the same page. ■

### Survey Snapshot

In recent years, many schools have either eliminated or greatly reduced recess time for students, generally for budget and safety reasons to accommodate more classroom time. Do you agree or disagree with these changes?



Research was conducted by Kelton Research in September 2008 with a sample of 1,000 American adults.



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