Every child has a right to play.
Play is fundamental to a child’s development. Family work schedules, structured activities, homework, and social media all leave little room for physical free play and exploration. Nearly one-half of a child’s wakeful hours are in school. Rising demands for more classroom time has diminished the duration and quality of recess in our schools.

Why is this important?
Free time makes unique contributions to the whole child. Active recess can improve attention and concentration. Even when recess is spent socializing, it helps manage stress. Importantly, recess improves learning. Rather than jumping from one task to the next, the brain needs time to store new information into memory.

brain breaks:
/braɪn/break/noun
Brief interruptions that help the brain’s memory centers process what has just been taught, making the memories stronger and less likely to be forgotten. Brain breaks also prepare the child for the next session of concentrated learning.

Skills that are learned on the playground:
• Communication skills
• Negotiation
• Cooperation
• Sharing
• Problem-solving
• Coping skills
• Emotional control
• Persistence

Regular recess can help to promote a school’s positive social climate. Sadly, quality recess is not available for many children. A willingness to sacrifice recess to gain more academic minutes or to withhold recess as a punishment remain common practices in many schools. Lack of safe play areas, poor equipment, and inadequate staffing at school are additional challenges to ensuring quality recess.

Check out the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) approach at: https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wscc/index.htm

Ohio AAP PMP Mobile App
Search Parenting at Meal and Playtime on Apple Store or Google Play

App Highlights...
• Physician-endorsed materials for parents to access on-demand
• Resources for parents organized by age
• Text reminders sent monthly and/or for age milestones
• Easy sign-up
• Videos on feeding, play, nutrition and more

Ohio Department of Health
http://ohioaap.org/projects/PMP

12/2021
The Riches of Recess

Fun Recess Games

- Hide and Seek
- Capture the Flag
- Traffic Cop
- Hopscotch
- Chinese Jump Rope
- Marbles
- Mother, May I
- Tag
- Freeze Tag
- Marco Polo
- Red Rover
- Spud
- Cat’s Cradle
- Crack the Whip
- Telephone

- Kick the Can
- Parachute
- Four Square
- Jump Rope and Double Dutch
- Jacks
- Red Light, Green Light
- Simon Says
- Shadow Tag
- TV Tag
- Blind Man’s Bluff
- Heads Up, Seven Up
- Who’s Got the Button?
- Hand-Clap Games
- Musical Chairs
- Freeze Dance

These handouts are the property of the Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics and the Ohio Department of Health and may not be altered without express permission.

Check out these websites for more information about games to try with your classmates at recess this week:

- https://www.playworks.org/game-library

http://ohioaap.org/projects/PMP