



[News about the 17th IPA World Conference 2008 Hong Kong](#)



[Who We Are](#)

[What We Do](#)

[Membership](#)

[Donations](#)

[IPA and the UN](#)

[IPA Declaration](#)

[History of the IPA](#)

[Events](#)



[Playday](#)

[Recess](#)

[Links](#)

[Playwork](#)

[Newsletter On-Line](#)

[Play Shelf](#)



[IPA/USA Board](#)

[Web Master](#)

[See this web site made
by concerned parents
Fair Play for Recess](#)

IPA/USA NEWSLETTER ON-LINE
The American Association for the Child's Right to Play
Sharon Schneider and Tom Reed, Editors

Summer, 2006

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Message from the President
- A Pitch for Fitness in Schools'
- The Value of Play: A Forum on Risk, Recreation, and Children's Health
- NASPE 'Recess for Elementary Schools'
- IPA/USA and TASP National Conference Combined!

- Schools, Pressed to Achieve, put Squeeze on Recess
- School Recess Common but no Longer a Given
- Rescuing Recess
- Peaceful Playgrounds – Recess Articles June 2006
- Playground Supervision Training for Child Care Providers
- IPA/USA Membership Information
- Advertising Rates and Conditions

Message from the President:

Dear Friends,

Former web manager Mike Lee has posted a FREE version of his program Animal Exercise Fun online at AnimalExerciseFun.org.

First I would like to commend Cartoon Network's "Rescuing Recess" outreach program and update you on their next project in which I hope all IPA/USA members will get involved. CN is declaring the week of September 25-29 as National Recess Week and hope to have at least 30,000 schools involved. It is creating Recess Kits that will be available to participating schools, and will include recess monitor buttons, whistles, rubber balls, jump ropes, sidewalk chalk, a Recess Coordinator T-shirt., recess volunteer posters, volunteer recruitment flyers, iron-On decals, and media outreach templates. These kits will be available to all teachers and school staff volunteers who will complete an online training between August 11 – September 15. The training will take about 15 minutes to complete and I encourage all of you to bring this to the attention of your local schools and to serve as the event coordinators. Please mark those dates on your calendars and begin recruiting schools to jump aboard! By working together we can make this event a great success!

There is much media interest in the recess issue. I have received phone calls from reporters in many states and Canada about the recess question. A local TV station in New Mexico is planning a 1/2 hour show about recess to air sometime in the fall. It seems the message is getting through that children need recess!

We are also planning for our triennial conference next year. Tentative date for the conference is the last week in April. This should be one of the best conferences ever as IPA/USA will be joined with TASP (The Association for the Study of Play) and IPA/Canada in planning the conference. The Strong Children's Museum in Rochester will serve as conference headquarters. If you have any ideas for this conference, send your suggestion to me or any of the board members and we will discuss them at our board meeting in September.

Enjoy your summer and keep on playing!

Audrey Skrupskelis

'A Pitch for Fitness in Schools'

Connect for Kids makes the best use of communications technologies, specifically the internet, to give adults- parents, grandparents, guardians, educators, advocates, policymakers, elected officials and others – the tools and information they need to improve the lives of children, youth and families. The Connect for Kids online publication covers more than 30 topics ranging from arts to youth development, foster care to adoption, and welfare reform to oral health.

Connect for Kids recently held a live online chat entitled 'A Pitch for Fitness in Schools' with specialist guests discussing questions related to physical education, recess and children's general overall fitness. The full transcript from this informative discussion is detailed below. It is also available from <http://www.connectforkids.org/node/4370>

'A Pitch for Fitness in Schools'

Host: Roshin Mathew

Expert Guests: Charlene Burgeson, George Graham, and Rhonda Clements are all experts in the field of physical activity and work to promote the benefits of recess and physical education in schools. Burgeson, a former physical education teacher, is now the Executive Director of the National Association for Sports and Physical Education (NASPE). As a professor of kinesiology at Pennsylvania State University, George Graham has written 15 books/monographs and over 50 articles related to children and physical activity. Clements, who is also a professor, teaches within the Department of Educational Leadership and Special Subjects at Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York. She is currently the Associate Editor of the on-line journal, PlayRights: An International Journal of the Theory and Practice of Play.

Roshin: Nearly half of young people in the U.S. between the ages of 12 and 21 do not engage in regular vigorous physical activity, according to The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. Yet such activity is known to reduce the risk of obesity and premature death. That's why many advocates are pushing for schools to make more of an effort to encourage students to get moving.

Connect for Kids will be hosting three expert panellists on kids' health and fitness for our Talktime Live! online chat. Charlene Burgeson, George Graham, and Rhonda Clements will field your questions about physical education and recess, from the perspective of advocates who believe in the importance and health benefits of school-sponsored physical activity.

Toshio Meronek, Portland, OR: question: The situation sounds pretty dismal. Are there many schools that are going against the tide, and recognizing the need for gym classes? Is the lack of gym classes a funding issue, a change in prioritization of school subjects at most schools, or both?

If it is a funding issue, how do we decide whether it's more important than arts/music/outdoor science programs, which are also in danger?

Charlene: The short answer is "yes." Actually, CDC data tells us that almost 90% of school districts require schools to teach physical education, and that most schools (96%) require students to take some physical education. The problem is that most schools are not offering enough physical education. The recommended amount of physical education is at least 150 minutes per week for elementary school students and at least 225 minutes per week for middle and high schools students. Less than 10% of schools provide this amount of physical education for the entire school year for students in all grades in the school. So, it appears, that school districts and schools do recognize the need for physical education classes, but that they need to make more time available for this important subject.

Also, with vending machines gone from most campuses, I expect that'll have an effect on obesity rates -- can we use the energy that was created around that issue to make sure gym classes don't become extinct?

There are some major national and state initiatives that have brought together experts and advocates for healthy eating and physical activity to ensure that schools and communities are

addressing both of these important aspects of good health, healthy weight, and prevention of chronic diseases. Examples include Action for Healthy Kids, Alliance for a Healthier Generation, National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity, and many state coalitions. The passage of local school (school district) wellness policy requirements through the federal Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 2004 is generating a tremendous amount of attention and action – and some funding (and hopefully more in the future) – for efforts to support healthy eating and physical activity in schools.

As with most issues, it's a combination of factors. Yes, there are funding issues related to hiring certified physical education teachers (hiring more so that the amount of physical education can be increased) and the necessary facilities/space and equipment needed for a safe, instructional, active, and high quality physical education program. It is also widely believed that physical education time is being reduced to create more time for schools to prepare students for subjects being tested by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. In either case, reducing or eliminating physical education is short sighted for a number of reasons: (1) students deserve a comprehensive education which includes being educated physically, (2) research shows that physical activity increases self-esteem and reduces anxiety and stress thus contributing to students' capacity for learning, and (3) the cost of obesity and related chronic disease are far greater than the cost of reducing/avoiding these health problems, for which physical education can assist.

Finally, there are a lot of after school athletics programs that are partnered with schools but that are funded independently of them (through foundations, etc.). Do you see these becoming more common; what role do they have to play; will this become a common model -- will the Ford Foundation, or Nike, or Bill & Melinda Gates become the most prevalent stewards of education?

The programs that you are referring to, positive youth development programs that utilize one or more sports/physical activities as a "vehicle" for engaging students in a safe (physically and emotionally) and meaningful group activity, are a very important way of ensuring the kids are physically active and feel good about themselves. I cannot say whether or not these will become more common, but I do know that quite a number exist, especially in the urban core of major cities, and that many foundations are stepping up to the plate to support them. Some examples of these types of programs are: America SCORES, Police Athletic Leagues, and Inner City Games.

Betty Madigan from Melrose New York: If a school has a policy of having students that have not completed their work stay in for recess to complete the work, isn't this counterproductive because these are often the same students every day and are usually the very students that need to get up and move around?
How do you suggest I approach this issue with the school district?

Rhonda: I could not agree with you more. I am going to list a few suggestions that hopefully will assist your efforts with your school's administration:

1. Provide your principal with articles that advocate the virtue of recess. Many of these articles can be found on the American Association for the Child' Right to Play Website (<http://www.ipausa.org>)
 2. Ask that the topic of recess be placed on the agenda of a faculty meeting to review the offerings that currently exist and the policies that are being implemented.
 3. Contact your school's PTA President and convince him or her of the value of physical play and recess for all children.
 4. Secure a guest speaker from one of the local colleges or universities and ask that individual (usually from the exercise sciences or physical education) to discuss the importance of physical activity, and to state some of the alarming statistics regarding childhood obesity.
 5. Write a letter about the value of recess to the local paper, and include the fact that all children need daily physical activity and the opportunity to socialize with their peers.
- Finally, I want to add that your concern is also shared with many special education teachers throughout the country. For many children with learning problems, recess is one of the only times that these children can excel. Depriving the child of these experiences is very disheartening to the student, and... as you say "counterproductive."

Washington, D.C.: How have schools faced challenges of encouraging health and fitness

without triggering unhealthy weight control behaviours, especially for increasingly younger girls?

Charlene: This is a very important issue. In our efforts to teach youth about physical activity, healthy eating, and healthy weight, we must also educate them about unhealthy weight control practices and related diseases. That being said, there is a much greater prevalence of overweight and obesity than eating disorders, so we must not avoid educating about the importance of healthy weight because of a fear of unhealthy weight control practices.

Stephan Kapsch, Portland, OR: I don't know how to put this into a question, and maybe my experience is sadly out of date, but I grew up with an obesity problem starting at about age 7, and what I found was that physical education teachers (without exception) treated it as a character flaw and were thus utterly unhelpful, even very destructive because they tended to use ridicule. They made me hate and despise PE classes because I knew all I could expect from them was deliberate humiliation.

One might think this has changed, but I suspect not since PE teachers are usually former jocks and that is what jocks are like. The same is true (in my experience, of course), for career military people.

It was especially tough for me because as a child I was very active--played backyard and sandlot sports constantly, hunted and trapped, canoed, had a paper route and still has a serious weight problem.

Rhonda: How sad that earlier generations of physical educators were so heartless in their behaviour. I am however delighted that teacher training has changed greatly in the last 10-15 years, and I can assure you that this generation of physical educators are much more caring, knowledgeable about the problem, and see themselves as "teachers" to assist all students. "Jill and Joe Jock" no longer exist...ask any of my Graduate students at Manhattanville College. Thanks for this excellent reflection.

Jim Nottingham, Chappaqua, NY: It appears that there is less emphasis on physical activity, conditioning and teaching traditional sports during "gym" class. Classes are dedicated to circus arts (to increase hand/eye coordination); and students are assigned homework that requires them to be sedentary (after sitting all day), however true exercise, i.e. sweating, muscle fatigue and hard play seems to have been forgotten. In elementary school the kids rarely went outside. Although my son in middle school loves and plays sports outside of school, he is bored by and "hates" gym, and many of his peers, both male and female, hold the same opinion. Back in the dinosaur era, I couldn't wait for gym, finding it fun, full of hard exercise/play and a great break from the academic day. (It was a little instruction and all movement). I realize each district's program is different, but if kids hate gym they are not going to become lifelong devotees of healthy exercise.

Charlene: You are right to be concerned about the quality of physical education that your child, and other children, are receiving. Just like any subject area, there are some poor teachers and programs out there. Some educators do not keep up with, or just don't care about using, best practices. However, the physical education that your child is experiencing is not the norm. The National Standards for Physical Education define what a student should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a physical education program. Those standards address all important aspects of physically educating an individual: development of motor and behavioural skills, knowledge, development and maintenance of a physically active lifestyle and health-related fitness, personal and social responsibility in physical activity settings, and valuing physical activity. I urge you to get involved in improving your child's school's physical education program. For user-friendly information and resources to do this, go to: <http://www.naspeinfo.org/observePE>". Additionally, for examples of exemplary physical education programs, go to: <http://www.naspeinfo.org/STARS>.

Michael Casey Kailua, HI: Are there good examples of local governments that have instituted planning regulations designed to make neighbourhoods more "activity-friendly?"

Rhonda: Actually I was hoping that you might tell me that Kailua would be an excellent example. At this time, I have extended my associations to include many city-planning groups. From a personal standpoint, I am most pleased that New York City's Park Department is really on the move with new refurbishments. However the monies needed to include more space for play, games, and sports, nationwide has not peaked the interest of our

major city planners. If you are performing research I would investigate Baltimore as a city that has made some progress.
Thank you for your concern.

Chicago, IL: What evidence can be presented to schools to demonstrate that children who have recess perform better academically and/or are more engaged in the classroom? In Chicago, adding recess means a longer school day, so teachers need to be convinced that recess will provide classroom gains too.

Rhonda: Unfortunately, we do not have any large scale studies that serve as a strong argument for recess increasing a student's academic ability. However, there is a huge agreement among educational theorists that children learn while they play. They learn first about their own bodies, and then about how to function in their home environment. They have a natural urge to explore their environment, to find favorite places and objects, and create their own places for play. We know that outdoor play is crucial to learning, and through freely chosen play activities, children develop some of the skills necessary for adult life. These skills include creativity, social competence, and physical strength, manipulative and problem-solving skills. Children also grow emotionally when playing outdoors as they indulge in imaginative and fantasy play, contemplate how to complete a task, physically test themselves and challenge their peers, develop initiative, and at the same time acquire knowledge of the environment, of adult life and social values.

I also advocate the work of Jarrett, Maxwell, Dickerson, Hoge, Davies and Yetley (published in 1998) that found that grade four students were more on-task and less fidgety in the classroom on days when they had recess. And, perhaps most important there is no research that supports the theory that children (or adults) learn better without a break.

Finally, I receive many, many calls from parents in Chicago that worry that their child is not enjoying school because of the lack of recess and physical education. This factor tells me that the school administrators need to rethink the length of the school day. To assist you in supporting this effort, NASPE has a position paper called "Recess in Elementary Schools." Free copies of the document are available on-line

Rene Gutel, Phoenix, Arizona: I guess it's hard to talk about PE in schools without talking about teenage awkwardness in general, and kids teasing other kids. I wonder to what extent childhood cruelty keeps kids from exercising. I guess what I mean to say is that if I were a fat 13-year-old and the boys made fun of me in PE (as they no doubt would), when it came time to run the weekly mile, I'd be even less likely to actually try to run because I'd just be afraid of drawing attention to myself. Do you know what I mean?

George: In recent years we have been working hard to eliminate the types of practices in K-12 physical education that embarrasses and humiliates youngsters. Overweight, poorly coordinated, unfit youngsters should feel just as comfortable in physical education as highly skilled athletes. What are we doing? NASPE has developed a series of documents entitled "developmentally appropriate physical education" that describe practices that have the deleterious effect you describe in your question, e.g. captains picking teams, relay races, running laps or doing laps as punishment, and then recommends practices and techniques for eliminating these practices that have proven harmful in the past. These documents can be downloaded at HYPERLINK <http://www.naspeinfo.org>.

Jaime Owen Chicago, IL: What data sources are available for monitoring school recess and physical activity standards? By State? County?

Rhonda: I rely on the CDC for statistics regarding physical education and recess. I would also like to mention early works by the American Association for the Child's Right to Play. In the fall, 1999 The American Association for the Child's Right to Play conducted two case studies with schools that had restored recess after having eliminated it for 3 years. The results of those case studies showed the need for training in supervision. The results were published in: Clements, R. (2000). Elementary school recess: Selected readings, games, and activities for teachers and parents. (Ed.). Boston: American Press

That same year, the Association also worked with Elementary School Physical Education teachers in 14,840 school districts (i.e., one teacher per school district) to obtain a sampling figure from the larger 64,785 total elementary schools in the USA. The purpose of this sampling was to determine the extent to which the schools offered recess periods in grades

Preschool through Six. All results at that time indicated that these schools had either eliminated one or more recess period, or were in the process of revising their school's curriculum to increase academics.

Michael Casey Kailua, HI: What are some of the most exciting "practical research" that is currently being conducted (or funded by federal government)? And, I'm only using the term "practical" to refer to the type of research that is looking more at behaviors (TV viewing habits, play time, eating habits)

Charlene: I can answer your question in regard to school physical education. Probably the most exciting practical research is the evaluation data from physical education programs funded by the federal Carol M. White Physical Education Program (PEP) out of the US Department of Education. PEP grants are competitively awarded to school districts for approximately \$200-500,000/year for three years to expand and enhance physical education. With these grants, we are seeing very positive physical education enhancements, such as new/revised physical education curricula that focus on students experiencing a wide variety of physical activity and developing knowledge and skills that can lead to a lifetime of physical activity participation.

Jocelyn, Moosic, PA: We care for preschool children some of whom are already overweight, we encourage the children to eat healthy and provide a well-balanced breakfast and lunch daily with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Many children do not eat the fruit or vegetables and they say mommy says I don't have to eat these. We use the three-bite rule; before you can say you don't like eating you have to take three bites of the item on your plate. Are we wrong in encouraging children to try new foods and do you have any suggestions as to how we can encourage parents to do the same things at home? It becomes very frustrating when children won't eat healthy foods and then when mom comes to pick them up the child asks to be taken to McDonalds because they are hungry.

Rhonda: Oh wonderful question ...and a great suggestion for readers and parents alike. I share in the belief that all Preschool children need to be exposed to different healthy foods. And, I was very fortunate to have a mother who was a nutrition aid for our local county. She was very successful in offering evening workshops to teach the parents about how to cook healthy dishes. In fact, I remember her saying, "unless the parent is involved in a hands-on way... they will never acquire an appreciation for nutritional meals." (And on a personal note my latest book for ages 3 through eight) is loaded with fun simple activities that teach the basics about healthy foods.

So with that said, I would encourage you to have a "family" evening event where each family could make or bring in their favorite recipe. I hope my suggestion sparks additional ideas...

Katie Averill: What ideas do you have for sparking enthusiasm for physical activity in children so they will enjoy the rewards of a healthy lifestyle when they leave the school and go home to a sedentary home lifestyle?

George: For youngsters to feel enthusiastic about physical activity they need to feel confident about their abilities. Youngsters who are made to feel uncoordinated in physical education or embarrassed seem far less likely to be voluntarily physically active. Some of the techniques used by good teacher include providing youngsters with choices so every child is not doing the same thing at the same time, providing opportunities for children to vary or modify games or tasks, and generally creating a safe and welcoming environment where every child can experience success regardless of their ability. Good teachers also spend time discussing the importance of being physically active 60 minutes, or more, a day and practical ways youngsters can do so in their community and at home.

Randy Kuhlman/Fort Dodge, Iowa: question: Are there school systems around the country that have changed from a sports-based curriculum to a life-skills fitness/wellness based curriculum? If so, is there a developed PE curriculum available that schools can implement?

Charlene Burgeson: Absolutely! For a decade or more, there has been a strong movement toward physical education curricula and programs that prepare students for a lifetime of physical activity. The National Standards for Physical Education state that "Physical activity is critical to the development and maintenance of good health. The goal of physical education is to develop physically educated individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity." However, it is important to point out that

sports are a type of physical activity that many people enjoy, and many sports are lifetime activities (especially these days with adult leagues and masters teams for so many different types of sports). So, high quality physical education programs do teach sports as well as a variety of other physical activities (such as dance, weight training, outdoor adventure education, etc.). The key, and you'll see this in good physical education programs, is that students are taught – and learn – foundation sports skills before they learn to use them in game situations. Another key is that game situations in physical education do not need to be played by "official rules." In order to create an environment where all kids are learning and moving, modified or small-sided games may be the way to go. Yes, there are some physical education curricula on the market. It is more common, though, for each school district to develop its own curricula in order to tailor it to the needs and interests of their community (for example, schools in Alaska may teach ice skating and skiing while schools in Florida may teach kayaking).

Michael Casey, Kailua, HI: Can you give some good examples, from your experience, of a school level effort to increase students' activity levels ... Who led the effort? What types of things did they do? What kinds of resources did they need?

Charlene: There are a few key items. First, to have the best chance of increasing students' physical activity levels, schools should implement a comprehensive physical activity program. Those elements are: physical education, recess for elementary school students, after school physical activity clubs/intramurals, interscholastic athletics for high school students, walk/bike to school programs, integration of physical activity into other subject areas, and teaching about physical activity in health education. Second, there needs to be buy-in from a variety of stakeholders at the school level including teachers (beyond physical education and health education), principal, parents (e.g., PTA), and don't forget - students! Typically, the school physical education teacher is the biggest "champion" for physical activity in the school, so he/she may be the obvious leader, but it has to be a group effort. Third, human and financial resources are necessary to make any program successful. But we need to be creative here. Schools can find community corporate partners to provide human and/or financial resources, apply for grants, utilize parent volunteers, link with community resources such as YMCA, parks/rec, fitness clubs, etc.

Jenny Ward, Palo Alto, CA: How can we expect the children of today to value health, if adults choose not to? More adults are overworked, tired, stressed, and forgetting that PLAY and creativity are essential to balance and Life.

Rhonda: Regarding children...I share your concern about the lack of play and good health for children and adults alike. Many early childhood psychologists and educators recognize that our schools are providing a too highly structured learning environment that tends to produce children who are overly passive in nature, with few interests or initiatives. Overly structured environments at school or at home, where the child has little opportunity to make his or her own decisions, also stifles creativity and self expression, and may result in children having an increased expectation that others will address their every need as long as they are compliant with the adult's expectation. This can also surface in the child's play when he or she is a receiver of entertainment, instead of its creator. And yet, our society depends on qualities reflecting eagerness, energy, curiosity, and playfulness. The latter quality is seldom discussed in health journals, but it is critical to the child's and future adult's ability to interact socially with peers in non-demanding ways.

Michael Casey Kailua, HI: If parents at a school are interested in doing something to promote healthy activity and nutrition - is there some sort of "how-to guide" that would help them to structure their efforts, find available resources (info and \$)?

Charlene: Yes! There are a lot of great resources; there is no need to recreate the wheel. Try these websites: <http://www.naspeinfo.org>, <http://www.pecentral.org>, <http://www.pelinks4u.org>, <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org>, and there are more. Another great resource is the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) School Health Index: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth>. You should also check out the brand new school recognition program from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation (American Heart Association and Clinton Foundation): <http://www.healthiergeneration.org>.

Rah, Japan: 'Sports Day' is an important event in a Japanese student's school life. For weeks, perhaps months leading up to the big event, the students practice racing, doing relays,

balancing acts, etc. They take practice and their results on the big day very seriously. Could a 'Sports Day' in American schools motivate students to look at physical activity as more than just another class to pass?

Rhonda: Oh I am very familiar with Japan's "Sport Day" events. They are wonderful, active, and very organized. In the USA we also have large scale student and family events. The most common is the Field Days at the end of the school year in elementary through out secondary schools across the USA. These are a mixture of cooperative and competitive activities. Sometimes they involve mix ages, and sometimes they even involve parents. The other large scale event that I am very familiar with (and have conducted many) are called Playdays. A playday is organized according to "little people" medium people" and "big people." They are based on play and cooperative activities. Basically, families meet in the local or city park and I enjoy the physical activity that goes along with physical play.
Thank you for your question.

Judy Shasek: Have you thought of having kids vend fitness along with the snacks and even healthy beverages being sold? There is a great YSA program here:
<http://www.redmond.k12.or.us/patrick/renz/2005-2006/dancematvending.htm>

George: What an interesting concept! I had not heard of this program before. If I understand it correctly the school is selling participation time on dance mats (similar to Dance, Dance, Revolution) at lunch and recess as a way to raise money to purchase additional dance mats and Play Stations. While I suspect some schools would frown on this program, I am sure others would welcome it. While I need more time to think about this program, I would be concerned about youngsters who might not have the money to purchase the time on the dance mat. Overall, however, this is both intriguing and interesting and I would encourage schools to explore this program. Thanks for bringing it to our attention.

SK, Atlanta, GA Hi, in the Atlanta Public School system, recess is prohibited and very few schools have any physical education requirements. Cutting these activities out often stems from increasing pressure to meet NCLB standards. Several health studies do show that there is a positive correlation between exercise and academic performance. As experts on kids health and fitness, how do you propose we advocate to schools and schools districts to re-incorporate this much needed health benefit?

Charlene: NASPE has a great position paper on the importance of recess (and the characteristics of a quality recess program) at <http://www.naspeinfo.org> under "Publications." Many parents and advocates use this paper as an authoritative statement. Furthermore, the results of health studies that show a positive correlation between physical activity and academic performance need to be shared - because it is academic performance for which schools (principals, superintendents, school boards) are held accountable. You should also check out the great new initiative of the Cartoon Network called "Rescuing Recess" at <http://www.rescuingrecess.com>. They have many reputable organizational partners on board, including the National PTA - and we know that PTAs (parents) can influence administrators and school boards.

Connie Hall Givens: What will it take to get physical education/physical activity recognized as critical to the complete education of children?

Rhonda: Studies in the USA, England, and Australia clearly show that children spend more than four hours a day viewing television. They also spend more time indoors than previous generations largely due to the risk of violence now thought to be inherent in urban settings. They read quietly, amuse themselves with comics, push buttons on computer games in isolation of a peer group, or use remote controls to move electronic toys that have replaced the time memorial hobbyhorse, wagon, or scooter. Given the technology of today, one can also predict that children of the 21st century will know very little about their bodies' capabilities, and continue to seek passive entertainment, in contrast to physical challenges that help the body to grow and develop in healthy ways.
I am afraid that this growing trend will continue unless parents "really step up to the plate" and insist on daily physical education and recess in their child's schools as well as providing more physical activity experiences in the home setting.

Stacey Randolph: What would be the standard as far as meeting this "healthy level of physical activity? Requirements...

Rhonda: The key word is "daily." My graduate students at Manhattanville College hear this word over and over again. Children and parents alike simply need daily physical activity and that should be the focus of all physical education teachers' discussion with their students and their parents.

CG, Washington How receptive do you think schools in general are to parents or groups of parents who want to work on improving wellness policies and physical exercise opportunities for their kids?

Rhonda Great question! Over the years I have had the pleasure of chatting, emailing, and responding to letters from at least 3,000 parents- maybe lots more. During my work with the American Association for the Child's Right to Play. I am always delighted when parents take the time to secure information about "how to change their school" to permit more time for recess, or physical education, or after school sports. However, every single parent worried that they might be perceived as "rocking the boat" or placing their child in a bad light. I remain firm that parents are the "champion of any change" and when a parent sees an administrator with another parent... they have already made a huge step forward to change. If you or others are still hesitant, I have many parents be successful but raising as little as \$100 dollars and taking it to the school administration as a donation. That can also get the ball rolling.
Thanks for the question.

Cindy, Baltimore My son's school has been cutting back on recess for the past 2 years. When it comes to concerns of parents & schools recess just doesn't seem to matter, how do we change that?

Charlene: Please see my answer to a similar question from SK in Atlanta. There is so much pressure on schools to address a wide variety of important needs/programs, that in many cases, the squeakiest wheel gets the grease. So, mobilize! Get a coalition of parents, students, and community members together to advocate loudly and forcefully. Try to get the local media to buy into the problem (that elementary school students need recess) so that they can help make it a public fight.

Dave, Alaska I feel like I had an easier time with my son than I did with my daughter when it came to being active, do you suggest a different approach for each of the sexes.

George: There is an increasing body of evidence suggesting that perhaps we should be treating girls and boys differently when it comes to physical education and physical activity. While it always risky to generalize about differences between girls and boys, we know that many boys prefer more competitive, large group sports whereas many girls prefer individual, less competitive physical activities, e.g. dance, working in groups cooperatively. Coaches would also tell you that with boys they can be a bit more aggressive and harsh, whereas girls prefer their practices to be more fun with little or no hollering. So I do think there are differences between boys and girls but the bottom line is that each child is different and the best approach is always to explore a variety of physical activities and see what sparks their interest. All too often in the United States we specialize way too early and deprive youngsters of the opportunity to discover and explore the plethora of sports and physical activities that exist throughout the world today.

Randy Kuhlman: Is there an online resource that we can go to get information about "best practice" PE curricula?

Charlene: Yes, a brand new one! The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) just released free, online Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT). Go to <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth> to read/download a copy. There are also some great books available from commercial publishers. I suggest goggling or yahooing something like "physical education curriculum/curricula" or "books on physical education curriculum/curricula."

Lauren, Washington, DC: I was wondering if you all might be able to highlight some international practices that have proven successful in keeping kids active and healthy. Can US patterns of eating and culture be compared with other countries to give us a holistic picture of health for future generations?

Rhonda: I am delighted to try... since I am very fortunate to work with 47 other countries, and many European countries are also facing the same problems and issues with obesity. England is very concerned and has a large campaign on TV aids and cartoon booklets. They use a game approach in their literature to motivate participation. Scotland is becoming more involved with enriched afterschool programs. Overall, no one country has the solution, but all of the efforts are encouraging.

La Terra, Denver, Co.: Is there any correlation between a child's age and the amount of exercise they need?

George: The recommendation today is 60 minutes or more of physical activity a day. Obviously the type of physical activity will be different for different aged children. It is also recommended that children of pre-school age not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes and that elementary school children not be sedentary for more than 2 hours at a time. This last recommendation is especially important as more and more schools increase the emphasis on high-stakes testing in reading and math and may tend to overlook the recommendations of child development experts that youngsters do not spend several hours with limited or no opportunity for moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Roshin: That's all the time we have today. Thanks to all of you for your thoughtful questions and comments. Special thanks to Charlene, Rhonda, and George for sharing their thoughts, experiences, and expertise with us.

The Value of Play: A Forum on Risk, Recreation, and Children's Health

The Value of Play: A Forum on Risk, Recreation, and Children's Health Joint conference AEI-Brookings Joint Center & Common Good.

The AEI-Brookings Joint Center (<http://www.aei.brookings.org>) was established by the American Enterprise Institute and The Brookings Institute in responses to growing concerns about understanding the impact of regulation on consumers, business, and government. The primary purpose of the Joint Center is to hold lawmakers accountable for their decisions by providing thoughtful, objective analyses of existing regulatory programs and regulatory proposals.

Common Good ([HYPERLINK "http://www.cgood.org" www.cgood.org](http://www.cgood.org)) is a bipartisan, non-profit coalition to restoring common sense to American Law. By conducting polls, hosting forums, and listening to leaders in health care, education, law, business, and public policy from across the country, we are developing practical solutions to minimize the impact of legal fear in American life. Through widespread national and local media coverage, we also work to elevate the public discussion and consideration of these matters.

Children in America have lost significant opportunities for active, stimulating, and creative play that used to be commonplace; as a result, childhood obesity has risen and children's social and cognitive development has suffered. Playgrounds have become boring – stripped of seesaws, slides, swings, and jungle gyms. Sledding on snowy hills in public parks is in legal jeopardy. Fear of being sued and fear of even the slightest risk are increasingly leading to a sedentary childhood, even if that leads to far greater health risks associated with obesity and lack of exercise.

Play is critical to children's cognitive, social, and physical development and to their mental and physical health. What implications do changes in playground design have for our children's long-term mental and physical health? What is the role of active play in combating childhood obesity? What are the secondary efforts of our attempt to remove all risk from our children's lives? And how can fear of litigation be replaced with renewed confidence that reasonable actions will not lead to court cases?

On May 31, 2006, the AEI-Brookings Joint Center and Common Good convened a conference to consider the relationship between America's growing aversion to risk and the development and health of our children. The Value of Play conference brought together, for the first time, leaders in the fields of playground and landscape design, child development and health, and law to explore the relationship between risk, recreation, and children's health

The conference consisted of three panels. The first panel was led by Susan G. Solomon, author of *American Playgrounds: Revitalizing Community Space*, and included representatives from government, the playground industry, and academia to discuss the role that legal fear and risk aversion have had upon playground design and recreation activities. The second panel was composed of experts in childhood development and health and was led by Joe L. Frost, Professor Emeritus at The University of Texas and a leading expert on issues relating to play and playgrounds. The panel explored the nature of play, its importance to children's cognitive, social, and physical development, and the decline in children's physical activity and health associated with reduced opportunities for play. The third panel was led by Philip K. Howard, a prominent New York lawyer, author of *The Death of Common Sense* and *The Collapse of the Common Good*, and chair of Common Good. It discussed societal attitudes toward risk and the steps that can be taken to restore the pleasures and lessons that playgrounds and recreation can provide our children.

The following is Joe L. Frost discussion during Panel 2: Why We Need Play Improving Children's Health and Well-Being. For full conference transcript please visit <http://www.aei.brookings.org/admin/authorpdfs/page.php?id=1302> or <http://www.cgood.org/f-valueofplay.html>

Our subject, of course, is "The Value of Play, Risk and Play" and certain other assorted topics, some of which we have not even thought about yet. But essentially, I will make this quick because I'm speaking to the choir here when I speak about the value of play. But in the most general, broadest terms, play promotes cognitive development, social development; it promotes language, it promotes cultural genes and it has therapeutic value. Its development is cumulative. It is dependent on such factors as novelty, risk, challenge, opportunities to engage with peers and adults and it depends heavily on changing environments. These factors are rather inextricably interrelated. Beginning early in life we see the rudiments of development in these many forms starting and they become much more complex over time. Practice and exploration, symbolic activities or make-believe activities, simple and complex games, not just the games with rules that are established in advance or rules that are established by adults but rules that children themselves engage in and create as they play are terribly important from the very simple to the most complex ones. Social development and other forms of development explored through action, they develop through exploring, through practicing, risking, creating, mimicking, negotiating, building, problem solving, creating, abiding by rules, assuming responsibility, assisting others, playing with language, sharing feelings, even exploring taboo subjects using tools, interacting with nature and animals.

So you see play is a profoundly important factor in the lives of children. I sometimes tell my students that without play kids would all grow up retarded. Play is therapeutic. This is something that is frequently overlooked with respect to many groups because we think of therapy as taking place only in organized context such as hospitals and it does take place there with trained people. It takes place in areas like the tsunami-hit area, the hurricane-devastated gulf coast where everywhere you look there are kids in trauma, not only kids but adults of course.

And so by working with children, allowing children to express themselves in the many forms of play, in the many forms of art, music et cetera, it helps in healing them. That is, they can play out those things that they may have no words for. Play is the child's language with respect to the therapeutic qualities of play. And it promotes healing, and we have a great deal of research showing that play promotes healing in so many ways. It promotes progress in so many ways and you do not have to have a therapist present for that to happen. It can happen anywhere.

We also see that much of the work of the past many decades by scientists in many areas has now been confirmed or at least supported by neuroscientists, and the 1990s, of course, was called the decade of the brain. We saw that early games and play promoted brain development, that animals and humans all play and they play at the time most vigorously when the brain cells are most active in forming synaptic connections.

It is in a nutshell a use-it or lose-it process. Children who do not have the opportunity to play, that is, kids who are subject to let us say play deprivation, such as the Romanian orphans which you are undoubtedly familiar with, do not develop on schedule. And those that

were brought to this country by adoptive parents had such difficulties that one parent referred to her child as the "child from hell." They seemingly did not have the capacity like other children to love. He did not have the capacity to get along with other people and the learning was very slow. There were even children who did not have apparently the capacity for pain. There is the normal sanitary kind of play, which is terribly important about which I have been talking primarily, but there is also the more bizarre kinds of play.

There is cruelty in play, there is bullying, there is cruelty to animals, there is sadism, there is excessive violent theme play particularly in high-tech play, which is one of the reasons that we are seeing children leaving playgrounds because of their addiction, so to speak, to high tech play. And then we see that the absence of play has even more direct consequences in the work of Stuart Brown, for example, who studied the sniper Charles Whitman at the University of Texas Tower, 1966. I have been there two weeks on my way to a lunch.

Someone started shooting, people started falling, blood started pouring and after this was all over Governor Conley asked Stuart Brown, gave him plenty of support, he said "You study this guy all the way back and you find out what happened, what went on to possibly link to this kind of violence." So he did, and he found such startling results that he went on to ask the governor for additional money so that he could study convicted criminals, criminals convicted of murder and people who are convicted of drunk driving, killing themselves and others and he found a common factor in all of these people, or at least in Charles Whitman and 90 percent of the convicted criminals, the lack of play in childhood, abnormal play in childhood and abuse by adults.

Secondly, how is litigation messing up play? Threats of litigation, playground safety standards. I think we might say in a sense here that adults are messing up play. Excessive regulation is messing up play. We need regulations of one kind and another. We need our law system; we need safety regulations. They have gone a long way in helping to reduce automobile accidents by wearing seat belts, for example, and many other ways.

But there are other factors that contribute to this other than just safety regulations and lawsuits and threat of lawsuits contributing to the loss of recess and the loss of play and the changing of play. There is the fear of crime at playgrounds. There is indoor technology play. High-stakes testing is a major factor here in schools - a major, major factor that is totally out of control. Excessive and inconsistent playground safety standards. I say excessive and inconsistent.

We need to work on them. There is changing family structures and the lack of understanding and appreciation of the value of spontaneous outdoor play among adults with respect to children's play. And these factors individually are powerful enough, but taken collectively, they represent a kind of perfect storm, that is collectively they tend to intertwine and work with one another and these are doing the job on kids at the present time and producing in their effects negative consequences on the health and development of children, that is, the active, the physical health, the obesity problem for example.

Now three of these factors - high stakes testing, excessive safety standards and excessive litigation - potentially valuable in initial phases now collectively represent an out of control regulatory system. So what is an example of all of these? In one city alone in which I'm working, a few months after safety regulations were instituted, were changed, revised, 40 plus playgrounds in one city alone were out of compliance. Some years later an inspector came by and ruled them out of compliance. They went ahead and used them initially. And they had to stop using the playgrounds.

Now, today, these playgrounds stand idle because it would cost... we get more playgrounds in one per million dollars than they do in New York City. We would get the 40 for about \$2 or \$3 million, so the type that public schools typically use. Now public schools do not typically have good playgrounds. They have a super structure and a set of swings. That is the pattern. That is the general factor. That is not good because it is not sufficient for the broad developmental needs of children.

So we also see that standards are kind of the ammunition in lawsuits. I worked for law firms throughout the United States. I started doing this in 1981 when I learned, I thought they were immoral, lawsuits were to me immoral. In 1981 I had a visit by some attorneys who said, "We have problems with a manufacturer and we have 23 injury suits of kids who have been

chopped up in this device and we need your help." I learned very quickly from the information available that they were not going to do anything about it.

Later, the Justice Department got in on the act, and I helped the Justice Department with this case and they got these removed from playgrounds nationwide. By that time, with incomplete records, they had records of 83 kids who had been chopped up in the same device, so lawsuits can make a difference in effecting social change and helping to protect children. Now on the other hand, not too long ago, a laboratory school in a major state had a child fall over a stump in a Redwood forest and they were sued; the State of California was sued and they lost the case. I guess that was a relatively small judgment as law suits go but it was lost, and I was trying to defend these people, and I hate to say we had to pay a judgment in this case but the reason for it was one [indiscernible] in the safety standards. We stated there should be no rock, stumps, et cetera on the playground. When this was developed it was intended to refer to in the fall zones around equipment, but it was in there you see.

So we need that kind of revision to make these consistent, to make them say what they mean, to make them simple and intended only to the most serious types of injuries, for example head entrapments. We know that kids die from getting their heads entrapped in certain spaces. We know that they do not die in those spaces if those spaces do not exist. There are places, factors for which we need safety guidelines and standards.

The effects on playground design on social interaction activity, the environments for play, including both natural and contrived features are instrumental in determining how children play, how much they play and the value of their play. If they are to learn and develop through play, the mental faculties used in later coping must be developed through early exposure, practice and elaboration. Playgrounds need to be flexible. They need to be broad. They need to include not only materials, equipment or natural features that allow them to do brachiating activity, to do overhead activity, to do climbing activity, to do tunnelling activity.

In the past we could do that on our own, on natural playgrounds but no more. Is risk then acceptable in play and how does it enhance play and learning? Yes, risk is an essential component of play. Risk is involved in every major thing we do. Coming to work this morning, coming here this morning, we took risk by facing the traffic here in Washington DC. But we have learned over time to cope with that.

So we must help children to learn through the play worker programs, for example, that are so imaginative in European countries, our play leadership programs as they call them in some. In helping children to learn to cope but learning to cope with risk is, in my estimation, heavily dependent upon the child having opportunities to deal with risk in a reasonably controlled manner without exposing the child such as infants, exposing infants who have no cause-effect thinking to traffic. We release our tentacles as the child develops and good parents have always done this and this is the way that we expect it to be. So it has to do with the function of design, children having opportunities to play in challenging environments, environments where risk is taking place, where they can experience risk and learn to deal with it and we expect playgrounds to be challenging and for children to take risk.

Just a quick story to show you how far we have come, I may be the only person in the room that can talk firsthand about how children played in the 1930s and the 1940s and how they play today. So bear with me a moment while I tell how we played in the Ouachita Mountains in Arkansas in the 1930s. Quite a contrast: We had three recesses a day. We had before and after school because of the school bus running, though it went to us first and brought us home last because we lived farther out in the hills. And we played in the school yards with no teachers present. They came out only to stop violent fights or to observe one that they were particularly interested in and we played war on the mountainside in the piney woods. We developed our own games.

There was no playground equipment. We all carried our knives to school and we had knife games. I never saw anyone cut. I saw one child attempt to attack another child but he was quickly stopped. We played in the creek that ran behind the building on the mountainside above the creek. Both boys and girls and children of all ages played together. The girls did tend to have some other games that were separate and apart in part because when they get too aggressive, they would tend to withdraw to the sidelines.

We saw in this occurring what I would - and I remember it very well - what I would refer to,

as the writers say, "deep play" or "flow" or what I would like to refer to as "transcendental play," transcending from the here and now, transcending from the immediate to forgetting everything around you and so engrossed in the play that it gives you the special feeling that you only get through that kind of intense play.

Injuries, I do not recall but one serious injury, we pulled a pine tree over and we were letting the smaller kids grab a hold and they were supposed to turn loose and this kid forgot to turn loose and he was shot into orbit. We developed a game called hot pants where you lined up all the kids of all different ages played together.

Now social development is in large part dependent upon children of different ages and development levels playing together. We want them to learn from one another but we segregate them. And last week at our research site we developed a new play site every few years. We have three major ones, different ages. We brought over the first graders. Tom, you do not know this yet. We brought over the first graders and let them play with the fifth graders. The most remarkable thing happened. The fifth graders immediately stopped what they were doing and went to help the younger children and were very supportive in that.

And we saw so many positive things happen there that you can always see on the great adventure playgrounds in Europe or in the city farms in Europe. You see this going on all the time. They are so far ahead of us with respect to understanding play and doing something about it. But the game of hot pants that I was about to tell you about, we lined up all the kids, half of the boys over here, half of the boys in school over here and we would put a piece of newspaper, a paper in the back pocket and the front ones and set it on fire. And they would run as far as they could run until they had to stamp it out and then the next kid would pick up there, and the one whose team that went the farthest won the game.

Now I would say we never had any kids hurt. Kids in Europe built fires on playgrounds. We rode our horses into the hills raccoon hunting at night and chased dogs all night, went swimming in the rivers. We learned safety and we never got anybody killed. We did not get anybody put in the hospital for a long period of time and there were no obese children in that whole school, and we went to high school in this rural area. This county has the smallest population of any state in Arkansas, any county in Arkansas. And at our 50th reunion, there was still not an obese person in the crowd.

So it seemed to me from my reading and from my observations that perhaps obesity that begins early in childhood has a way of persisting. And me, I eat like a horse. I never gained a pound in my life except for a brief period in college. I think there must be something about how you start kids out. Maybe some of you medical doctors would know about that.

Finally, our kids today are a mess, isn't it? We are really messing up kids' play. We are messing it up by too much bureaucracy as has already been mentioned. We are messing it up by not bringing some aspects of nature to the kids. We are doing this now, thanks to a very skilful certified gardener at our research site of 30 years. We have wet lands. We have the gardens. We have butterfly gardens. Yes, we have manufactured equipment. Yes, we have built our own playgrounds. My students and I built playgrounds for years in the old scenario for low-income neighborhoods until litigation ran us out. The University says, "No more, Joe." And I said, "No more, Joe" because of the students who were at risk as you see," and that all stopped.

Then I began to question what is going on in lawsuits, and I learned about it firsthand by working with attorneys. We, of course, are here because of such problems and we need to tackle those problems upfront and deal with them. And not only with the problems of over-regulation but with the problems of parents who do not understand the nature of play, who do not understand the value of play, of teachers who stand on the playground and visit with one another but have not the slightest idea of what is going on among the kids. Thank you, I had better quit.

**Recess for Elementary School Students
Council on Physical Education for Children
A Position Paper from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education**

National Association for Sport and Physical Education has just released an excellent position

paper entitled 'Recess for Elementary Schools'. The article is presented below for your awareness, but it can also be downloaded at <http://www.naspeinfo.org>. The American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) is the largest organization of professionals supporting and assisting those involved in physical education, leisure, fitness, dance, health promotion, and education and all specialties related to achieving a healthy lifestyle.

AAHPERD is an alliance of five national associations and six district associations and is designed to provide members with a comprehensive and coordinated array of resources, support, and programs to help practitioners improve their skills and so further the health and well-being of the American public.

The organization dates to November 27, 1885, when William Gilbert Anderson, two years out of medical school and an instructor of physical training at Adelphi Academy in Brooklyn, invited a group of people who were working in the gymnastic field to come together to discuss their profession. Today AAHPERD serves 25,000 members and has its headquarters in Reston, Virginia, 25 miles west of Washington DC. Members who are visiting in the area are welcome to visit the headquarters.

NASPE is the pre-eminent national authority on physical education and a recognized leader in sport and physical activity. NASPE is a non-profit professional membership association that sets the standard for practice in physical education and sport. Its 17,000 members include K-12 physical education teachers, coaches, athletic directors, athletic trainers, sport management professionals, researchers, and college/university faculty who prepare physical activity professionals. It is the largest of the five national associations that make up the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD).

**Recess for Elementary School Students
Council on Physical Education for Children
A Position Paper from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education**

It is the position of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) that all elementary school children should be provided with at least one daily period of recess of at least 20 minutes in length.

Recess is an essential component of a comprehensive school physical activity program and of the total education experience for elementary school students.

Various organizations including the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Department of Education (USDHHS & USDE, 2000), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 1997), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 1998), and American Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA/USA, n.d.) support school recess as an integral component of a child's physical, social, and academic development.

Recess provides children with discretionary time to engage in physical activity that helps them develop healthy bodies and enjoyment of movement. It also allows children the opportunity to practice life skills such as cooperation, taking turns, following rules, sharing, communication, negotiation, problem solving, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, participation in physical activity may improve attention, focus, behavior, and learning in the classroom (California Department of Education, 2005; Hannaford, 1995; Jarrett, 1998; Jensen, 2000; Shephard, 1997; Symons, Cinelli, James, & Groff, 1997).

Currently 16 percent of our nation's children are overweight—a result of poor nutritional habits and a lack of physical activity (Hedley, et al., 2004). An increasing number of children are developing cardiovascular risk factors (e.g., high blood pressure) and type 2 diabetes (Kaufman, 2002). Daily physical activity is an important part of the solution to these health issues. National recommendations state that school-aged children and youth should participate in at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity (NASPE, 2004; Strong, et al., 2005; USDHHS & USDA, 2005). Participation in a regularly scheduled recess period can make an important contribution toward meeting this recommendation. In addition, extended periods of inactivity (two hours or more) are discouraged for elementary-age children (NASPE, 2004).

NASPE recommends that:

- All children in elementary schools should engage in at least one daily period of recess for at least 20 minutes per period.

- Recess does not replace physical education classes. Physical education provides sequential instruction to enhance the development of motor skills, movement concepts, and physical fitness. Recess provides unstructured play opportunities that allow children to engage in physical activity.
- Recess is not viewed as a reward but as a necessary educational support component for all children. Therefore, students should not be denied recess so they can complete class work or as a means of punishment.
- Adequate and safe spaces and facilities are provided for all students to be physically active at the same time. Outdoor spaces are used whenever the weather allows.
- Adequate, safe, and developmentally appropriate equipment is provided for students to engage in enjoyable physical activity.
- Physical education and classroom teachers teach children positive personal and social skills (e.g., cooperation, conflict resolution) for use during recess.
- Safety rules are taught and enforced.
- Recess is properly supervised by qualified adults.
- Bullying or aggressive behavior is not tolerated.
- Adults intervene when a child's physical or emotional safety is an issue.
- Recess is not scheduled immediately before or after physical education class.
- Recess does not interfere with physical education classes that are taking place in a common environment.

Quality physical education and daily recess are components of the elementary school educational experience that enable students to develop physical competence, health-related fitness, personal and social responsibility, and enjoyment of physical activity so that they will be physically active for a lifetime.

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National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)
1900 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191
(p) 703-476-3410

(f) 703-476-8316

<http://www.naspeinfo.org/>

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National Association for Sport and Physical Education, an association of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

IPA/USA and TASP National Conference Combined!

SAVE THE DATE:

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IPA/USA and TASP

National Conference Combined!

First Time Ever!

Strong Museum: The Perfect Conference Site for Play...

There are so many good reasons to visit Strong—National Museum of Play®—hands-on exhibits, engaging and interactive learning environments, world-renowned collections, a vintage diner and historic carousel, family-friendly events, and more. When our expansion opens in July 2006, the new Strong will feature huge new hands-on exhibits about children's literature and play, an engaging indoor butterfly garden (additional admission fee applies), and an expanded National Toy Hall of Fame®, plus more family programs, restaurants, shopping, and parking. The new museum will provide a family experience unlike anything you have experienced anywhere, and we know you will want to visit again and again! Strong members will be invited to experience the expanded museum before we open to the public.

For Your Information:

The Strong Museum is also called the National Museum of Play's with more than 500,000 objects including the world's largest and most historically significant collection of dolls and toys, America's most comprehensive collections of homecrafts and souvenirs, and a nationally important collection of advertising materials.

Founded on the personal collection of Margaret Woodbury Strong, the museum's holdings reflect her innate sense of fun and fascination with the commonplace objects of daily life. These artifacts embody, illustrate, illuminate, preserve, and enable understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, values, customs, tastes, and traditions that Americans have held individually and collectively over the last two centuries and have passed, or are passing, to subsequent

generations. These personal, everyday objects help Americans to understand who they are and who they believe they are and why.

So Many Reasons to Come...

New!

Two museum shops, including the Everything for Play! Shop and the Dancing Wings Butterfly Garden shop, offer children's toys, books, and quality educational items, plus museum souvenirs.

Don't Miss!

All aboard! Hop on for a ride on the Strong Express—a passenger train for children and adults alike. Experience the thrill of old-fashioned train travel as you chug down the track surrounded by scenic postcards from across America. Enjoy transportation trivia games while you're waiting to board. This year-round, indoor train includes a locomotive, four passenger cars, and a caboose, of course!

The Elaine Wilson Carousel

Take a spin on the lovingly restored Elaine Wilson Carousel featuring jumping horses, ponies, a chariot and whirling tub. Manufactured in 1918 by the Allan Herschell Company in nearby North Tonawanda, New York, the carousel is an exceptional example of a country fair-style machine, built to last—a necessity when traveling from town to town.



The carousel is named in honor of the late Elaine P. Wilson in recognition of the Elaine P. Wilson and Richard U. Wilson Foundation's generous support of the museum. The carousel and train operate during regular museum hours. Rides cost 50 cents per person per ride.

The Gelser Library!

Check out the Gelser Library—one of a select few public branch libraries located inside museums anywhere in the country. Museum guests may use a public library card to borrow children's titles, family favorites, parenting books, and volumes related to museum exhibits. Books may be returned to the museum or to any Rochester public branch library.

The Gelser Library is operated in partnership with the Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County and is named in honor of the late Grada Hopeman Gelser in recognition of her family's generous support of the museum.

So Many Reasons to Save the Date.....

SCHOOLS, PRESSED TO ACHIEVE, PUT SQUEEZE ON RECESS

Abstract: Ask any group of kids what they like best about school and one answer will come up over and over: recess. Who doesn't remember that wonderful moment when you finally got to run out to the playground, carefree, for a pickup game of four square or dodge ball? But for many kids today, the recess bell comes too late, for too little time, or even not at all. Pressure to raise test scores and adhere to state-mandated academic requirements is squeezing recess out of the school day, reports Margaret Webb Pressler. In many schools, it's just 10 or 15 minutes, if at all. In some cases, recess has become structured with organized games -- yes, recess is being taught. Parents -- and kids -- are starting to fight back. Recess defense groups have formed nationally. Academics and psychologists who study childhood development are growing concerned about overly structured, less playful school days, arguing that free play is extremely valuable to kids and their development. "This is the one time during the day that they have the freedom, or the power, to control what they will be doing in terms of decision-making, in terms of negotiation, in terms of conflict resolution with their peers," said Audrey Skrupskelis, associate professor of early childhood education at the University of South Carolina in Aiken. Other experts point out that even adults count on breaks during the day to feel refreshed and recharged.

The full article can be downloaded at

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/31/AR2006053102208.html>
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/31/AR2006053102208.html>

SCHOOL RECESS COMMON BUT NO LONGER A GIVEN

Abstract: One sure way to get parents exercised is to take away recess, the playful part of the school day when their kids can run wild. In some places, it no longer exists. The proportion of schools that don't have recess ranges from 7 percent for first and second grades to 13 percent by sixth grade, new government figures show. Put in perspective, the overwhelming majority of elementary schools still offer recess each day, usually for about 25 minutes. Most children get one recess a day, if not two or three. What troubles parents, though, is a sense that recess is under siege, so much that the Cartoon Network and the National PTA have launched a "Rescuing Recess" campaign. Kids are leading the huge letter-writing effort to school officials with one theme: Let us play. Where recess is in decline, school leaders usually blame academic pressures. Under federal law, schools must test and show progress in reading and math starting in third grade. But how schools manage their time is a local decision. Recess competes with many other activities for schedule time, from music and arts to gym classes and computer classes.

The full article can be downloaded at

<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/departments/elementary/default.aspx?article=schoolrecess>
<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/departments/elementary/default.aspx?article=schoolrecess>

Rescuing Recess

Cartoon Network has started the national initiative, Rescuing Recess as a community outreach program to help all recognize recess as an essential element to the overall well-being of children and to connect educators and parents as advocates to bring back or keep recess in their schools.

Created to combat childhood obesity and the drastic reduction of recess at elementary schools throughout our country, Rescuing Recess will help provide the tools necessary to unite all members of each school community to advocate for recess and physical activity as critical components of their school wellness council and policy.

The Rescuing Recess Advisory Board is comprised of several national organizations and groups including American Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA/USA), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CNN, Kids' Health, Inc., National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), National Education Association (NEA), National PTA, New Leaders for New Schools, and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

Our membership should be pleased to know that we were asked to share our expertise in the field of recess as Rescuing Recess was in its infancy stage. Thanks to board members Rhonda Clements, Olga Jarrett, Audrey Skrupskelis and any of our other member experts who took so much of their time to assist with this wonderful project. Our research, knowledge, as well as our efforts in achieving recess as a mandated component in the school day in three states and in the city of Atlanta, Georgia have been recognized throughout our country and worldwide.

Tracy Johnson of the National PTA's Information Center has been kind to share the following:

The National PTA has joined with Cartoon Network and several national organizations to emphasize the importance of recess. The goal of the campaign is to recognize unstructured break time as an essential element of the school day and to connect educators, parents, and kids as advocates to bring back or keep recess.

We invite you to visit the National PTA website for more information and to obtain more tools to get involved with Rescuing Recess, http://www.pta.org/ne_press_release_detail_1142028998890.html>. The article, Think Recess

is Just Child's Play? <http://www.pta.org/archive_article_details_1142027724093.html>, which can be found in PTA's Health and Wellness section, <http://www.pta.org/archive_article_details_1142027724093.html> or please visit the Cartoon Network website, <<http://www.rescuingrecess.com>> for ideas of starting a rescue recess campaign in your school.

The National PTA is the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the United States. A not-for-profit organization of parents, educators, students, and other citizens active in their schools and communities, the PTA is a leader in reminding our nation of its obligations to children. Membership in the National PTA is open to anyone who is concerned with the education, health, and welfare of children and youth. For information on National PTA membership, please call the Membership Department at (312) 670-6782, or visit the National PTA website at <http://www.pta.org>.

Editor's Note: Please note that the website for Rescuing Recess <www.rescuingrecess.com> is continually being upgraded to provide new information.

Peaceful Playgrounds – Recess Articles June 2006

Greetings,

Quality physical education and daily recess are components of the elementary school educational experience. This month we explore articles that stress the importance for students to develop physical competence, health-related fitness, personal and social responsibility, and enjoyment of physical activity so that they will be physically active for a lifetime.

Recess Time - Well Spent!

A great overview article on recess, the history of recess, background on the elimination of recess, link to academics, benefits of recess, and what experts are saying about recess can be found on the website link below.

Additionally the paper compiles links to 7 position papers on recess from national organizations and also provides a great reference list of books and research on recess.

Read the full

article: http://www.simpleliving.net/timeday/pdf/newsletter_february_2006/Recess_Project.pdf

Calories in, Calories Out: Food and Exercise in Public Elementary Schools

Findings from this national report included:

Most public elementary schools reported daily recess, with the proportion of schools reporting from 83 to 88 percent across all elementary grades.

While almost all public elementary schools (99 percent) reported that they scheduled physical education for elementary grades, the proportion of schools that provided daily physical education ranged from 17 to 22 percent across elementary grades.

Click here to browse the full report: "<http://www.peacefulplaygrounds.com/pedometers.htm>"

School Talk

All elementary school children should be provided with at least one daily period of recess of at least 20 minutes in length.

NASPE 2006: "<http://www.naspe.net/>"

Tired of playground hassles and headaches?

Well marked game activities provide increased motivation for children to enter into an activity and become engaged in purposeful play, thus cutting down on playground confrontations.

Peaceful Playgrounds Benefits: <http://www.peacefulplaygrounds.com/benefits.htm>

Playground Supervision Training for Child Care Providers

Playground Supervision Training for Child Care Providers.

This interactive online course is a one hour, self-paced class, covering areas that will allow providers to learn SAFE supervision practices in an outdoor play environment. You will have two weeks to complete the course on your own time, and be held accountable for the techniques and ideas that you learned by completing an evaluation and a survey. The video, pictures, and graphics that are used in the course will give you new ideas and techniques to implement at your center. You will also have the opportunity to participate in an online chat with a nationally recognized expert. Purposes of this Supervision Course are to: allow you to learn safe supervision practices in the outdoor play environment, provide you with new ideas and techniques that you can implement at your center.

Endorsed by:

Delaware's Office of Child Care Licensing

Indiana Bureau of Child Development

http://www.playgroundsafety.org/online_training/Indiana_Bureau_of_Child_Development.pdf

Iowa Department of Human Services

http://www.playgroundsafety.org/online_training/Iowa_Department_of_Human_Services.pdf

Kansas Bureau of Child Care and Health Facilities

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Child Development

Registration

Registration begins August 15-29, 2006 .

Upcoming Events

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22-24 September 2006 International Play Association World Council Meeting Bournemouth, UK

21-23 March 2007 National Afterschool Association Conference Phoenix, Arizona. For more information, please their website at <http://www.naaconference.org>

2008 – International Play Association conference in Hong Kong. Details to follow.

IPA/USA Membership Information

We do appreciate your continue support in our efforts to advocate for the rights of children. Working closely with many international, national, state and local agencies, organizations, government officials, and professionals in the fields of health, education, recreation, play, recess, research, child development, media, and parenting, we are striving to continue to place children in the forefront and protect, preserve and promote their right to play.

As a dues paying member, your benefits include:

Membership to IPA (the international parent organization)

PlayRights- the IPA tri-annual magazine/journal

Access to a multidisciplinary network of people, IPA publications, media productions, and discounts on books stocked by IPA

Reduced rates at IPA and IPA/USA conferences, workshops, and study tours

On-line access to the PlayDay Handbook. IPA Declaration of a Child's Right to Play, Recess advocacy materials, and much more!

E-mail updates of breaking news and events

Access to IPA/USA Membership

An invitation to the biannual board meetings of IPA/USA

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Marcy Guddemi our treasurer and membership processor at mguddemi@sbcglobal.net

IPA/USA NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING RATES AND CONDITIONS

The IPA/USA Newsletter circulates electronically to a national and international audience . These readers are committed to children's play, recreation, education and development.

ADVERTISING RATES

Number of insertions	1	2	3	4
Banner (640 wide x 120 high)	\$80	\$150	\$215	\$275
Half-banner (320 wide x 120 high)	\$45	\$80	\$110	\$140
Business Card	\$25	\$45	\$62	\$80

Published quarterly. Only web ready .GIF, .JPG. Or .PNG advertisements are accepted. Includes one web and one email link. Advertising copy deadlines are January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1. Advertisements are expected to conform to international standards of decency and honesty. All advertisements are subject to approval by editorial board.

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All enclosed articles are the viewpoint of the author. Acceptance of an article does not necessarily reflect the opinions of IPA/USA.

Send articles and information to:
Audrey Skrupskelis
University of South Carolina Aiken
471 University Pkwy, Aiken, SC 29801
803-641-3240