

March 30, 2026

Subject: School Recess

To Whom It May Concern:

As a family nurse practitioner and a parent of young children, I strongly support legislation that protects daily recess because the evidence is clear: recess improves physical health, mental well-being, and academic outcomes.

From a physical health perspective, recess contributes substantially to children's recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity. Regular recess increases moderate-to-vigorous activity during the school day and is also associated with lower rates of childhood obesity.

In clinical practice, I am seeing children experiencing rising rates of anxiety, depression, and behavioral challenges. Studies show that unstructured play reduces stress, improves mood, and enhances emotional regulation. Recess also provides critical opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperation, communication, and conflict resolution.

Academically, recess is a productive time during the school day. Research demonstrates that children are more attentive, have better on-task behavior, and show improved classroom performance after recess. Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and American Academy of Pediatrics recommend daily recess as an essential part of the school day, not a reward or privilege. Withholding recess as punishment or for academic purposes has been shown to be counterproductive, particularly for children who benefit most from physical activity and behavioral resets.

The evidence overwhelmingly supports daily recess as an essential element of comprehensive child health and development. I also see the positive effects that unstructured outdoor play has on my patients and my own children on a daily basis. I strongly encourage policies and practices that ensure all elementary school students receive adequate daily recess in safe, well-supervised environments.

Sincerely,

Danielle Hodorowski DNP, APRN, FNP-C