

TAKE
A SIDE

Debate

Directions: Read the article. Then complete the chart on the next page.



Should Your Recess Be Longer?

Many schools have cut recess to focus more on math and reading. Is it time to put fun back on the schedule? **BY ALLISON FRIEDMAN**

You take one last bite of your sandwich and rush outside for recess. You've been waiting for this all morning: Sunshine! Fresh air! Kickball! You're lining up your shot. Then—*BRIIIIIINNNNG*. The bell rings to call you back inside.

Sound familiar?

Over the past 20 years, many schools have squeezed recess out of the schedule to focus more on learning. As many as 40 percent of school districts have shortened or gotten rid of recess.

Now, many kids, parents, and teachers are fighting to bring recess back. A few states, including Florida and New Jersey, have even passed laws giving students more free time.

But do kids *need* more recess?

Healthy and Happy

You're probably thinking, "Uh, YEAH." And a lot of experts would agree with you.

Doctors say kids need an hour of exercise each day. But between homework and family time, it can be hard to get enough. Running around at recess can help keep kids healthy.

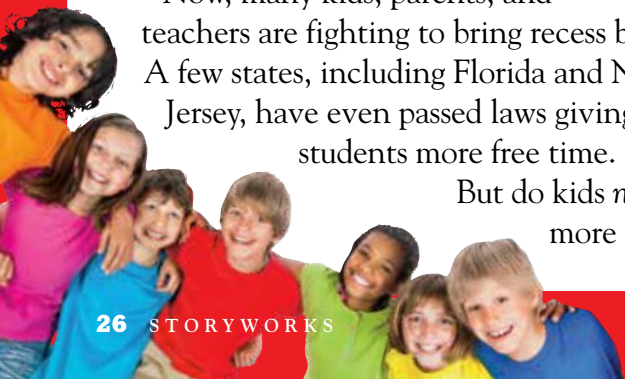
Playing outside helps students in class too. Dr. Robert Murray is a kids' doctor. He studies recess. He says it gives your brain an important break. "You return to the classroom calm and ready to learn," he explains. That may be why schools that have added more recess report a rise in test scores.

Recess helps kids in other ways too. You

25
Minutes
the average
length of recess
in U.S. schools



1,062
the average
number of steps
a kid takes
during recess



can build important life skills on the playground. You learn how to get along with others. You dream up creative ideas. You practice leading a team. These are skills you'll need someday to start a company or create a new invention.

Not Enough Time

But some say there's no time for more recess. Many teachers say they'd love for kids to have fun outside. But tests have gotten tougher. Teachers need every spare minute to teach math and reading. And you need those skills to become an inventor too.

200,000
the number of
kids treated in
emergency rooms
for playground
injuries every
year



Besides, recess isn't all fun and games. Some kids get picked on. Others get left out. Some get injured while playing.

Adult aides can help keep recess safe and peaceful. But schools can't always afford to hire people for this job.

Still, some say that recess is worth fighting for. "It gets me focused and gives me more energy," says Noah Browning. Noah is 9. He lives in Florida, where a new law gives kids 20 minutes of recess each day. "Everybody deserves a break," Noah says. ■



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Should there be more time for recess?

Go back to the article and find information to support each side. Write the information on the lines below.

YES Kids need free time!

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

NO Too many problems!

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Study the points on both sides of the argument—and think about your own opinion. State your opinion in one sentence below. It can become the thesis statement for an opinion essay on this topic.

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