Learning Objectives

- Identify school policies regarding recess.
- Investigate the links between physical activity and the numbers of related illnesses or conditions, such as childhood obesity, diabetes, and others.
- Raise awareness about the importance of recess and being outdoors.
- Provide information regarding the benefits associated with recess to the school, families, and larger, community.

Curriculum Links
N/A

Eco-Schools USA Pathways
Healthy Living, School Grounds, Transportation

Background

The state of our health is directly related not only to our long-term physical well-being but also to emotional and social factors - our general happiness, confidence and outlook on life. There is also a clear relationship between health and educational attainment.

Studies show outdoor time helps children grow lean and strong, enhances imaginations and attention spans, decreases aggression, and boosts classroom performance. In addition, children who spend time in nature regularly are shown to become better stewards of the environment.

Schools need, therefore, to be part of the equation when it comes to helping students to lead healthy and active lives.

Materials Needed for this Audit

- No other outside materials are needed to conduct the audit
- It may be helpful to enlist the knowledge of your building principal and/or facilities department

Procedure

1. Set aside time to complete the recess audit.
2. Analyze the results and report the findings to the school community.
3. Formulate an action plan and be sure to monitor and evaluate along the way.
4. Keep this report with your records. This information will be needed when responding to periodic Eco-Schools USA surveys, when applying for awards, and when communicating with the community and members of the media.
### General School Profile of Recess

1. I know about the effects of recess on behavior.  
   - Yes □  No □

2. I know about the effects of recess on academic performance.  
   - Yes □  No □

3. Does your school have recess at least 4 out of 5 days per week?  
   - Yes □  No □

4. On average, how many total minutes per day does a student receive recess? (Do not include time for lunch when students are eating and are not physically active.)
   - < 15 minutes of recess per day □
   - 15 to 20 minutes of recess per day □
   - > 21 minutes per day □

5. How often do classroom teachers/counselors keep individual students from recess to fulfill academic requirements?  
   - Rarely □
   - Sometimes □
   - Very Often □

6. During favorable weather conditions are students encouraged to stay outdoors during recess?  
   - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □

7. During inclement weather, are students encouraged to go outdoors during recess?  
   - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □

### Formal Recess Policies

8. Does your school district/state have a written policy that specifies the number of recess minutes per day student should receive?  
   - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □
   If Yes, how many minutes per day? ______ minutes

9. Does your school have a written policy that specifies the number of recess minutes per day students should receive?  
   - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □
   If Yes, how many minutes per day? ______ minutes

10. Does your school district/state have a written policy requiring that students be provided with organized activities during recess?  
    - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □

11. Does your school have a written policy requiring that students be provided with organized activities during recess?  
    - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □

12. Does your school district/state have a written policy requiring recess supervisors to receive formalized training on playground supervision?  
    - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □

13. Does your school have a written policy requiring recess supervisors to receive formalized training on playground supervision?  
    - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □

14. Does your school district/state have a written policy that specifies a maximum student-to-supervisor ratio during recess?  
    - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □
    If Yes, what is the ratio? ______ Student : 1 Supervisor

15. Does your school district/state have a written policy that specifies a maximum student-to-supervisor ratio during recess?  
    - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □
    If Yes, what is the ratio? ______ Student : 1 Supervisor

16. Does your school district/state have a written policy requiring regular maintenance of playground facilities and equipment?  
    - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □

17. Does your school have a written policy requiring regular maintenance of playground facilities and equipment?  
    - Yes □  No □  Don't Know □
NOTES:

Summarize results from data collection: