



Refreshing Recess

Week #6 Lesson Plan: Let's make sure everyone has fun!

Theme: Let's make sure everyone has fun. Children engage in Untying Knots game. Supervisors learn about bully prevention and commit to sustaining a positive recess experience.

The Refreshing Recess program is all about creating a positive recess culture focused on active play, friendships, respect for differences, and inclusion so that all students can participate and enjoy recess. Although 20-minutes doesn't seem like a long time, what students do during recess can have a big impact on their physical and mental health, academic performance, and feeling happy and connected to school. The Refreshing Recess program also recognizes the important role of recess supervisors in creating a positive experience for students. A focus of this program is to educate and empower them to be effective supervisors and to acknowledge and support them in doing their work.



Although the Refreshing Recess program is designed to be a 6-week program, the weekly themes need to be continually reinforced. Developing a 'Recess Committee' might be one way to ensure that attention to recess is sustained.



Check out the [Refreshing Recess Expansion](#) materials (Zastrow, 2020) to see how the program can be extended to include 6 more weeks of positive activities.

Goals:

- 1) Students engage in an activity that promotes working together cooperatively to solve a problem.
- 2) Supervisors learn about bullying and how to prevent it.
- 3) Closure. Celebrate the last Refreshing Recess session; commit to sustaining a positive recess environment.

Supporting materials (downloadable) Every Moment Counts materials:

- [Refreshing Recess Newsletter Week #6: Bully Prevention](#)

Materials from other sources/authors:

- [Bully Prevention & Friendship Promotion Information Sheet](#). AOTA (American Occupational Therapy Association). Also refer to the [School Mental Health Toolkit](#).
- PBIS.org [Bully Prevention Manual \(Elementary Level\)](#) (Ross, Horner, & Stiller)



- Storey, K., Slaby, R., Minotti, J., & Katz, R. (2013). [Eyes on Bullying Toolkit](#). Education Development Center, Inc. Excellent resource on understanding the bully, victim, and bystander.
- Storey, K., & Slaby, R. (2013). [Eyes on Bullying in Early Childhood](#). Education Development Center, Inc.
- Anti-Defamation League (ADF). (2012). [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Tips for Schools/Institutions](#). (2-page information sheet)
- Anti-Defamation League (ADF). [Words That Heal: Using Children's Literature to Address Bullying](#). Provides books by age level along with facilitation guides.



For students:

- Stopbullying.gov [What kids can do](#). Strategies for preventing bullying, responding to a bully, and respecting and standing up for others.
- PACER Center. [Kids against bullying](#) (website). Information for children to learn about bullying.

Action steps for occupational therapist (OT) or other program facilitators.

➡ BEFORE the 6th session:

- 1) **Program facilitator: Read supporting materials related to bully prevention.** Reinforce these strategies in conversations with supervisors. **Gather the materials for Week #6's activity – Untying Knots!** (see page 5)
- 2) **Recess supervisors (teachers, principals) →** Give them the *Refreshing Recess Newsletter Week #6: Bully Prevention* and any other materials that might be useful related to tuning into and preventing bullying.

➡ DURING Day of the Session The program facilitator helps set up and facilitate the activity.

- 1) Announce the theme of the week to the students. Talk about how preventing bullying is everybody's business. Bullying includes hurting others physically (e.g. hitting, shoving), but also hurting others emotionally (e.g. purposely leaving someone out of a game, gossiping about others, verbal put-downs). Bullying doesn't just hurt the victim - bullying hurts the whole school! Review the simple PBIS steps to dealing with bullying → Stop, Walk, and Talk. See the PBIS Bully Prevention manual or Eyes On Bullying information noted above.

Say, 'let's focus on being good friends, accepting differences and including everyone ... when this happens, then bullying will never be an issue'. Every student has a right to be treated with respect and enjoy friendships.



- 2) **Introduce the activity for the week** → Untying Knots! (See page 5)
- 3) Model activities and interaction, problem-solve obstacles that may come up, and offer support to recess supervisors during recess time. Help recess supervisors tune into bullying and know how to intervene.
- 4) Spend a couple minutes at the end on 'closure' (see below) - letting students and supervisors know that this is the last week and making a plan for sustainability.
- 5) **Touch base with the recess supervisors at the end of the session.** How do you think it went? What did you observe? Do you have any suggestions?

Tier 2 & 3 Strategies (Occupational Therapist or other program facilitator)

- Tune into students who may be bullied or, who may be bullies. Be vigilant. Adult presence is important for deterring bullying. Reach out to students who you think might be bullied, inquire and show support. Reach out to bullies and explain the negative effects of their actions and the belief that they have it within themselves to be kind.

Closure Activities: What it is and why it's important

Closure refers to an activity or discussion at the end of a program to think about the 'lasting impression' or 'take-aways'. Doing some kind of closure activity informs all participants involved in the meaning and outcome of the Refreshing Recess program.

Trust that an ending
is always followed
by a beginning

Suggestion - The program facilitator will:

- Make an **announcement** at the beginning of the recess period that this is the final week of the program. Thank the students for participating. Encourage students and supervisors to continue to apply what they learned and commit to making recess fun for everyone.
- **Ask an open-ended question** and give students a couple minutes to respond. Examples: *What did you learn from the program?* This is a good way to hear what the students have learned (their 'take-aways') and review the themes of the program.
- **Consider doing a closure activity.** Refer to Edutopia's [22 Powerful Closure Activities](#) (Finley, 2015). Try the 'Snowstorm' activity: Students write what they learned on a piece of scratch paper and wad it up. When the leader gives a signal (e.g. claps hands), students throw their paper snowballs in the air. Then, each child picks up a nearby response and reads it. Have some students read them aloud.



**Congratulations on completing Week #6 of the Refreshing Recess Program
Focus on Sustaining What Was Learned!**



Suggestions for Sustainability:

- **Occupational therapist:** Attend recess routinely to reinforce themes and identify students who may be experiencing challenges. Problem solve solutions with the recess supervisors and recommend accommodations. Consider facilitating a recess leisure group with a small group of students with and without challenges. Offer to help interview for and orient new recess supervisors.
- **Recess supervisors:** Seek assistance and input from the occupational therapist if you are experiencing challenges during recess. The OT can provide ongoing consultation and coaching to assist you in helping make recess enjoyable for all students.
- **Plan to orient new recess supervisors at the beginning of the school year.** If experienced supervisors who helped implement the program are still available, involve them in orienting new supervisors. Use the Refreshing Recess Orientation Power Point presentation. Orient them to materials on the Every Moment website. Develop a folder of helpful resources to share with them. Do what you can to help them learn about active supervision, promoting friendships and active play, & inclusion.



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Week 6 Activity

Untying Knots!

Setting: Outdoor or Indoor recess

Equipment Needed: 1(or more) long rope(s)

Rules/Directions:

1. Take a long rope and tie one knot about every three feet. There should be one knot for each person. If you have more than six in the group, you might want to have two ropes.
2. Lay the rope on the ground or a table in a straight line.
3. Have each player stand by a knot on the rope.
4. Have the players pick up the rope making sure each player has one hand on either side of the rope.
5. They have to untie the knots without letting go of the rope. Usually it will take some time to figure out how to untie the knots. Some groups end up with more knots before they figure it out! Give them time to solve the challenge.

