

Recess Activities

How to Use It

- This section includes activities paired with the instructional units you teach throughout the year. SPARK recommends teaching recess activities near the beginning of the month. (Use Matching Activities With Instructional Units as a guide to match skills with your instructional unit.)
- In order to increase moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) during recess, teach students to start a new game when more than 3 are waiting to play. Practice this during your PE lessons.
- Use the Recess Expectation Cards (SPARKfamily.org) and Peaceful Resolution Cards (SPARKfamily.org) to:
 - 1. Help you instruct these activities by defining school recess expectations (see Safety below).
 - 2. Provide Recess Supervisors with cues that enable them to:
 - Be proactive with students by posting and explaining expectations.
 - Reward students “caught” being good (those that SPARKle) by giving a small token/ticket to support a reward system.
 - Reinforce recess objectives. For example, if a student is misbehaving on the playground, instead of losing recess time sitting on the wall, remind the student about the expectations.

Safety

- To ensure recess is safe, inclusive, active and enjoyable, students should be provided with access to facilities, trained supervisors and sufficient equipment.
- Implement a consistent set of behavioral expectations (rules) and consequences. Children should know what is expected of them at the beginning of the school year. They should also know the consequences for inappropriate behavior. Use the Playground Expectations Cards (SPARKfamily.org) to help teach and maintain appropriate behaviors during recess, and/or create your own.
- Instruct students in peaceful resolution and self-responsibility. Training of older “student referees” fosters responsibility and positive social interactions. Prior to play, ensure children understand game rules and how to use and share equipment. This is a proactive means to reduce the number of confrontations. Use the Peaceful Resolutions Cards to keep peace on the playground, and/or create your own with student input.
- Keep adult-to-child ratios similar to classroom ratios to ensure adequate supervision and a safe movement environment.
- Immediate adult intervention is necessary when a student’s physical or emotional safety is at risk. Aggressive behavior and bullying must not be permitted.
- Ensure playing surfaces are conducive to the activity. If only blacktop or cement are available, keep activities at moderate levels.
- Teach children to use Rock, Paper, Scissors as a simple way to resolve most conflicts.