



# Physical Activity During School: Providing Recess to All Students



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

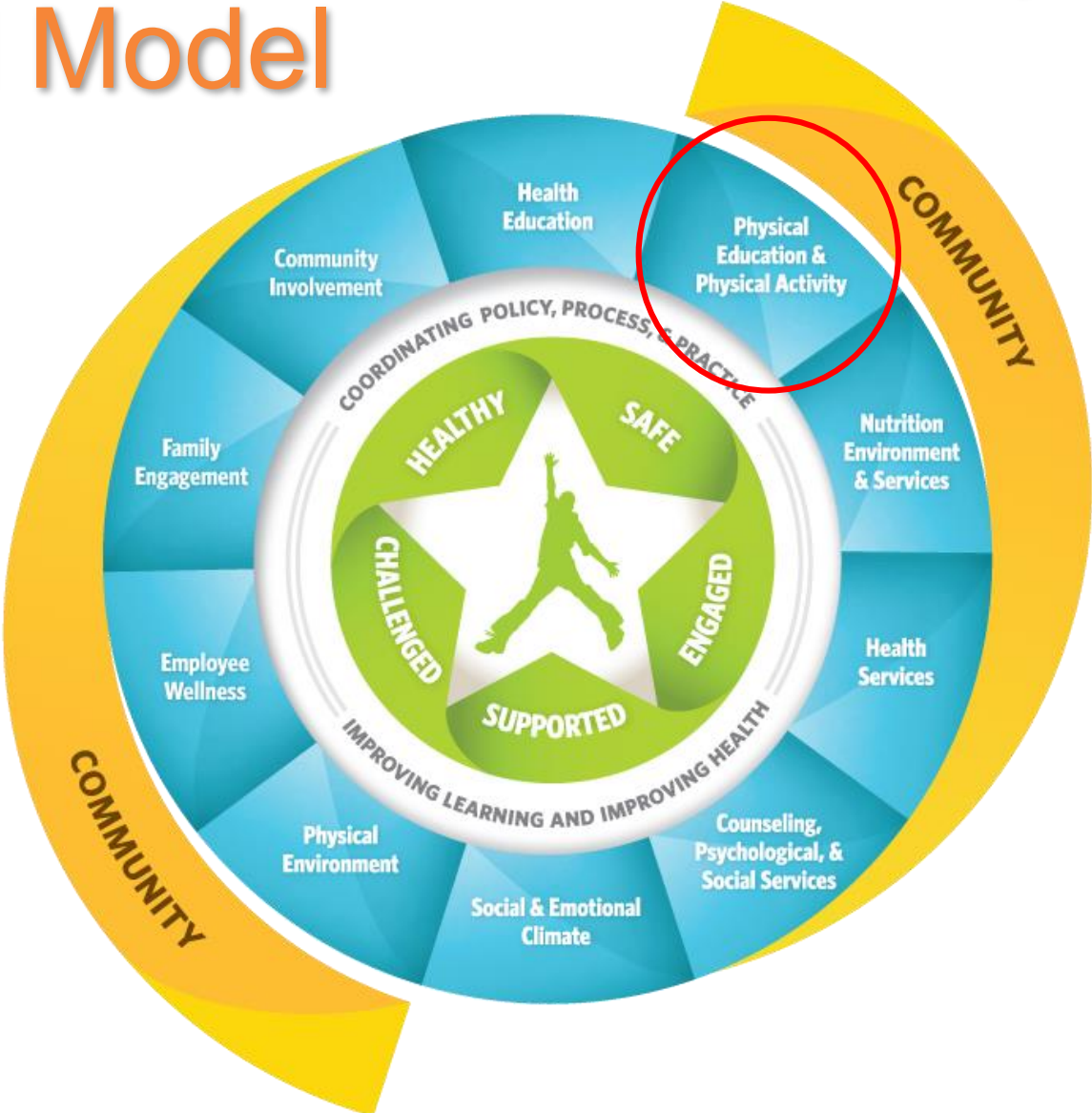




# Purpose

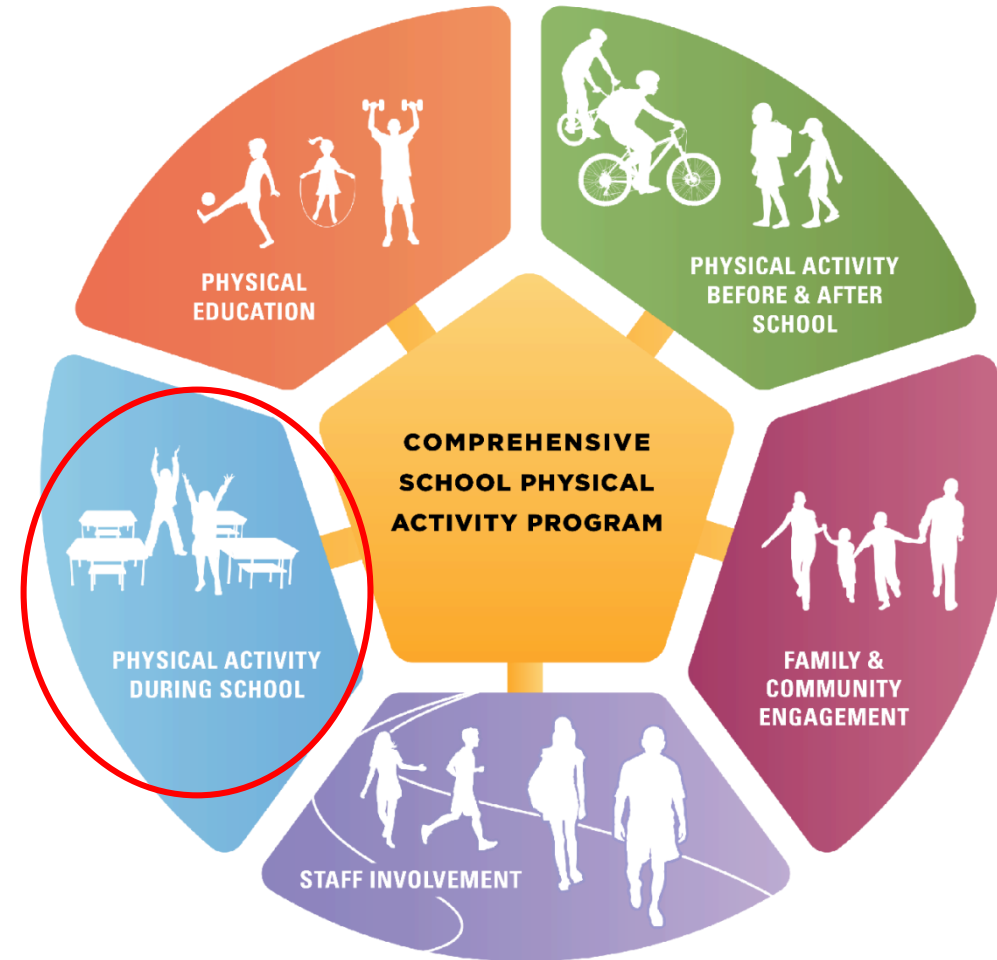
- Explain how recess supports student success.
- Share three new resources for recess
  - *Strategies for Recess in Schools*
  - *Recess Planning in Schools: A Guide to Putting Strategies for Recess into Practice*
  - Recess Planning Template
- Learn how to support recess in schools.

# Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model





# Physical Education and Physical Activity





# Definition of Recess

- A regularly scheduled period within the school day for physical activity and play that is monitored by trained staff or volunteers.
- Recess is a period of time when students are encouraged to be physically active and engaged with their peers in activities of their choice, at all grade levels, kindergarten through 12th grade.



# Benefits of Recess

- Improves social and emotional development.
- Improves memory, attention, and concentration.
- Helps students stay on-task in the classroom.
- Reduces disruptive behavior in the classroom.
- Increases level of physical activity.

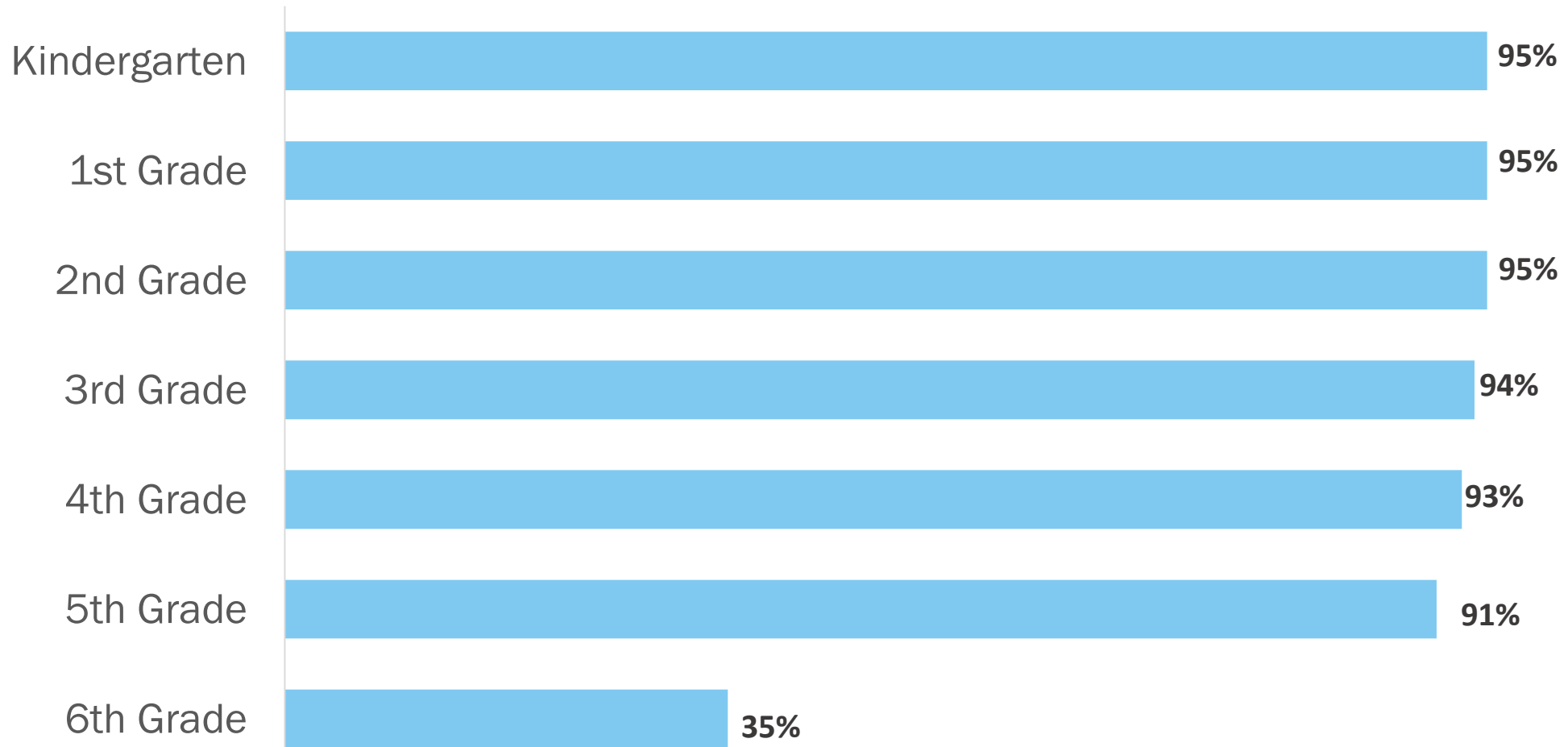


# National Guidance for Recess

- Provide all students K–12 with at least 20 minutes of recess daily.
- Prohibit the replacement of physical education with recess.
- Provide schools and students with adequate spaces, facilities, equipment, and supplies for recess.
- Ensure that spaces and facilities for recess meet or exceed recommended safety standards.
- Prohibit the exclusion of students from recess for disciplinary reasons or academic performance in the classroom.
- Prohibit the use of physical activity during recess as punishment.
- Provide recess before lunch.
- Provide staff members who lead or supervise recess with ongoing professional development.

# Recess Participation

Percentage of Elementary Schools that Had Students Participate in Regularly Scheduled Recess During the School Day\*



\*Among elementary schools with students in that grade.

Source: CDC. Results from the School Health Policies and Practices Study 2014. Atlanta, GA. US Department of Health and Human Services; 2015.





# Recess: Number of Days and Minutes\*

- On average, schools schedule students to have recess 5 days a week.
- On average, schools have students spend 27 minutes in recess each day.



Meets the national guidance for recess, but we still have schools not offering recess!

\*Among elementary schools in which students participate in regularly scheduled recess.

Source: CDC. Results from the School Health Policies and Practices Study 2014. Atlanta, GA.: US Department of Health and Human Services; 2015.

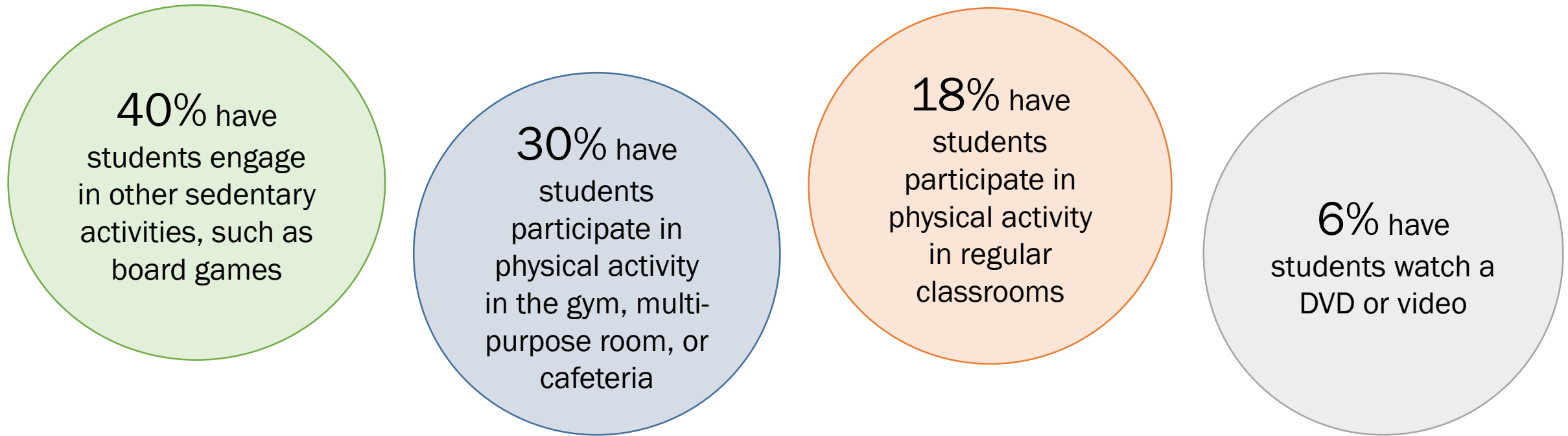


# Recess Policy on Punishment

- 54% of elementary schools prohibited or actively discouraged staff from excluding students from all or part of recess as punishment for:
  - Bad behavior.
  - Failure to complete class work.

# Students Can't Go Outside for Recess

- 100% of elementary schools hold recess outdoors, weather permitting.
- But when schools can't let students go outside:



Note: Percent in bubbles reflect the percentage of elementary schools.

Source: CDC. Results from the School Health Policies and Practices Study 2014. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services; 2015.

# Public Playground Safety Handbook



U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission  
Saving Lives and Keeping Families Safe

# Using Safety Checklist and Posting Rules

- 97% of elementary schools have playground facilities and equipment.
- 49% of elementary schools use the safety checklist and equipment guidelines published in the *Public Playground Safety Handbook*.
- 49% of elementary schools post rules for the safe use of specific types of playground equipment.

# Physical Activity in Middle and High Schools

Physical Activity Practice in Schools*	Middle Schools	High Schools
Have students participate in regular physical activity breaks during the school day	64%	27%
Have a specified time or event for schoolwide physical activity	34%	14%

\*During the school day outside of physical education class.

Source: CDC. Results from the School Health Policies and Practices Study 2014. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2015.



# STRATEGIES FOR RECESS IN SCHOOLS

January 2017



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
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# Strategies for Recess in Schools

1

## Make Leadership Decisions

1. Identify and document recess policies
2. Put documented recess policies into practice and revise as needed
3. Develop a written recess plan
4. Designate spaces for outdoor and indoor recess
5. Establish weather guidelines to ensure student safety
6. Train school staff and volunteers for recess



2

## Communicate and Enforce Behavioral and Safety Expectations

7. Establish and communicate behavior management strategies
8. Teach conflict resolution skills
9. Ensure that recess spaces and facilities meet recommended safety standards



3

## Create an Environment Supportive of Physical Activity During Recess

10. Provide adequate physical activity equipment
11. Add markings to playground or physical activity areas
12. Create physical activity zones
13. Provide planned activities or activity cards
14. Provide a combination of recess strategies



4

## Engage the School Community to Support Recess

15. Establish roles and responsibilities for supervising and facilitating recess
16. Involve students in planning and leading recess
17. Mobilize parents and others in the school community to support and sustain recess at school



5

## Gather Information on Recess

18. Track physical activity during recess
19. Collect information on recess to show the effect on student and school outcomes



# Strategies for Recess in Schools

1

## Make Leadership Decisions

1. Identify and document recess policies
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## Category 1: Make Leadership Decisions

1. Identify and document recess policies.
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# Strategies for Recess in Schools

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## Category 2: Communicate and Enforce Behavioral and Safety Expectations

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# Strategies for Recess in Schools

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# Strategies for Recess in Schools

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## Engage the School Community to Support Recess

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## Category 4: Engage the School Community to Support Recess

- 15. Establish roles and responsibilities for supervising and facilitating recess.
- 16. Involve students in planning and leading recess.
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# Strategies for Recess in Schools

5

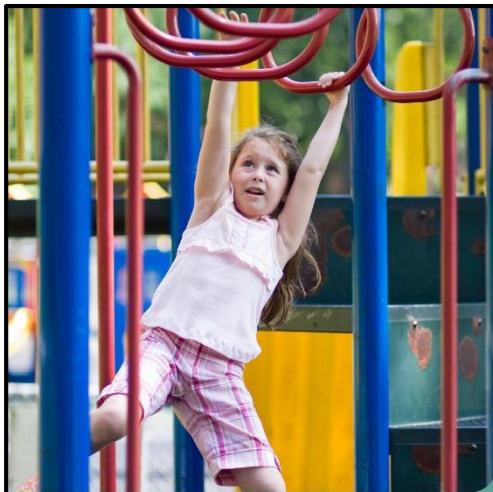
## Gather Information on Recess

- 18. Track physical activity during recess
- 19. Collect information on recess to show the effect on student and school outcomes



## Category 5: Gather Information on Recess

- 18. Track physical activity during recess.
- 19. Collect information on recess to show the effect on student and school outcomes.



## RECESS PLANNING IN SCHOOLS

A Guide to Putting Strategies for Recess into Practice

January 2017



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# Using the Planning Guide



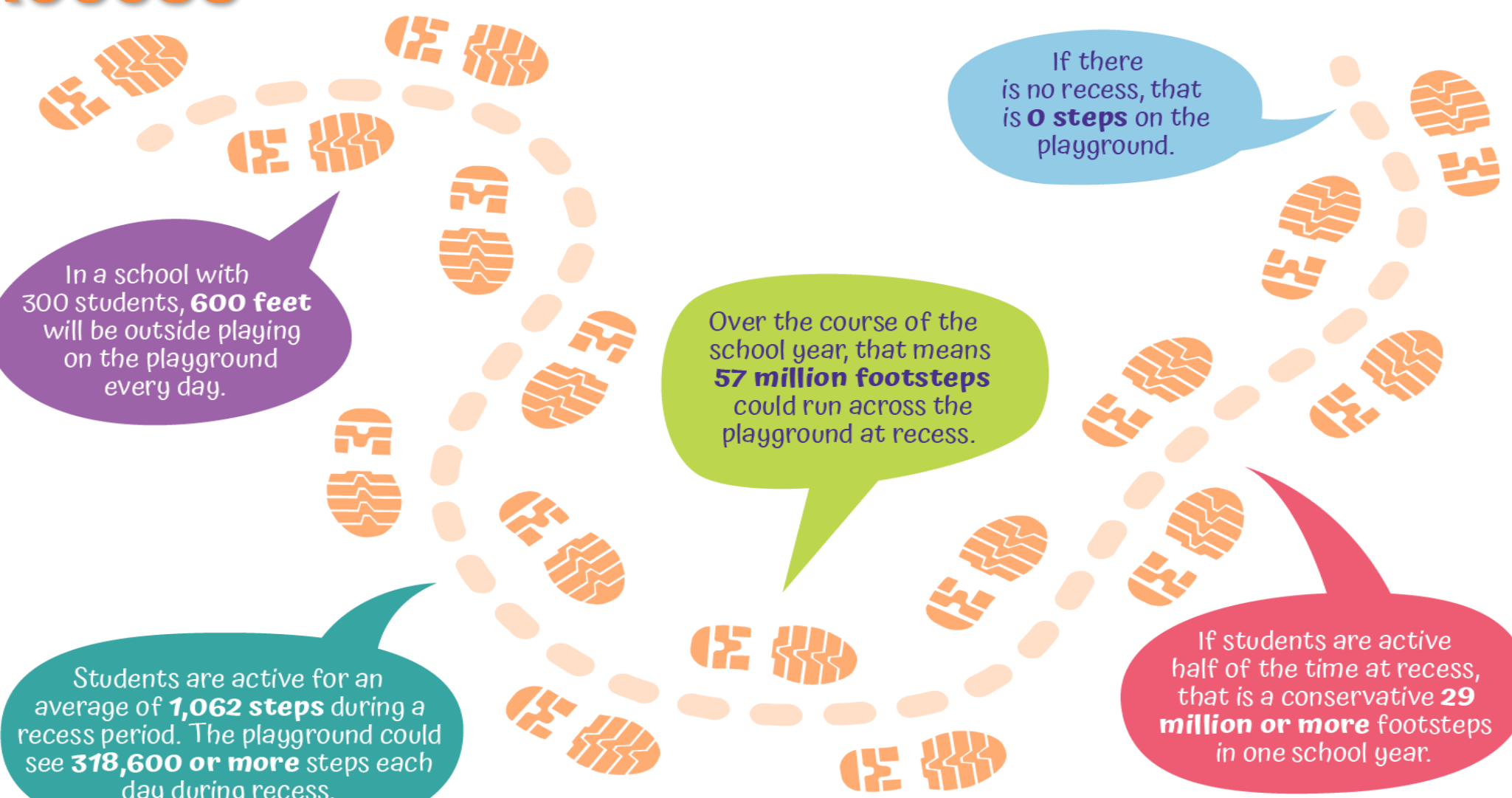
- Use questions to identify what is currently in place.
- Discuss and select strategies to strengthen recess.
- Document how schools will implement the strategies.
- Identify relevant resources.



# Planning Guide Template

- Document the customized school recess plan.
- Identify how school will implement recess.
- Communicate recess plan with school community.

# Footsteps on a Playground at Recess



In a school with 300 students, **600 feet** will be outside playing on the playground every day.

Students are active for an average of **1,062 steps** during a recess period. The playground could see **318,600 or more** steps each day during recess.

Over the course of the school year, that means **57 million footsteps** could run across the playground at recess.

If there is no recess, that is **0 steps** on the playground.

If students are active half of the time at recess, that is a conservative **29 million or more** footsteps in one school year.





# Take Action

- Educate the school community about the benefits of daily recess.
- Include recess in the local school wellness policy.
- Know the 19 evidence-based strategies in the *Strategies for Recess in Schools*.
- Use the *Recess Planning in Schools* guide to develop a written school recess plan.



# Additional Information

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# Questions





# Thank You!

- List speakers and contact information.

For more information, contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

Visit [www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/)

Contact CDC-INFO at [www.cdc.gov/cdc-info](http://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info)

Call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636); TTY: 1-888-232-6348



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