

# RECESS

Space and time for unstructured play!



**30**

The number of hours children spend in school per week

**4,000**

The number of recess breaks in a child's lifetime

Schools can provide a range of opportunities for

## UNSTRUCTURED PLAY

### BENEFITS: Unstructured play can...

- Improve **attention, concentration, and memory**
- Increase **physical activity** levels
- Strengthen **social and emotional learning**
- Support **resilience and self-regulation**
- Improve **mental health and well-being**



#### Encourages

- Play equipment, including **natural, loose, and movable parts**
- Supervisors that facilitate play and support reasonable **risk-taking**, meaningful **exploration**, **self-regulation**, and positive **interactions**
- Outdoor time in **diverse weather** conditions
- Extended recess breaks
- Rules that support access to a **variety** of activities and play spaces



#### Discourages



- **Withholding recess** for disciplinary, behavioural, and/or academic reasons
- **Excessive safety rules** influenced by parent concerns
- Too much or too little supervision
- **Restricting outdoor recess** during cold, wet, or hot weather
- **Limited access** to diverse play spaces and tactile and sensory elements



Unstructured play facilitates healthy childhood development. Article 31 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child identifies play as a child's right. **Children and youth need time, appropriate space, and opportunity to engage in quality play.** Strategies to increase unstructured play at school are necessary and should be supported by policies that promote the physical, academic, and social benefits of recess. Recess policies should be addressed from a balanced approach, considering safety alongside the benefits of outdoor play. This project is funded with the generous support of the **Lawson Foundation.**



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