

# Scheduling Recess Before Lunch Proves Itself

New trends can be exciting but risky. Time-tested ideas are solid, but not revolutionary. Want both? Try Recess Before Lunch!

For years children have been gobbling down their lunch and racing to get to the playground. No child wants to sit at lunch while everyone else is outside and many of them have other agendas to attend to besides eating! So, how much of a difference can simply having recess before lunch make? It can make a big difference!



One of the first studies\* conducted on “Recess Before Lunch” was Mary Jane Gettlinger’s groundbreaking 1995 research. Subsequent studies and pilot programs have shown that Recess Before Lunch generates these impressive benefits:

- *Less plate waste:* So children are getting more nutrients and are less hungry when returning to class
- *Better lunchroom behavior:* Excess energy has been used up - kids are relaxed, quieter and ready to eat
- *Fewer classroom discipline problems:* Kids have settled down during lunch and are calmer
- *Improved classroom performance:* Students come back to the classroom ready to learn



Want to see the studies and programs in action? Thanks to the Web you can! The Montana Team Nutrition program, Indiana Action For Healthy Kids and others are generous about sharing their experiences. For links to the studies and programs, go to [www.NutritionExplorations.org/SFS/Main.asp](http://www.NutritionExplorations.org/SFS/Main.asp)

\*Gettlinger, M.J., et al: Food waste is reduced when elementary-school children have recess before lunch. JADA, Sept., 1996 v. 96 (9) p. 906-908

September / October 2004