Today’s piece was prepared by Julie Campbell, MD, based on a Time article [Is Recess Important for Kids or a Waste of Time? Here’s What the Research Says](http://time.com/4982061/recess-benefits-research-debate/)

The TIME article begins with a discussion of a new nationwide push for legislation to “save recess,” pushing back on a recent trend to reduce or eliminate recess, with reasons cited that include increased importance of standardized testing, putting pressure on teachers and administrators to increase time dedicated to in-class instruction. A 2007 survey out of George Washington University in 2007 found that 20% of schools had reduced recess time in order to increase in-class time. This is somewhat outdated and likely does not reflect current data; however the Shape of the Nation report in 2016 found that only 16% of states require elementary schools to provide daily recess, making it easier for schools to shift recess time if needed. The article cite the American Academy of Pediatrics’ recommendations on activity; kids should get 60 minutes of “moderate to vigorous activity per day,” with recess being a part of that and should not be eliminated for academic reasons or as punishment. The article also cited a few recent studies linking recess to improved classroom behavior and academic achievement, reduced fidgetiness, and dietary balance.

Overall, this article did a good job of arguing for the benefits of recess, citing information about active play and its importance in classroom behavior and citing one study looking at classroom success. They make a good argument that recess should be held daily and certainly should not be eliminated from kids’ daily schedules. They also highlight the AAP’s policy on recess correctly; the AAP recommends recess as a “crucial and necessary component of a child’s development.” They do highlight the ongoing debate about structured recess (which may be beneficial for combating obesity) and unstructured recess (which allows for children to make their own choices). They do clearly state that recess should be kept separate from physical education. Additional recommendations that they make include having recess before lunch, as the Time article cited, and more frequent short recesses, such as they do in Japan.

**RESOURCES ON RECESS:**

[The Crucial Role of Recess in School *AAP Council on School Health*](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/131/1/183)*. Provides background and recommendations*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!