

# **The Power of Quality Recess: Why You? Why Now? And How?**

---

**Catherine L. Ramstetter, PhD, FASHA &  
Charlene Woodham Brickman, PhD**

**Child's Right to Play, RIGHT NOW!  
IPA-USA Conference**

**October, 2022**



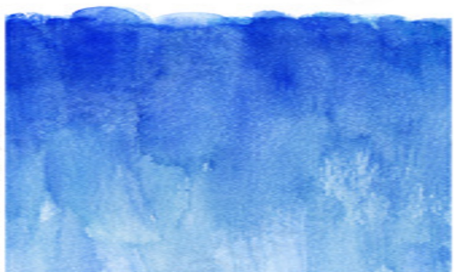
# Cathy Ramstetter, PhD, FASHA

- Co-Author AAP Policy Statement on Recess
- Consultant
- Researcher
- Advocate



# Charlene Woodham Brickman, PhD

- Teacher
- Admin
- Consultant
- Writer



If we want

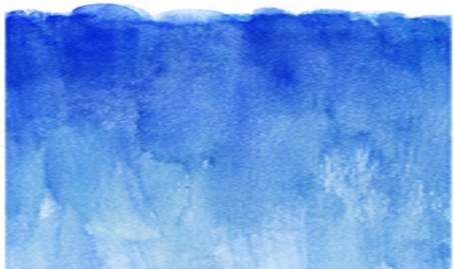


then we need

Recess  
& Play 

# Today we will...

- Share the power of recess in supporting children's learning/development
- Describe components of a *quality* recess
- Discuss equity/inequity
- Inspire you to envision yourselves as advocates
- Develop a plan for advocacy



# Recess provides a time for play.

- to practice interpersonal skills → collaboration
- to be creative → ingenuity
- to nurture holistic well-being → resilience
- to establish their own rules for game → critical thinking
- to foster imagination → problem solving



# Why Advocacy?

**Why You? Why Now? And How?**



# What is Quality Recess?

- *Unstructured* break
- Self-directed play
- *Minimum* 20 minutes daily
- Preferably outside
- Safe surfaces
- Availability of apparatus/games/manipulatives





# Are recess experiences equal?

- *Unstructured* break
- Self-directed play
- *Minimum* 20 minutes daily
- Preferably outside
- Safe surfaces
- Availability of apparatus/games/manipulatives

6. What do you like least about recess?

bullying and stuff like that

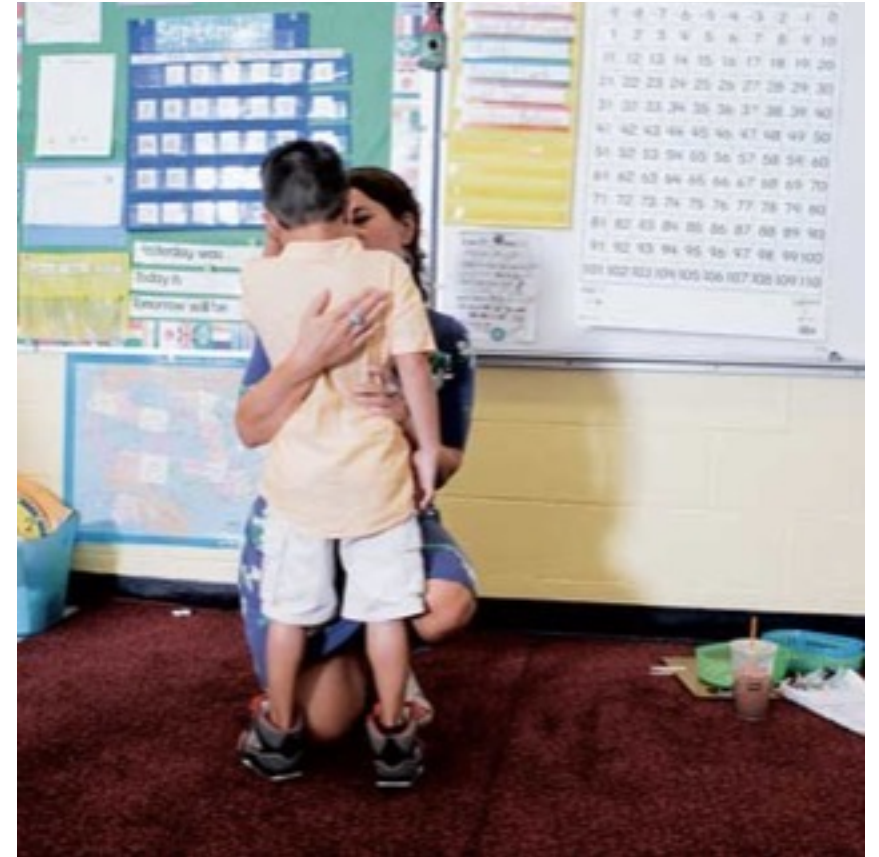
nothing to do

NOT a nuf equipmint



# Other issues to consider

- Currency: Academic & Behaviorally
- Bullying
- Lack of supervision
- Quality of supervision
- Aging out



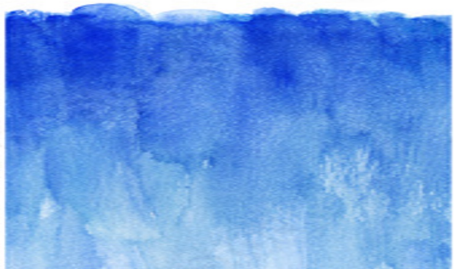
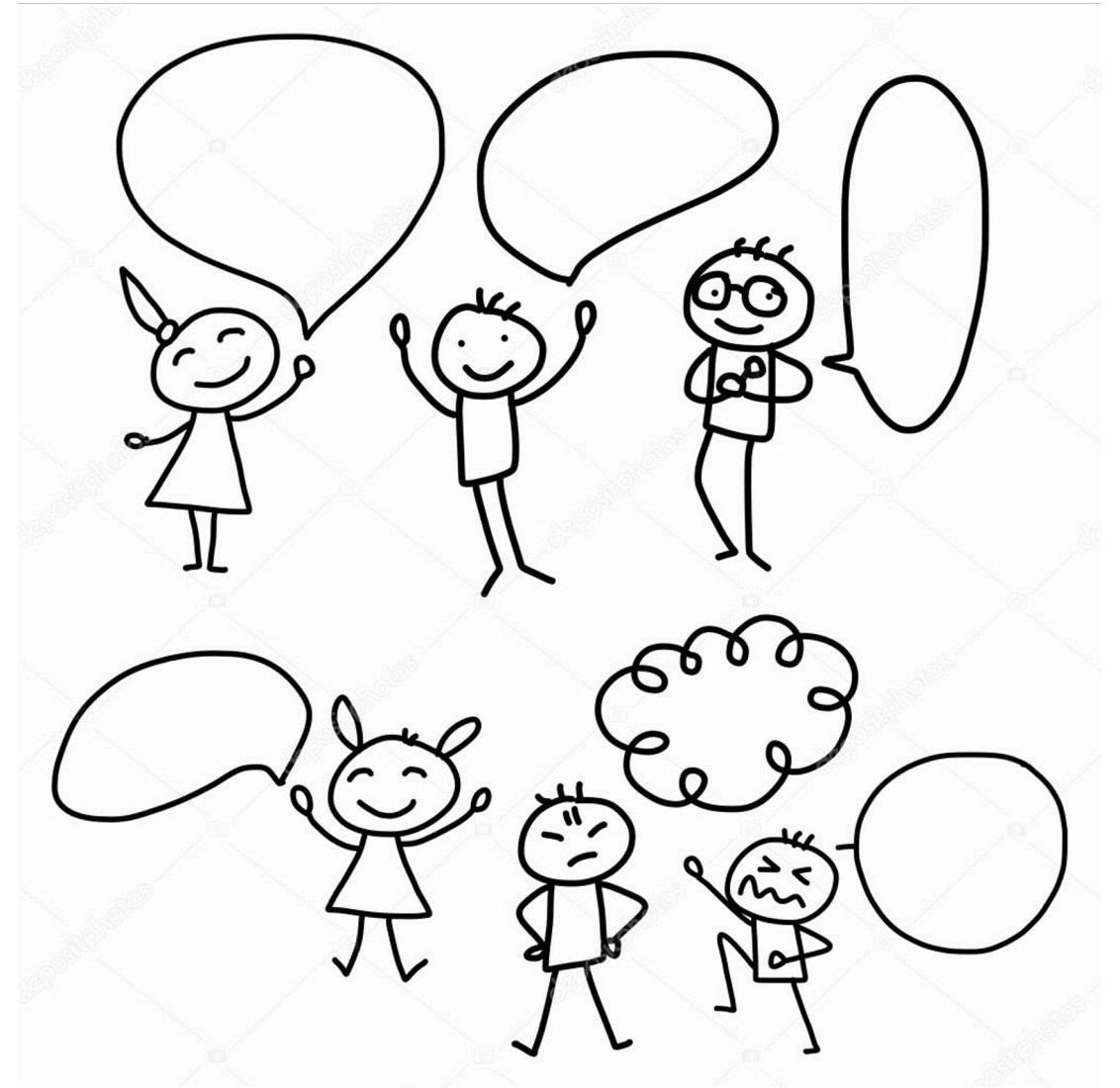
# Why Advocacy?

Why You?



# Why you?

- How do you personally play?
- How has play impacted your family and work life?
- What are your memories of play from childhood?
- What are your memories from recess?



# Jamboard 1: Recess Memories

- Take a moment and head over to the Jamboard to share a short recess memory on a post-it!



A Google platform, this virtual "board" allows you to share and see what other participants have shared about their recess experiences—even though you are participating asynchronously—we think that's pretty cool.



# Jamboard 1: Recess Memories

Recess Memories ASHA 2022

< 1/1 >

↶ ↷ 🔍 Set background Clear frame

What are your recess memories?

Add yours here!

Add yours here!

Add yours here!

Add yours here!

Add yours here!

Add yours here!

If there aren't any sticky notes available, click one, then click on the 3 vertical dots and select "duplicate." Drag the duplicate to an open spot on the board. Double click in the center of the duplicate, delete the text and type your memory!



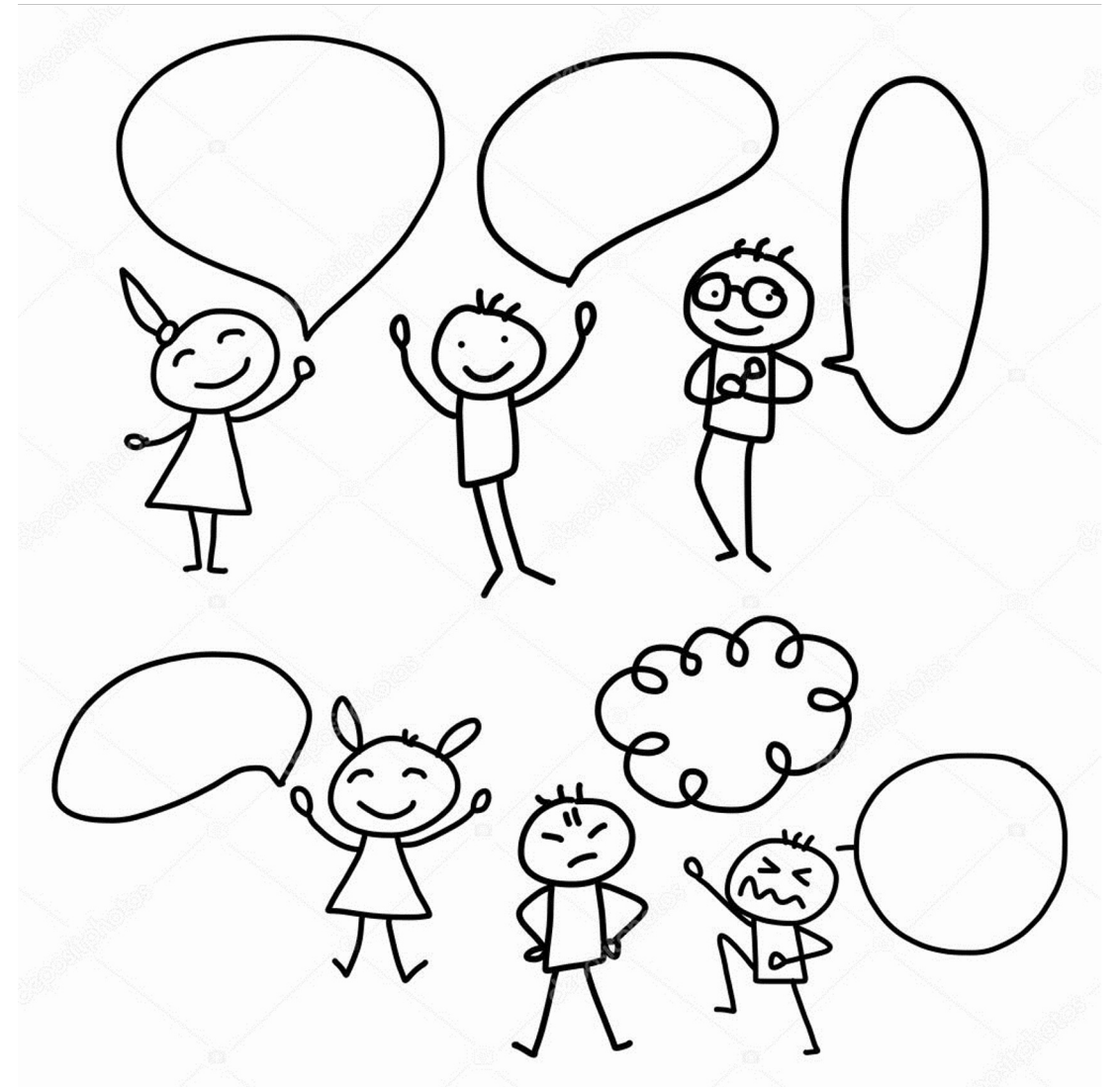
# Recess Memories

Celebrate!

or

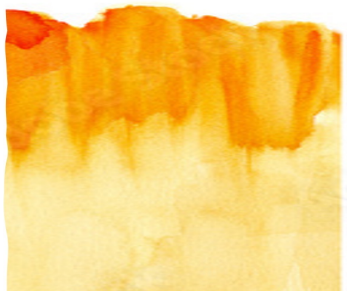
Commiserate~

Or both...



# Why you?

Community members are valuable  
assets to schools providing  
complementary  
and essential resources,  
support and influence!





# The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model



# Why you?

Community members are valuable assets to schools providing complementary and essential resources, support and influence!



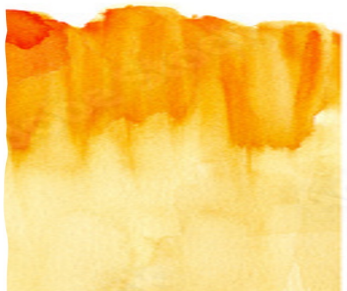
# Why Advocacy?

Why Now?



# Why now?

- Decreasing Opportunities for Play
- Academic Achievement Pressure
- Rising Rates of Mental Health Issues with our Youth
- Influence of the Pandemic



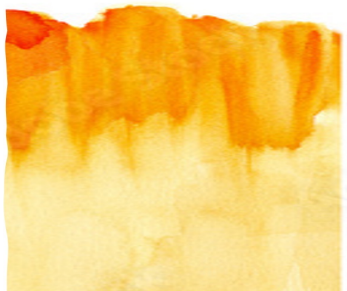
# Why now?

- ✓ INCREASING Opportunities for Play
- ✓ Achievement Pressure
- ✓ Rates of Mental Health Issues with our Youth
- ✓ Influence of the Pandemic



# Why Advocacy?

**And How?**



# Advocate for...

- for all children
- daily recess
  - safe
  - inclusive
  - socially-connected play



# Moving forward...

- Have you ever thought about why it matters what recess is like?
- And why we should be concerned with the quality of the experience of recess?



Cognitively

Socially

Emotionally

Physically





# Moving forward...

- Have you ever thought about why it matters what recess is like?
- And why we should be concerned with the quality of the experience of recess?

# Quality Recess

- ✓ *Unstructured* break
- ✓ Self-directed play
- ✓ *Minimum* 20 minutes daily
- ✓ Preferably outside
- ✓ Safe surfaces
- ✓ Availability of apparatus/games/manipulatives



# Get in the door!

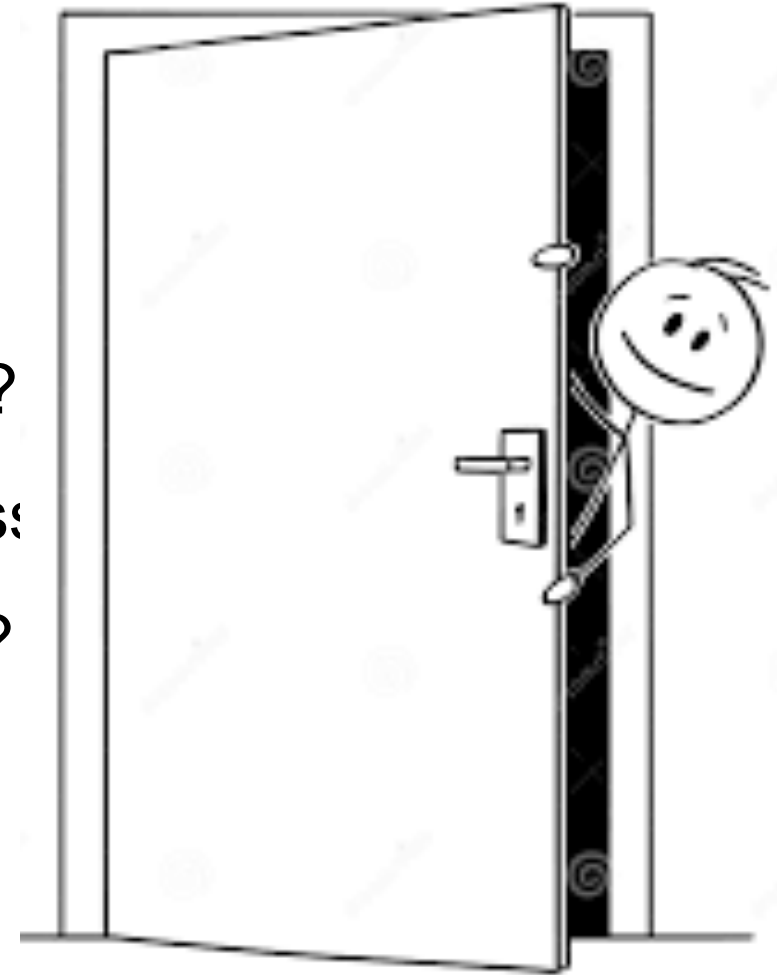
List those sites you have access to...

- What is visible?
- What do you already know?
- Who are the gatekeepers at these sites?
- How do you frame your intro?



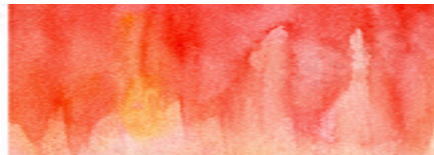
# Ask questions...

- How do you define recess?
- What would you like to change about recess?
- What is your wish list or your dream for recess?
- How do I help your site have a better recess?
- What would it take for us to get there?

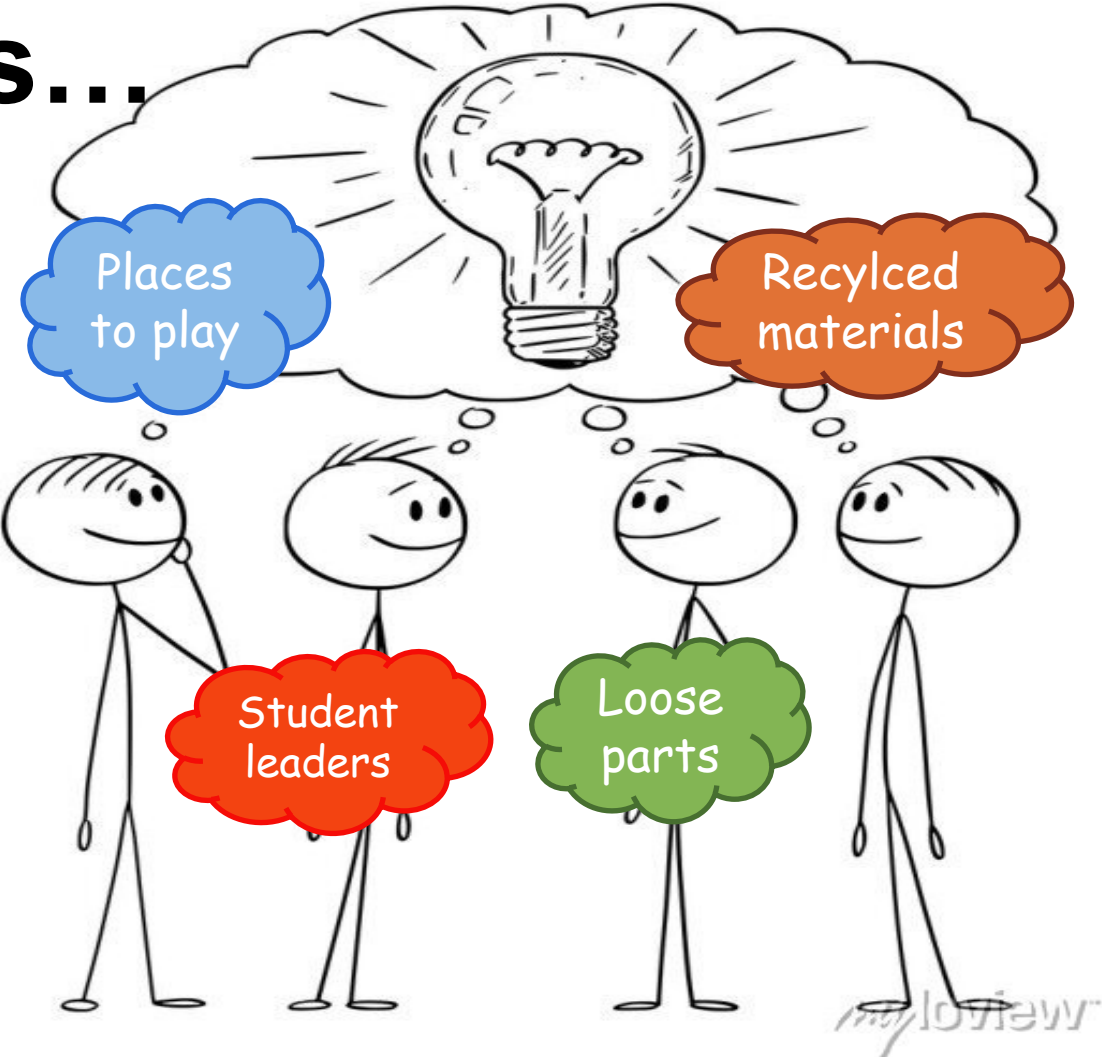


# Ask questions... and hear common concerns

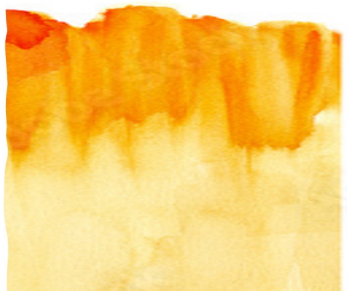
- safety
- behavior during recess
- behavior in the classroom
- academic needs
- schedule/minutes for instruction
- weather



# Answers to questions... and concerns



# Recess Models and Frameworks



# Recess Models and Frameworks

## **LiiNK; Dr. Debbie Rhea**

- Teacher training (TCU TBRI Training)
- Student character development
- Teachers monitor 15-minute recess 4 times per day
- Free play; students choose where and how to play
- Risk and nature; multiple places for recess to occur or multiple options on one play space



# Recess Models and Frameworks

## Recess Project Canada; Lauren McNamara

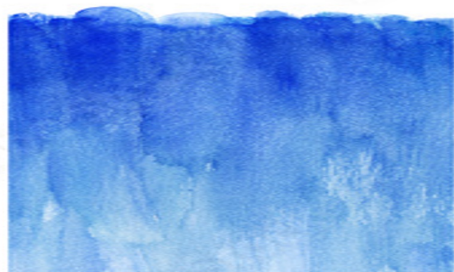
- Trained recess monitors
- Older students are junior recess leaders
- Professional development for buy-in
- Free play; students choose where and how to play
- Risk and nature; multiple places for recess to occur or multiple options on one play space





# Best Practices for Recess Advocacy

- Buy-in from admin and teachers
- Training for recess monitors and teachers
- Options for types of play
- Consider ages and abilities
- Provide variety of spaces, “tools”, toys, games



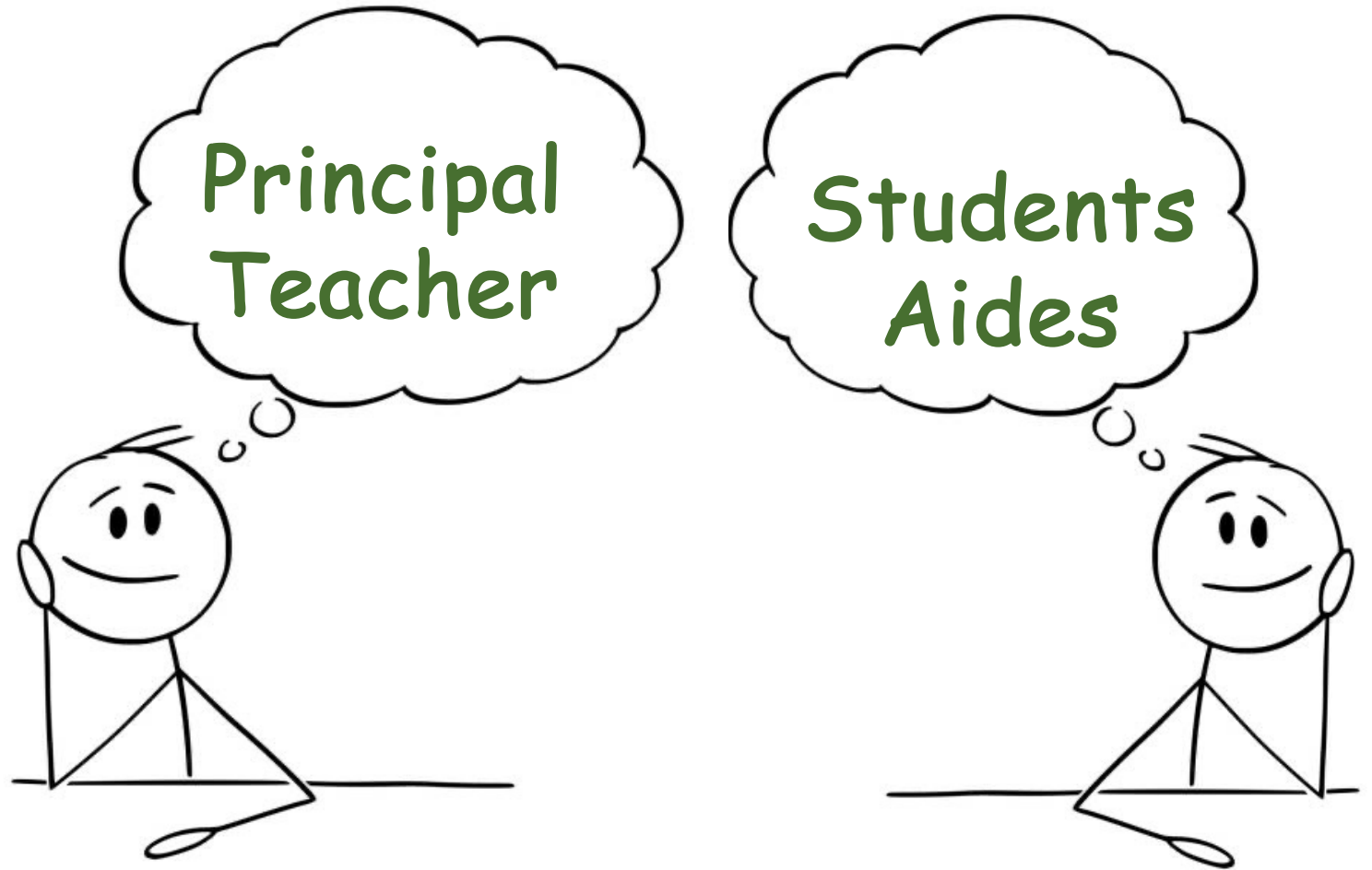
# Best Practices for Recess Advocacy

Recess is protected time for students:

- not withheld for behavior or academic reasons
- students choose activities/type of play
- transition time is minimal
- schedule changes do not diminish recess time



# Who will you contact?



# Jamboard 2: Who will you contact?

- Share the titles/roles of school/district people to contact
- Double click on the board, at the bottom of either list, and add your ideas to the list you'll see there
- Write the **names** of your contacts on your worksheet



# Recess Advocacy Cards



# What's your plan?

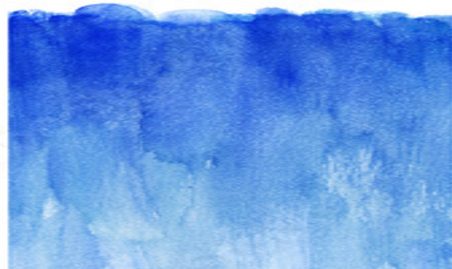


## Benefits of Recess

- Less fidgety
- Improved memory/ focused attention
- Develops brain connections
- Strengthens negotiation skills/conflict resolution
- Fosters leadership skills
- Increases physical activity before/after school

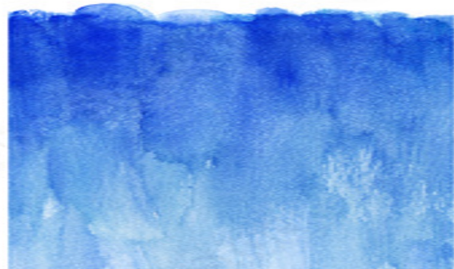
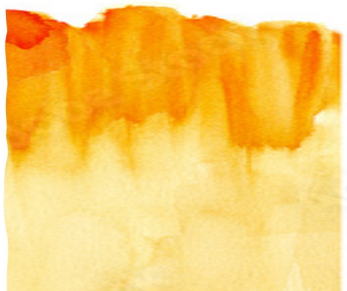
## Quality Recess

- Unstructured break
- Self-directed play
- Minimum 20 minutes daily, preferably more than once per day
- Preferably outside
- Safe surfaces
- Availability of apparatus/games/manipulatives



# A Passion for Play!

...to engage with local schools and districts  
to leverage community resources  
maximizing the opportunities  
for every child  
to meet their potential in society.



Visit [www.RecessStory.com](http://www.RecessStory.com) to share your recess story!

Be part of our forthcoming book:

***What Do You Mean Recess is Important!?!  
Audacious Stories from Real People  
Whose Lives were Changed by Recess***

