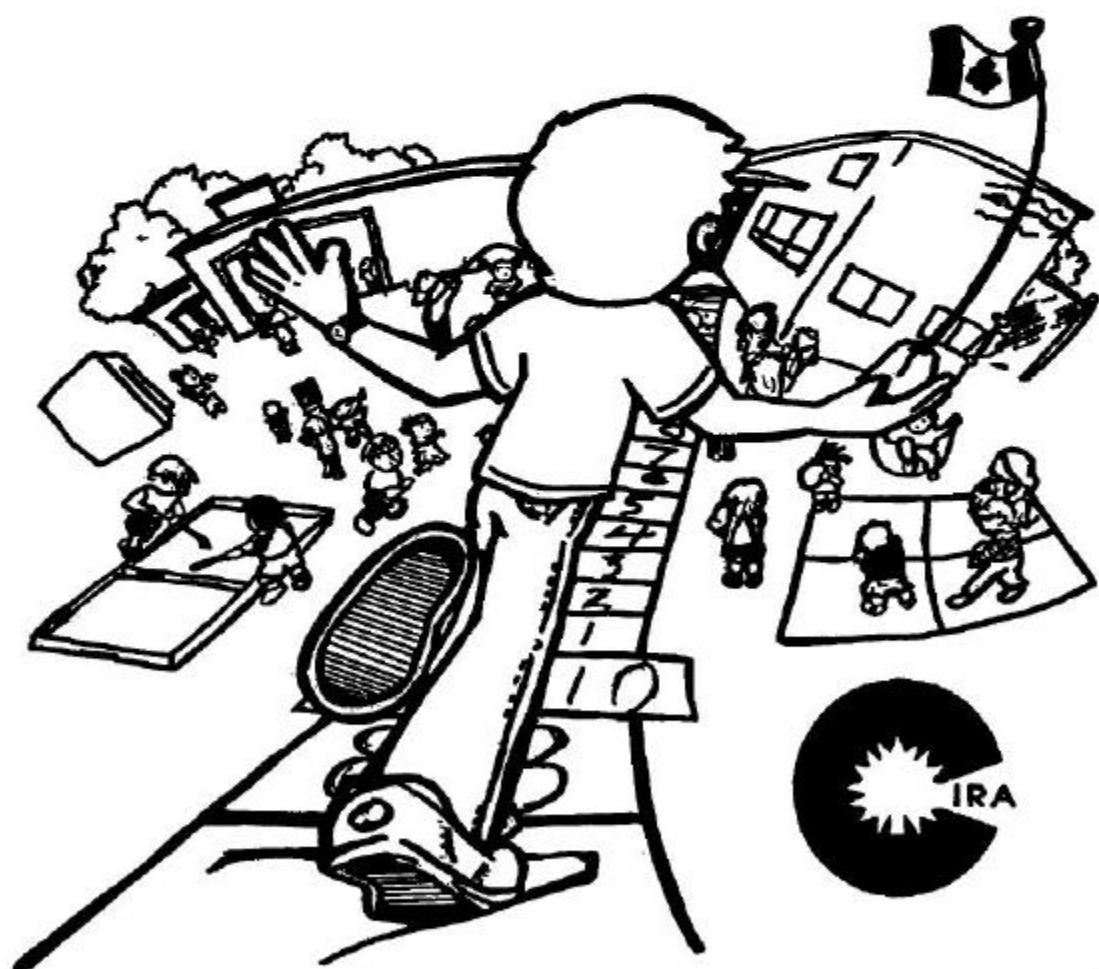


# Recess Revival

An Implementation Guide to an Active Playground



Canadian Intramural Association of Ontario (CIRA Ontario)

# Recess Revival

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

"Physical activity is as important to protecting your health as wearing a seatbelt and it should be part of everyone's daily routine, just like brushing your teeth!" (CFLRI, 1998).

**"Recess Revival"** is an implementation guide for the promotion of physical activity and cooperative play for elementary-aged children. As a supplementary resource to CIRA Ontario's *Awesome Asphalt Activities*, the guide is meant to assist teachers, playground supervisors and peer leaders in the promotion of fun and cooperative play on the playground.

An organized approach to an active recess will be different for every school! Existing programs, staffing resources and the playground itself will affect how **"Recess Revival"** takes shape at your school.

Introduction.....	2
The Team .....	3
Tarmac Surfaces .....	5
"Kits" for Active Kids .....	6
Assembly .....	7
Play Day! .....	8
What to do When The Snow Flies .....	9
Involve Everyone .....	10
Playground Rules .....	13
Play Structures .....	14
Success at Recess .....	15
Evaluation.....	18
Acknowledgments .....	19
Bibliography.....	19



***These materials can be reproduced without permission and can be downloaded off the CIRA Ontario website at [www.mohawkc.on.ca/cira](http://www.mohawkc.on.ca/cira).***

# Recess Revival

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

On average, Canadian children spend 26 hours watching television and another 30 hours sitting in school every week. This doesn't include the hours they spend in front of a computer or playing video games each day. These numbers contribute to the fact that of Canadian children are not physically active enough to lay a foundation for future health (CFLRI, 1998).

Only 10% of Canadian schools provide quality physical education programs on a daily basis. (CFLRI, 1999) Recess gives children a daily window of opportunity to be active. Before and after school, during lunchhour and at recess, most Canadian children spend at least 1 hour each day on the school playground. Outside of physical education classes, recess is the only time during most school days that children can be physically active.

Simply telling children to "Go Play" at recess doesn't always encourage the desired effect. Training teachers, playground supervisors and peer leaders to promote physical activity during recess is a viable solution to reducing the sedentary behaviour of young children. (Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 1997)

An organized approach to recess activity, through the introduction of games and activities, will also assist in reducing negative social interaction.

An active recess will assist in achieving the following outcomes:

- Increased physical activity levels
- Teach movement and manipulative skills
- Promote fair play
- Reduce bullying
- Promote creativity and problem solving skills
- Teach cooperation and respect for others
- Provide equal opportunity for all students
- Be coed and inclusive of all students
- Incorporate safety guidelines
- Promote multiculturalism
- Promote FUN and participation !!



Childhood is the ideal time for developing the skills and habits necessary for lifelong physical activity (CFLRI, 1996). Instead of being idle at recess and during lunch hours, boys and girls can become involved in games of skill, balance and agility.

# The Team

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

An enthusiastic team is essential to putting "Recess Revival" into motion. Principals, teachers, staff, parents and student leaders must be willing to translate their concern about declining physical activity levels into action! Because no two schools are alike, the team will vary from school to school.

Prior to organizing the initiative, the concept should be introduced to Administrators, School Council and staff. Once support for the project is secured, an organizing meeting should be held with several key individuals including a principal, teacher and parent.

The **Administration** will play a key role in making "Recess Revival" a reality; even the most enthusiastic teacher will have difficulty mobilizing the entire school without the principal's support.

**Teachers'** enthusiasm for physical activity will affect the entire student body! Teach the teachers by introducing games at a staff meeting using overheads and handouts.

The greatest challenge in bringing the games to the playground is ensuring that the children understand the rules so they can initiate activity. Teaching the skills of Four Square, Hopscotch and other playground games during physical education classes is key to ensuring the success of the project. At recess, teachers should provide the necessary prompts to encourage physical activity.

**Retired Principals** and **Teachers** can also be called upon to be part of the team. Their knowledge and expertise on "what works" will be very helpful.

The **School Council** or **Home & School** can be true "champions" of the project. Not only can they assist as volunteers on the playground, but they can take a leading role in organizing fundraising initiatives that will help cover costs. Keep them involved every step of the way.

**Lunchroom / Playground Supervisors** already play an important role on the playground. Whether the supervisors are teachers, paid employees or parent volunteers, include them in the planning process. They should be familiar with the games and rules of play; provide in-servicing where necessary.

**Custodial Staff** are another resource that cannot be overlooked. In addition to retrieving balls off the roof and making storage space available, they play an integral role in maintaining a safe playground.

**Parents** can help with playground supervision, fundraising and special events. Parents may have forgotten the games they played as children; invite them to be in-serviced on the rules.

Solicit support from a **Public Health Nurse** or **Physical Activity Promoter**. Not only can they assist in providing resources on physical activities, they may be willing to play an active role on the organizing team.

Bring together a team of senior students as "**Recess Ambassadors**" or "**Play Leaders**" or utilize your Peer Mediator or Student Leadership Program if one is in existence. Student leaders can encourage their peers to be more active.

The "Play Leaders" can also assist teachers in physical education classes to demonstrate games to primary grades.

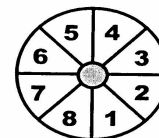
The "Recess Ambassadors" should be trained in a variety of leadership principles including teamwork, communication, fair play, conflict resolution and safety awareness. The Canadian Intramural Recreation Association's *Playground Leadership Program* promotes active living, respect for others and for property and safe play while developing leadership skills among youth. Research has proven that student mediators on the playground drastically reduce playground conflicts. (Cunningham, 1997)



# Tarmac Surfaces

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

More than likely, your school has some empty pavement waiting to become an exciting play area! Four Square and Hopscotch combined with other exciting patterns can help turn your tarmac into an invitation to be active!



Well marked and designed playgrounds can provide increased motivation for children to be physically active and significantly reduce the number of confrontations at school

***Awesome Asphalt Activities*** is an excellent resource for tarmac patterns. The book contains a variety of Hopscotch, Four Square, Wall Games and other tarmac markings.

Although you can paint the tarmac yourself, hiring a contractor is the recommended method. Having a company do the work can cost as little as \$10.00 for one 4-square grid. Approximately \$500.00 should fill an average tarmac area with patterns. To find a contractor in your area, look under "Pavement Marking" in the phone book's yellow pages. Most companies have a minimum charge of \$250.00.

*Fastline* sells line painting tools, paint and stencils. *Fastline* can be contacted at their web site, [www.fastline.net](http://www.fastline.net), or by phone at 1-800-565-1564.

### Tips for Success:

- Visit a school with a painted tarmac before deciding on what markings to paint.
- Distribute the activity evenly throughout the playground.
- Monitor the playground for traffic and play patterns. The middle of a "path" to a play structure or the area near school entrances may not be good places for patterns.
- Do not worry if the pavement has a few rough spots! A fun play area can even be created on pavement that needs to be re-surfaced.
- If possible, sweep the pavement before painting.
- Warm, dry weather is the best for painting.
- Yellow paint is more eye-catching and is therefore preferable over white.
- Lines should be sprayed with traffic paint.
- Circles can be sketched with a chalk and string.
- Lines should be 5 cm in width.
- Decide on which patterns you would like to include, keeping in mind that Four Square tends to be a more popular activity than Hopscotch.
- Alphabet and calculator hopscotch are very popular.
- Play areas should be repainted every 5-6 years, depending on how weathered they look. If vehicles drive over the patterns, lines may need to be repainted every 2 years.

Markings for a traditional game of "Fox and Goose", basketball courts, schlockey and tetherball can be welcome additions to the tarmac.

Play areas can be assigned by grades on certain days ie., basketball hoops are for grade 4 students on Mondays and four square for grades 1 and 2 on Tuesdays. Having a schlockey game available for each grade is also recommended.

# "Kits" for Active Kids

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

Providing equipment in plastic containers or bags is a great way to encourage an active recess. Schools can choose to have a "kit" for each class or to have one large "kit" for the entire school.

To raise the funds needed to purchase equipment and containers, School Councils can be approached to organize a fundraiser such as a Penny or Canadian Tire Money Drive. A Family BBQ with the proceeds going to new equipment is also an excellent fundraiser.

The equipment, however, does not need to be new; acquiring equipment from garage sales and asking for donations from parents are economical alternatives.

"Recess Ambassadors" or "Play Leaders" can have the responsibility of keeping the equipment clean and in good repair. They can also be assigned the task of putting equipment out and away each day.

Teachers should emphasize taking responsibility for the equipment and playing with it in a safe manner. Equipment days that highlight a special piece of equipment can create added excitement on the playground.

### Suggested equipment:

- Utility balls
- Basketballs, soccer balls
- Nerf or foam balls
- Frisbees
- Skipping Ropes: long and short ropes of varying sizes
- Enlarged and laminated skipping and clapping rhymes on poster paper
- Jumpsies: make your own out of interlocking elastics
- Rubber balls in pantyhose
- Sidewalk Chalk
- Foot bags
- Rubber Chickens
- Parachute
- Bean Bags
- Flags
- Devil Sticks
- Scarves
- Scoops
- Racquets



***Awesome Asphalt Activities*** contains many ideas of what to do with this equipment. It also contains skipping and clapping rhymes. Check out other game books for creative ways to use the equipment.

# Assembly!

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

An assembly is an excellent way to kick off **"Recess Revival"** and introduce the school community to a more active recess. The assembly should be fun and focused on activity. Use music to help make the assembly more upbeat!

The assembly could include any of the following:

A **Group Cheer** gives the children a positive vent for their energy and enthusiasm. For example, call out "How are you doing?"; the students yell back *"Fantastic, Terrific, Great....all day long, huh!"*, pulling their elbows into their sides on the *"huh"*.

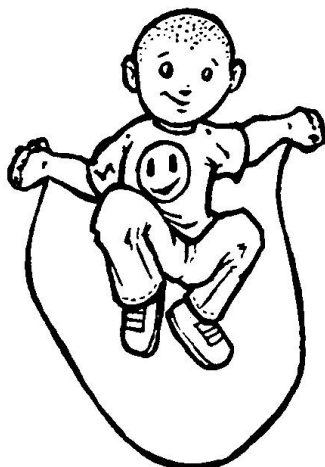
**Activity Demonstrations** by peers will help students get excited about activity. Examples include: skipping, clapping rhymes, jumpsie and special equipment demonstrations such as devil sticks or foot bags. Seeing their peers in action and being exposed to new games will encourage children to become more active themselves.

**"Recess Ambassadors"** or **"Play Leaders"** can be introduced to the students at the assembly. These student leaders can be responsible for a portion of the assembly, such as helping to organize the activity demonstrations or leading the school cheer.

**Fundraising Campaigns** in support of "Recess Revival" can be promoted during the assembly. The assembly is a great opportunity to announce a special prize for the class that raises the most money.

A **Community Physical Activity Promoter** or **Public Health Nurse** can be included in the assembly and asked to promote the benefits of physical activity. In a "do you know" format, have them tell the students alarming facts about inactivity.

Other guests could include: school board trustees, superintendents and interested politicians.





---

# Playday! Playday!

---

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

A playday held during an afternoon or extended recess is a great way to start reviving your recess and introducing the activities to the entire student body.

Playday can begin with a large-group activity such as roof aerobics; have an instructor lead a mass aerobics class from the roof or a raised platform.



A "free flow playday" is recommended, as it allows the students the chance to choose what stations they would like to participate in and in what order. Set up activity stations around the play area, on both the tarmac and on the schoolyard's green spaces. The number of stations to be included is limited only by the time and the number of volunteers available. The students should be encouraged to look for short line-ups and come back to the more popular events when the line-ups are shorter. Each student can be given a passport, which is stamped at each station.

Teachers should prepare students for playday prior to the event by teaching them the games during physical education classes.

Parents, playground supervisors, teachers and Recess Ambassadors will be required to monitor each of the stations.

### **Suggested Playday Activity Stations:** *(Ideas & games are available in Awesome Asphalt Activities)*

- **Hopscotch**
- **Four Square with a Ball or Four Square Switch**
- **Clapping Games**
- **Skipping**
- **Jumpsie/Chinese Jump Rope:** The rope is a six-foot long elastic in a loop. Two players inside the loop stretch it taut.
- **Schlockey:** This is a fast paced, exciting game played with bladeless "schlockey schticks," old hockey sticks with the blades cut off and the ends taped. The game is played in a 4' by 8' arena with 6" high sideboards, end boards and a centre board that has two puck ports, the openings.
- **Are You Coming Out, Sir:** This game is played against a wall with a rubber ball in pantyhose.
- **Donkey:** This game is played throwing a ball against a wall.
- **Apartments:** A version of dodge ball played against a wall.
- **7-up**
- **Dodgeball**
- **Foot Hockey**
- **Basketball Bump**
- **Play Structure:** Review rules with the children as they play

# What to do When the Snow Flies

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

In Canada, our winters of snow, ice and cold weather offer the ideal setting for a variety of outdoor activities. Though children are often less active during the winter months, the season presents unique opportunities because of the natural "playground" of snow. By participating in activities outdoors in the winter, children can pump up the heat and learn to be active all year round!

### Suggested winter games with minimum preparation:



**Schlockey:** The game is even better in the winter.



**Foxes and Geese:** Students make a winding track on new snow. Establish a den; one player at a time can enter the "safe zone". Two players are chosen to be "foxes" and chase the "geese" around the track; once tagged by a "fox", the "goose" switches roles with that "fox."



**Snow Sports:** Bring a soccer ball or football into the snowy field and play a game!



**Snowball Roll:** Participants start at the top of the hill with a small snowball, which they roll down the hill and back up again. Snowballs are then judged in a variety of categories, including largest, roundest, oddest shape or fastest down the hill. This activity can also be done on flat ground.



**Snowball for All:** Divide the students in groups of 6-8. The object of the game is to make a gigantic snowball large enough for everyone to sit on. Instruct the groups to roll a snowball as large as possible. Ensure that everyone participates in rolling the snowball. Once the ball is no longer movable, players line up and climb on the ball one by one.



**Snowpile:** In a set amount of time, students make snowballs and see who can create the biggest pile.

**Hitting the Hog:** Create curling stones by filling Javex bottles with water. Let the water freeze and use them as "rocks".

The Canadian Intramural Recreation Association's "**Snow Fun**" resource is a collection of Canadians' favourite winter activities. Gathered from teachers and students from across Canada, the book is divided into categories such as: relay, tag teams, targeting and cooperative/team building. The book also includes information on safety, equipment, and inclusion of persons with a disability.



---

# Involve Everyone

---

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

### Children with Disabilities



All children should be able to play, including children with disabilities. Students with a disability should be challenged to set personal goals and to focus on their ability, not their disability.

In planning program modifications, think about equipment, skill complexity, the rules of the game and the space and distance in which the activity takes place.

When adapting activities, modify the games so that the inclusive version is the children's first experience with the activity. Adapted activities will increase successes and provide greater opportunity for independence.

### Program Modifications that Really Work

#### Equipment:

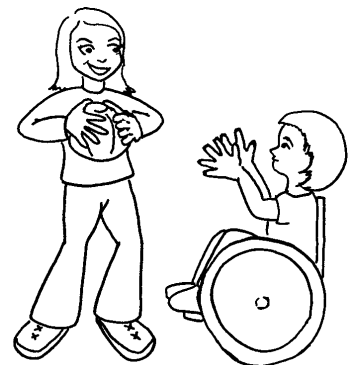
- Using lighter, softer, larger balls will slow the game and allow more time to prepare for executing a skill.
- Choosing shorter, lighter bats and racquets gives greater control for those with less arm length.
- Choosing larger goals or target areas reduces the number of misses and makes it easier for everyone to succeed.
- Substituting bean bags for balls makes catching and throwing easier for participants with limited use of their hands.
- Partially deflating balls for dribbling and kicking activities makes the movement slower and allows the player more time to prepare.

#### Skills:

- Substitute wheeling for running, rolling a ball off a lap for kicking, striking a soccer ball with a floor hockey stick instead of a foot.
- Simplify games by having players drop the ball and catch it rather than asking that they bounce it consecutively.
- Use props to enhance the player's skills. For example, using a towel can extend a player's reach in a game of tag.

#### Distance/Space:

- Use a smaller playing area to make it easier for players of all skill levels to participate and be in on the action.
- Lower the target or move it closer to the players and you will reduce the number of misses and increase everyone's feeling of success.
- Consider having a different starting or finishing point for the player with a disability to make the competition more equal.



- Choose a function on the team that requires less or more mobility. For example, a player in a wheelchair could be a pitcher, a goalie or a designated foul shooter.
- Reduce the number of players on each team to increase the participation of each player.

On the playground, all can enjoy ***Awesome Asphalt Activities!*** When playing hopscotch, someone in a wheelchair can toss the marker while a friend hops. A visually impaired student can be guided verbally through the markings. Others can direct games, by calling out equations for Playground Calculation. With minor adaptations, Four Square is another game ideally suited for children with a disability.

**The following resources are available from CIRA's National Office:**

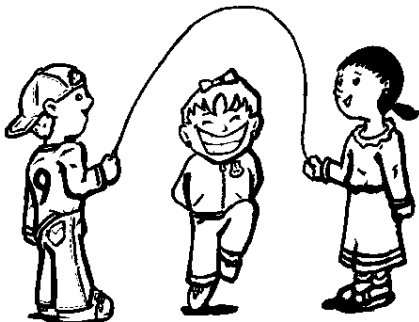
- *Games for People with Sensory Impairments* by Lauren J. Lieberman and Jim F. Cowart
- *Creative Play Activities for Children with Disabilities* by Lisa Rappaport Morris and Linda Schulz
- *Moving To Inclusion*, a series of nine binders about including people who have various disabilities, which was developed by Fitness Canada and many partners.

**Are Jack and Jill both Active?** \_\_\_\_\_

Boys tend to be more active than girls during recess time and receive more encouragement from adults and peers to participate in activity. The difference widens with each passing year, leading up to the teenaged years when two times more boys reach the recommended energy expenditure than girls. Early on, girls begin to participate in passive activities while the boys spend recess playing organized sports with large groups. (Jaffee and Sickler, 1997)

During recess, many girls take their cues from the playground supervisor and senior students. Supervisors and "Recess Ambassadors" play an important role in encouraging increased activity, leading by example.

Participation, not competition, should be promoted during recess. This attitude shift will encourage more participation from both genders and create an atmosphere more conducive to fair play and maximum participation.



Offering "girls only" activities such as an Intramural Kickball program may encourage increased participation.

Invite a representative from a community skipping program to provide instruction during a lunch hour or extended recess.

Both boys and girls should be given the equal opportunity to be active during recess. Activities suitable for all children should be encouraged for maximum participation.

## The Senior Kids

---

Current trends indicate that activity levels decrease with age. Often, the oldest students in a school are the least active.

A more organized approach may be required with students in senior grades. Lunch hour intramural programs stressing participation not competition are recommended.

Encourage games of "Bump" Basketball rather than 2on2, as it encompasses more students, is fast paced and turns over quickly.

Monitor the trends and capitalize on what's hot.

Senior students can act as role models, providing the necessary prompts to encourage active participation by the younger students.

Leadership Programs, where students run and organize activities can develop leadership skills in senior students and provide a mechanism for younger children to become active in organized programs.

For more information on CIRA's Student Leadership or Playground Leadership Program contact CIRA by phone at (613) 244-1594 or on the internet at [www.intramurals.ca](http://www.intramurals.ca).

## Hacky Sack kicks back into popularity

By JANEL COHEN  
Knight Ridder Newspapers

And you thought they were out of style. Hacky Sack is back, just in time for the nice weather.

Actually, it never left.

One reason is because of people like 14-year-old Matt Bounds of Biloxi, Miss.

"It wasn't just a fad for me like it was for some people," he said. "I do it because of the challenge."

In fact, there is a whole footbag world out there that many people don't know about. Footbag being the generic term for Hacky Sack — a small, bean-filled bag.

Kick this around: The World Footbag Association was founded in May 1983 as the sport's promotional arm and official players' organization.

Just about anywhere a group of bored teens is, there is sure to be a Hacky Sack. The sacks range in colours and designs from spotted animal print to logos of clothing manufactures.

Any number of people can play.

The point of game is to keep the ball going in the air without using your hands. Usually, people use their feet, chest and legs.

---

# Playground Rules

---

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

Safe and fun equipment is not all that you need to have a great recess! Acceptable behaviour and appropriate use of play structures and equipment are important.

Use posters and/or bulletin boards to promote and reinforce playground rules. Daily announcements should address concerns and highlight successes.

Playground supervisors must move around the play area and anticipate problems. They should promote safe behaviour by using eye contact and reminding the children of the rules as necessary.

Schools can reduce overcrowding on the playground by staggering recess times or offering intramural games in the gym at lunch.

Ensure that playground supervisors know whereabouts of the first aid kit.

### Playground Rules:

- Listen to the Supervisor or "Recess Ambassador"!
- Play fairly.
- Respect others.
- Do not push, shove, fight or bully.
- Don't interfere with the activities of others.
- Use equipment for its intended purpose.
- Report anything unsafe to the supervisor.
- Use normal voices and positive language.
- Respect others.
- Tie up shoelaces.
- Running games are allowed only on the field.



Studies show that bullying usually takes place on the playground, away from adult eyes, and episodes last about 38 seconds. Suggested strategies to combat unacceptable behaviour include the following:

- Identify hot spots for problems on your playground with the help of the children.
- Ensure a high adult to child ratio during recess. Be visible.
- Develop a coordinated plan for reporting aggressive/bullying concerns.
- Always approach and assess groups of kids hanging out together. If you think bullying may be occurring, trust your instincts. Witnesses often side with the bully.
- Differentiate between rough and tumble play from bullying and teasing. Everyone should be having fun, but never at the expense of others.

It is inevitable that all schools will have problems during recess. It is essential that playground rules are followed and a clear set of consequences established. The problem, not the game, should be removed from a troublesome situation. "Recess Ambassadors" can play a vital role in reducing the problems.

# Play Structures - Safety First

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

Make your Creative Playground an important part of recess activity.



Playground structures must be safe to prevent accidents. The C.S.A. (Canadian Standards Association) sells a book of playground structure standards as well as other playground safety resources.

If your school board does not already own a copy of the standards, it can be ordered by phone at 1-800-463-6727 or from their web site at [www.csa.ca](http://www.csa.ca) (item # CSA-Z614-98).

A C.S.A. certified professional should check the equipment once a year. Some school boards have staff members who are Canadian Certified Playground Inspectors. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) has established the Canadian Playground Safety Institute, which offers training and certification in playground safety. Two-day workshops that include an exam are offered across Canada. For dates and locations, check the CPRA web site: [www.cpra.ca/npsc/npsc.htm](http://www.cpra.ca/npsc/npsc.htm) or call (613) 748-5651. Otherwise, companies like the ones below can check your play structures:

- Playspaces, Guelph Area (519) 766-1160
- Insurer's Advisory Organization, all of Canada, 1-800-463-6727 ext 4527

Equipment must be used properly to be safe. Strings on hoods and hats should be tied up, jackets zipped up, shoes tied up, scarves tucked in and all loose clothing avoided.

A staff member should monitor the playground daily for glass, garbage and ice and for ropes tied to the equipment. They should also check the equipment for protruding, loose or rusting screws or any other defect that could cause injury. Any problems should be fixed immediately!

Put the children on red alert! When danger exists such as icy surfaces, place a large red pylon on the playground. The pylon will immediately alert the children that a walk-and-talk recess is in effect.

### **Additional safety resources include:**

- Safe Kids Canada has information about safe structures and use of playground equipment. Their web site is [www.safekidscanada.ca](http://www.safekidscanada.ca) and their phone number is 1-888-723-3847.
- The Ontario School Boards Insurance Exchange site looks at playground injuries, prevention, and recommended daily, weekly, and annual safety checks; these can be accessed at their web site, [www.osbie.on.ca](http://www.osbie.on.ca), under "Risk Management Advisories" or by phone at 1-800-668-6724.
- Health Canada deals with the issue of accidental strangulation under the playground heading of their regulated products section <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>.

---

# Success at Recess

---

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

---

### Recess Intramurals

St. Paul's School, a JK-8 school in Norwood, has a completely student-organized intramural program that runs in three time slots: the 15-minute morning recess, the first half of the 40-minute lunch recess, and the second half of the lunch recess. Almost all of the students participate in intramurals, and school principal Karen Reeves affirms that the students are more active during unstructured play times as a result of the program. *Karen Reeves can be contacted at (705) 639-2191.*

---

### Winter Equipment

Ryerson Community School, a JK-8 school in Toronto, provides skates and hockey sticks for students to use on an outdoor skating rink during recess. The rink is run by the neighbouring Alexandra Park Community Centre. This shared-use facility is well-used during winter months!

*Ryerson Community School can be contacted at (416) 393-1340.*

---

### Inclusion in Pavement Markings

When the tarmac at John Darling School in Kitchener was painted, a small track around the edge of the pavement was included for students with disabilities to use for riding tricycles or for being pushed in wheelchairs. The "safety zone" gave everyone a place to be active.

*Pat Doyle can be contacted at (519) 748-6161 or [lacrosses@home.com](mailto:lacrosses@home.com).*

---

### Student-Led Recess Games: Positive Social Relationships



At Westvale School in Waterloo, the VOLT (Voyageur Outstanding Leadership Team) student group leads the intramurals program with Merrill Pierce, the facilitating teacher. In addition to organizing intramurals, student leaders play a role in promoting an active playground. They supervise Schlockey games and monitor sports equipment acquired through fundraising.

Students are very active at recess; the school has a running club, intramurals, pavement markings, playing fields and a playground structure. The school principal appreciates that recesses at Westvale are almost free from fighting and behavior problems, which Merrill attributes largely to the high levels of physical activity. The students are simply too busy with positive behavior to have time to bully one another! *Merrill Pierce can be contacted at (519) 746-6724.*

---

### Games of Yesteryear

The School Council of Rosedale Heights Public School in Thornhill, Ontario made old games new to re-energize their playground. The students brought home forms for parents or grandparents to fill out with the instructions for their favourite childhood games. This plan promotes education and activity!

*Rosedale Heights Public School can be contacted at (905) 882-1864.*



## **Trained to Play**

---

A few years ago, St. Anne's Elementary School in Peterborough revamped their playground, improving the soccer fields, installing basketball hoops and painting the pavement using ideas from *Awesome Asphalt Activities*. But they did not stop there!

In principal, Tim Ball's words, the staff "assumed that the kids knew nothing" about schoolyard games. They trained the students in the rules of play for games like "Bump" and Four Square during physical education classes. Staff members took the initiative to teach games during recess. Now students know how to play, and the school enjoys rewarding and active recesses!

*Tim Ball can be contacted at (705) 742-3342.*

## **Indoor Winters: Beat the Winter Blahs!**

---

Balmy Beach Community School of Toronto promotes the three F's of physical activity, Fun, Fitness and Fundamentals in all areas of the physical education program, including recess. Every student is in a House League intramural group and is free to come to the gym at the noon recess on their house's "Colour Day". The intramural program focuses especially on the winter months as a way to keep the kids active despite the cold weather.

*Laurie Chalmers can be contacted at (416) 393-1565.*

## **Non-Competitive Games**

---

Games such as Hopscotch and Four Square are based on elimination when a player makes a mistake. As a result, skilled players have more opportunity to play. Draw extra squares onto a four-square court so four or five students share one square. Encourage all students to get the same amount of playing time regardless of errors.

For hopscotch, suggest that students create personal challenges, keeping records of errors and trying to reduce them. Encourage students to create their own hopscotch games i.e., "The World's Longest Hopscotch".

*Source: "But They Love It" by Myra Stephen. Myra can be contacted at (416) 426-7083.*

## **Multicultural**

---

Many different types of cultures are represented at West Hill Public School in Scarborough. Recent immigrants to the area attend this school, so the school helps them to become settled in their new surroundings by pairing them with a "Child Ambassador." "Child Ambassadors" are a group of students who are part of the stable population of the school, representing all of the grades but kindergarten.

The Ambassadors wear specially designed T-shirts at recess to emphasize their teamwork, develop respect for their position, and help the students to recognize them. In addition to welcoming and helping new students, they have a responsibility to promote positive activity at recess. They are trained to determine areas on the playground that could be problematic and to prevent problems by beginning activities there and involving marginalized children. They get games started with the children on the playground, using hula hoops, jump ropes, "scoops" and a tub full of utility balls. The spontaneous programming of this strategy works well in this school, where the student turnover rate is very quick.

*Connie Henderson can be contacted at (416) 396-6630.*

## Parent Supervisors

---

1	2	3	+	x
4	5	6	0	÷
7	8	9	-	=
ON		OFF		
PLAYGROUND COMPUTER				

OUT

At Lisgar Public School in Mississauga, recess sessions are active and fun! The school has a great green space and tarmac area, much of which is covered with four-square and hopscotch markings. The school has a variety of hopscotch patterns, even "solar hopscotch," as featured in *Awesome Asphalt Activities!* Parent helpers come in at noon to help supervise the playground.

*Andy Raithby can be contacted at (905) 785-0105.*

## Schlockey Tournament

---

A Schlockey Tournament is a great recess activity. Students pick their name out of a hat and place their name under a bean bag in a long line set up on tables in the centre of the "Schlockey Arena". Students may challenge anyone four spots above their name. Students cannot refuse a challenge unless they are playing a game or have already challenged or been challenged and are waiting their turn. The challenger gets their choice of sides. The challenged gets their choice of sticks.

*Pat Doyle can be contacted at (519) 748-6161 or [lacrosses@home.com](mailto:lacrosses@home.com).*

## Recess Fun Runs

---

Hamburg Elementary school in Detroit organized a "Turkey Trot" in which students ran laps during recess. The class that ran the most laps won a turkey dinner, served by the physical education teacher. A short-term incentive can help to create a healthy lifestyle with long-term benefits!

*To read the write-up for the Hamburg Elementary School's program, check out the Detroit News website: [www.detnews.com](http://www.detnews.com) and search for "Recess Spurs Kids Fitness".*

## Quick Hands Four Square

---

The game is played on the traditional Four Square court with a server. Students must hit every ball underhand; no catching, cradling, "babying" or slamming is allowed. Balls caught, landing out or landing on lines eliminate the player who made the mistake, and everyone moves up a square.

*Andy Raithby can be contacted at (905) 785-0105.*

## Pump up the Music

---

At Morton Way in Brampton, the school pumps up the music three days a week during recess. Physical Education teacher, Kirsten Schwass wheels out a stereo system and plays fun upbeat music including YMCA, Men In black and the Virginia Reel. Students play games or perform dances learned in physical education class. Principal, Mirella Aglio appreciates the increased activity and the fact that, schoolyard discipline problems have dropped since the active lunchtime program started.

*Kirsten Schwass can be contacted at (905) 452-6116*

## Crazy About Winter

---

William Beatty Public School in Parry sound gets children active during winter recesses using "Crazy Carpets". The carpets, with ropes attached, promote cooperative play with much pulling and sliding.

*William Beatty can be reached at (707) 746-9333.*

# Evaluation

## An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess

The success of Recess Revival is dependant upon an effective mix of both human and physical resources. Ongoing evaluation and communication with staff, students and parents will assist in achieving success. Recess Revival involves getting the necessary resources and using them to their fullest potential. Ideally, every playground will be a place where students are voluntarily participating in physical activity.

- ☐ Was an organizational meeting held?
- ☐ Who played the key role in organizing the initiative?
  
- ☐ Do students play the Tarmac games?
- ☐ Which are most popular? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did teachers teach the classes the activities?
  
- ☐ Are the "kits" being used?
- ☐ What equipment is used most often? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Are the children taking responsibility for the equipment?
  
- ☐ Did fundraising efforts provide enough money?
  
- ☐ Are the playground structures in good condition?
  
- ☐ Is rule enforcement effective?
- ☐ Which rules are most often broken? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- ☐ Which activities were most popular? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- ☐ Are the students active during the winter months?
  
- ☐ Are children with disabilities finding opportunities for activity?
- ☐ Are both boys and girls active at recess?
- ☐ Are the senior students active?
  
- ☐ Was a Student Leadership/Recess Ambassador Program introduced?
  
- ☐ Did the initiative increase activity levels at recess?
- ☐ Who were the biggest supporters of the initiative? \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Acknowledgments

*"Recess Revival - An Implementation Guide to an Active Recess"* was prepared and produced by Michelle Harkness and Judith Byl.

The project was funded with support from the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation and the Active Schools Plan.

Lyn Ingham, a retired school teacher from South River, deserves recognition for her efforts in promoting an active recess throughout her teaching career and for coining the phrase "Recess Revival".

Thank-you to everyone that assisted in the project by providing ideas and guidance

# Bibliography

Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. **"Canadian Children and Physical Activity Levels."** Press Release. [www.cflri.ca/cflri/press\\_releases/9803b.html](http://www.cflri.ca/cflri/press_releases/9803b.html)

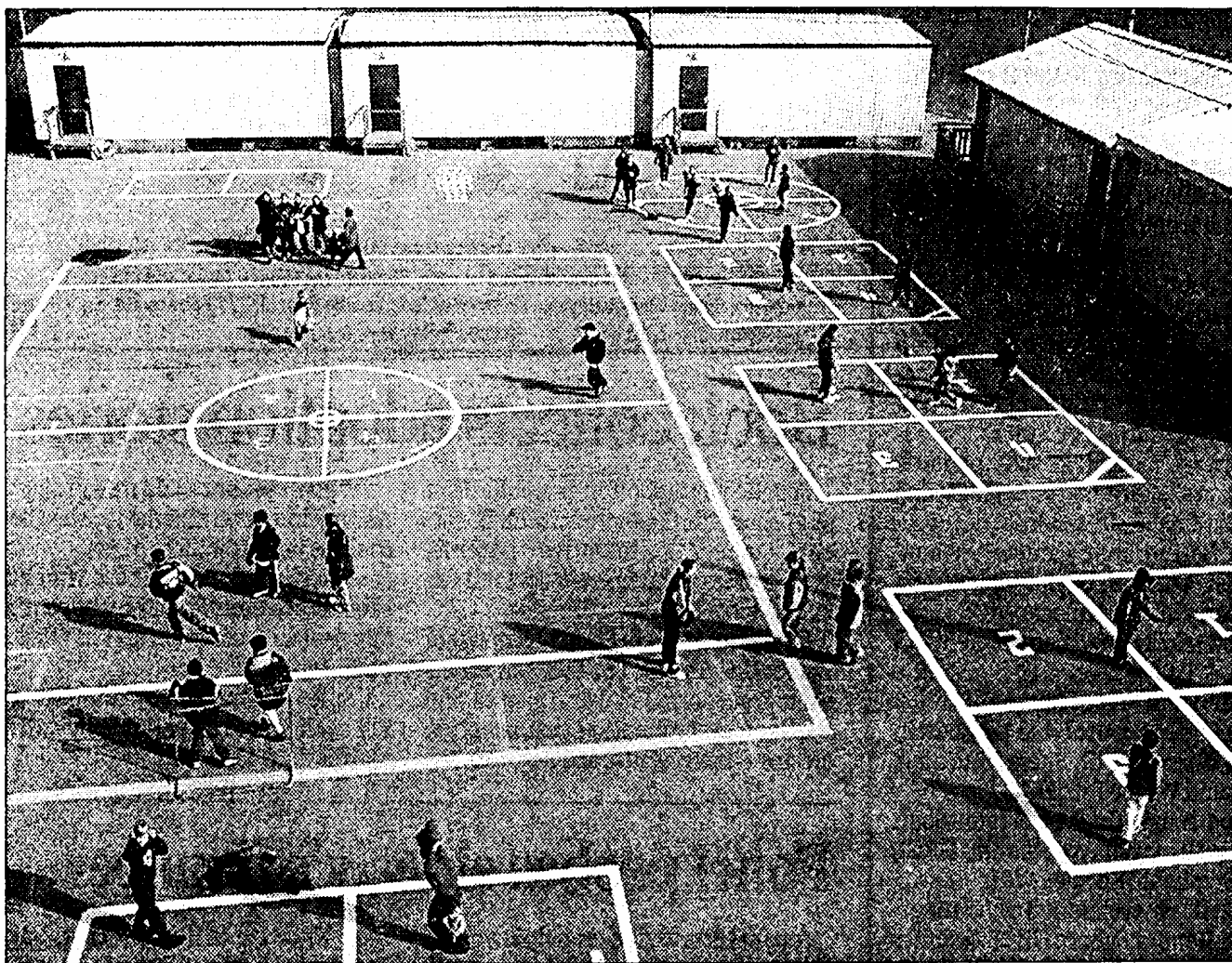
McKenzie, Thomas L. et. al. (1997). **"Physical Activity Levels and Prompts in Young Children at Recess: A Two-Year Study of a Bi-Ethnic Sample."** *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*. 68(3), 195-202.

Morrison, Suzanne et al. (1997) **"Student Mediators Drastically Reduce Playground Conflicts."** Hamilton Spectator.

Jaffee, Lynn and Sickler, Heidi. **"Boys' and Girls' Choices of Equipment and Activities on the Playground."** *Melpomene Institute*.  
<http://melpomene.org/journal/j170218.htm>

# CIRA Resources

- To order any of CIRA Ontario's Resources, contact the Provincial Office at [harknem@mail.mohawkc.on.ca](mailto:harknem@mail.mohawkc.on.ca), (905) 575-2083 or by FAX at (905) 575-2264.
- To order CIRA's Resources, contact the National Office at [www.intramurals.ca](http://www.intramurals.ca) or by phone at (613) 244-1594.



RICK KOZA, RECORD STAFF

The blacktop playground at John Darling Public School has been painted with boundaries for games ranging from hopscotch to an assortment of throwing and passing games.

# Schoolyard fun and games

## Painted pavement an invitation to come and play

Playing on the schoolyard at John Darling Public School in Kitchener has become a daily treat since games were painted on the pavement to entertain students at recess.

Some of the games include alphabet hopscotch, a clock for the younger children, square games, a track for special education students and "schlockey."

Schlockey players use hockey sticks and pucks, but the sticks don't have blades.

The game was introduced to Waterloo Region's public schools about five years ago by Pat Doyle, a Grade 5 teacher at John Darling and the current Ontario president of the Canadian Intramural Recreation Association (CIRA).

During a recent recess, Doyle counted 85 students playing games, some of which are painted on the wall of the school.

The games are so popular at the Kitchener school that principals

from other schools have visited to check them out, says principal Dave Lane.

The \$500 cost of painting the game markings was covered by the school council.

Doyle said the CIRA office in Hamilton has received many orders from Ontario schools for resource manuals outlining the rules of schlockey. The manuals were written by Doyle.



COLIN MCCONNELL/TORONTO STAR

**NOT SITTING STILL:** Students at Morton Way Public School in Brampton participate in active lunch program, a thrice-weekly festival of sound and motion designed to encourage fitness. The healthy fun has also cut schoolyard discipline problems.

# Keeping the student body fit

School is more than academic exercise at Brampton's Morton Way

Unlike many schools facing the new scooter craze, Morton Way Public School in Brampton not only lets kids scoot to school, it encourages it, as part of a lively new focus on fitness.

"If we believe in getting kids active, we have to support what we believe, even if that means having to find somewhere to store kids' scooters during class," said principal Mirella Aglio.

Because their awkward shape makes scooters tricky to lock up outside, Aglio often keeps the trendy contraptions safe in her office for kids during class.

"We need to take responsibility for developing students' bodies as well as their minds," added Aglio, who is learning to use in-line skates herself.

At lunch time three days a week, the schoolyard erupts into a festival of sound and motion, as 650 students dance, juggle and skip to the thunderous backbeat of a stereo cranked full blast.

It's part of a six-week push by the province's gym teachers to get kids active for summer — and Morton Way is taking the challenge seriously.

■ The active lunch program has kids playing with everything from parachutes to rubber chickens, from giant balls to homemade hockey games.

## Cool Schools

LOUISE BROWN



A WEEKLY LOOK AT INNOVATIONS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

■ Under a popular Walking Wednesday program, more than 94 per cent of the school's students walk to school each Wednesday, rather than arrive by car — which not only boosts fitness, but reduces traffic congestion around the school.

■ Students end each school assembly with an active routine performed to a techno-ditty familiar from NHL games.

■ Students take swimming lessons at a nearby community pool as a way to broaden their physical education program.

"Not only has it got the kids moving, but our schoolyard discipline problems have dropped since we started the active lunchtime program," said Aglio.

"And we have the Grade 5 kids

running the games for the younger kids, so there's a whole leadership component as well."

As warnings mount about the health of Canadian children — the number of obese young people has doubled in 15 years — this is one school that has decided to get kids moving.

And it is a timely new focus, as physical education programs are threatened by budget cuts and the school system's new focus on core subjects rather than "optional" subjects such as gym.

"We explicitly teach math skills and reading skills, but we also need to explicitly teach activity skills," said Aglio.

Physical education teacher Kirsten Schwass launched the school's new focus on fitness after attending a conference of the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association and learning about the association's new Active Schools Award Program, which challenges schools to get kids active.

Schools that sign up receive kits suggesting activities both in and out of class, and qualify for achievement stickers for an incentive poster to mount in the school.

"We know kids are getting obese and the risk of heart disease is hitting younger and younger, and that

kids as young as 10 are now suffering from high blood pressure," said Schwass.

"So we need to get kids more active, even just by turning off the television and computer for a while in our own homes."

Already many of Schwass' students understand the need for fitness.

"Do you know eight out of 10 Canadians don't stay active?" asked Shauna Kerr, 10, who helps run the skipping at lunchtime.

"But if you do keep active," adds her friend Mira Baker-Geldermans, 10, "it can reduce your chance of getting diseases like high blood pressure."

As well as being healthy, the kids admit such programs are downright fun.

"Once you start skipping and doing double-dutch, you get really good at it," said Shalima Mehta, 10, "and you never want to stop."

For information on the Active School program go to [www.ophea.net](http://www.ophea.net) and for information on Walking Wednesday programs go to [www.greenestcity.org](http://www.greenestcity.org).

If you have an idea for Cool Schools, you can reach Louise Brown at 416-869-4306 or Kristin Rushowy at 416-869-4828, or by e-mail at [lbrown@thestar.ca](mailto:lbrown@thestar.ca) or [krushow@thestar.ca](mailto:krushow@thestar.ca).