



Refreshing Recess Program

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Obtaining Administrative 'Buy-In'

What if I don't have a very approachable principal or flexible administration?

- Sometimes it takes time to educate administration on the benefits of programs such as Refreshing Recess. Schedule a short meeting with the principal in order to give him/her a copy of the Refreshing Recess Information Brief and review information about the program and outcomes.
- Show the principal the Every Moment Counts website and review the Refreshing Recess tab with all of the resources and video vignettes. Watch the video, 'Here's what Recess Supervisors and OTs have to say about it'. Make a point to note that supervisors report a reduction in behavior problems and injuries during recess and that students love the activities. Also mention that when students enjoy their time at school and feel good emotionally, they do better academically.

Scheduling Issues

Won't implementing this program decrease my productivity? How will I get all my IEP minutes covered? I'm already too busy!

- If IEPs are written to allow flexibility in the location of service provision and the goals can be targeted during recess, then services can fulfill IEP minutes. Goals related to social participation, play, group interaction, and coping with challenges can be addressed during recess.
- Make the case that providing services in the LRE (Least Restrictive Environment) is the law (IDEA) and that students learn skills best in natural environments. Small recess groups can include students with and without disabilities in order to foster inclusion. Providing group versus individual interventions can actually free up time in the OT's schedule. Indoor recess groups can focus on healthy hobbies and interests such as playing board games, cards, or puzzle-making.
- Having a fieldwork or practicum student is an ideal way to obtain additional help when implementing the Refreshing Recess program. Students offer an extra set of hands and can often plan and implement the program with their supervisor's support.

Obtaining Recess Supervisor 'Buy-In'

What if the recess supervisors don't want to or feel comfortable changing their approach?

- Obtaining administrative buy-in prior to approaching the recess supervisors is important for ensuring that the supervisors are aware that the principal has endorsed the program. During the initial meeting with the recess supervisors, make a point to tell them that you are there to support them in their role. Recess Supervisors are often frustrated and would like to do a better job but have never been provided the information and support needed to create a positive social environment. Ask them about their biggest challenges and needs. Let them know that you are there to help make their jobs easier and more enjoyable.
- Talk about how you will help teach students how to be a good friend, engage in healthy and active play activities, and learn teambuilding skills as well as include everyone. Let them know that from our experience, students love the Refreshing Recess program and that it helps them be safer, happier and easier to supervise.



Is There Flexibility in how the Program is Implemented?

Do we have to follow the program in the exact order in which it is presented on the website?

- No. Remember to make the program work for you and your situation. Be creative and make the program your own! It can often be provided in conjunction with other programs such as a school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)/ Bully Prevention and Character programs.
- When replicating the Refreshing Recess program, Weeks 1 (Kickoff) and 2 (Friendship) set the tone for the remaining weeks. Feel free to teach weeks 3-6 in any sequence.
- What if we have to skip a week because of time off of school? No problem. Although consecutive weeks are optimal, weeks can be skipped because of a schedule conflict. Simply review the prior week's lesson before continuing with the new lesson/activity. This reinforces the message from prior weeks. The program is flexible enough so that if you feel that one lesson per month is what is manageable then that may work as well.

Who can Implement the Program?

Does the OT always have to be the person to provide the Refreshing Recess program?

- No. Although this program was developed by occupational therapists who have a background in play/leisure, social participation and sensory processing, other school professionals may easily provide the program after carefully studying the materials on the Every Moment Counts website. Recommended professionals include speech language pathologists, physical therapists, health educators, PE teachers, and school counselors to name a few.

Start Small

Do I offer the program for each grade level in the school? There are so many students!

- Start with one small group, one classroom or one grade level depending on the size of your school and what you think you can manage. The program was designed with primary grade students in mind because they can understand the basic concepts presented and in most cases have not yet developed negative judgments or discrimination against other students. Offering the program with the younger grade students will help them learn important skills/lessons (how to be a good friend, including others, how to work as a team) that can be reinforced in successive grades. Remember that the best way to prevent bullying is to promote friendship!

Space Issues

What if our space is too large for the way the program is written?

- Because the program involves sharing information to the students in a short 'lesson', if the recess space is not conducive to presenting to a large group, teachers can be approached to share the information in their classroom prior to that week's activity. Some OTs have used a microphone during recess to share the mini-lesson. With advanced planning and permission you can be creative in sharing the 'weekly theme' in other ways such as assemblies or the morning announcements.
- If a large scale implementation is not realistic, a small recess group such as a "Game Group" consisting of peers and students with special needs may allow you to target the most vulnerable population in a smaller space/room.

Parent Permission

Do we need to get written permission from parents to implement these programs?

- If the principal has approved and supported implementation, there is no need for specific parental permission because the program will be considered part of the regular curriculum. However, make sure to inform parents several weeks prior to the program initiation by sending home the Refreshing Recess Marketing Flyer.



How Much Does it Cost to Implement?

What if we don't have extra funds to pay for things like printing handouts, and laminating posters or food/other props?

- The Supervisors' handouts can be emailed to those who have Internet access, which will minimize the need to make paper copies.
- Many schools have laminating machines that can be used to laminate the Recess Posters to help them hold up over time.
- Approach the PTO or PTA organization and request that they raise funds to cover the costs of recess play materials (chalk, hula hoops, parachutes, games).
- Some local organizations offer discounts or donations to schools when asked. A local sporting goods store might eagerly contribute to this good cause and also benefit with a tax write-off.



Sustainability

What should I do after I complete the program?

- Make sure to stop in during recess every so often (1-2 times/month) to see how the students and supervisors are doing. Consider yourself a coach in helping maintain positive changes in the students' participation and enjoyment during recess and the supervisors' interactions with the students. Provide ongoing suggestions for reinforcing the weekly themes. Refer to the Every Moment Count's Pinterest site for additional recess ideas for maintaining a positive environment.
- There are suggestions in the "Just Do IT-The Six Week Program Detail" handouts that include how to apply the concepts to older students who might need a refresher or may be learning these concepts for the first time under these programs. Be creative in how to best teach students based on age, cultural diversity and abilities.



Can This Program be Provided Outside of School Settings?

- Yes. Other settings such as camps, day care centers, or after school clubs can implement activities that are embedded in the Refreshing Recess program.

