

Safe and Healthy Recess

PLAYGROUND MAPPING GUIDELINES

Setting up a playground that has clearly marked play areas is critical to creating and maintaining fun, safe, and engaging recesses. One of the best ways to create a safe recess space is to design a map of your playground for all students and staff to utilize.

Brainstorm:

- Which games are already being played safely?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Which games are less safe?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- How are boundaries defined on the playground?

- Where is equipment currently stored?

- How is equipment distributed?

- Where and how are playground and game rules communicated? (i.e. signs, adults at game stations, student led, taught in class?)

At Recess there should be:
 3-5 Core Games
 A Special Game of the week
 Posted Rules
 Clear Boundaries

Consider the following recommendations for a safe play environment:

- All game area boundaries should be clearly marked (cones, chalk, paint, flags)
- Smaller areas are good for jump rope, double dutch, and hula hoops.
- Basketball should be contained in the basketball court or another designated area
- Soccer, football, and running team games are best played on fields
- Any game where a student is running full speed should not be placed next to a game where there is a strong chance that a ball or another student may enter the boundary while playing a different game.
- Avoid shared boundaries if possible.
- Relay races are best on the outside of the core playground area so that children who aren't in the races aren't walking or running through the lanes.
- Kickball games should not take place near a busy street or an area where it is unsafe to retrieve the ball (established rules should be communicated regarding who can retrieve balls). There should also be adequate outfield space so that kicked balls do not end up in other games.
- Equipment check-out area should be clearly marked and be easily accessible
- Adults should be able to supervise all play areas. If the playground is too big for this to happen, it's ok to not use a portion of the playground.
- Recess guidelines and game rules should be posted on the playground

Best practices for map construction and use:

- Draw your map on large paper or poster board so it is easy to read
- Download a Google Earth map of your playground to use as the foundation of your map
- Laminate your map so it's weather-proof
- Use dry erase or impermanent markers so that you can easily change your map
- Create a key for your map
- Keep the map simple enough for young students to understand
- Create copies of your map to post on the playground, in the cafeteria, in classrooms or on a school-wide bulletin board
- Staff is encouraged to regularly review map and recess guidelines with students

Suggested Games:

Rotational Games	Large Group Games	Independent Games
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Switch<input type="checkbox"/> Foursquare<input type="checkbox"/> Wall Ball (Hand Ball)<input type="checkbox"/> Tetherball<input type="checkbox"/> Three Lines Soccer<input type="checkbox"/> Three Lines Basketball<input type="checkbox"/> Knockout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Kickball<input type="checkbox"/> RoShamBo Relay<input type="checkbox"/> Castle Ball<input type="checkbox"/> Tag Games:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Band Aid Tag<input type="checkbox"/> Watch Your Back Tag<input type="checkbox"/> Hungry Fox<input type="checkbox"/> Hula Hoop Tag<input type="checkbox"/> Magic Tag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Hula Hoop<input type="checkbox"/> Jump Rope<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Helicopter<input type="checkbox"/> Snake<input type="checkbox"/> Cat and Mouse<input type="checkbox"/> Zero 1, 2, 3<input type="checkbox"/> Hopscotch<input type="checkbox"/> Chalk coloring

Find more game ideas at playworks.org/games