

# Recess Before Lunch

Toolkit for Missouri Schools



# Testimonials

Student: "It takes all off all your energy, so you're not moving around at lunch."

Student: "If you eat lunch before recess, you get a tummy ache."

Student: "I can let my energy out!"

Food Service Staff: "They have better appetites and are a lot quieter. They eat more of their lunch."

Parent: "This policy is helping my child to eat better and enjoy his lunch more."

Food Service Staff: " Kids want to play, not eat. This way they are not in a hurry to get outside."

Student: "I can play soccer sooner; we get to play before we go to lunch."

Student: "It makes me hungrier and I like to eat."

# Recess Before Lunch

Sets the stage for less discipline issues and better student behavior during recess, lunch time and the classroom.

Extending lunch periods from **20 to 30 min** decreased percentage of food wasted

**Eating lunch after recess** increased percentage of food eaten by 12.9%

**4 out of 5 Principals** Report that recess has a positive impact on academic achievement

**60%** of MO schools are providing recess before lunch for all or part of their students

## Greater Nutrient Consumption & reduced plate waste

- 20% more of the intervention students drank entire carton of milk
- Plate waste decreased from 40.1% to 27.2% when RBL was implemented
- The consumption of calories, iron, calcium and vitamin A was significantly greater

# What is it?

- Change in Schedule....
  - Children go to recess THEN eat lunch
- Seems simple, but requires planning, communication, commitment, and support
  - School Administrators
  - Educators
  - Food Service Staff
- Creates better eating and academic environment!

# Why?

Students . . .

- Eat their food and drink their milk
- Are no longer in a hurry to throw food away to get to recess
- Are more settled when they go back to the classroom



# Why? (cont.)



- It reduces playground discipline problems
- Lunchroom and serving lines are quieter
- Food waste is down





# Statistics

When lunch is served after recess compared to lunch before recess, elementary students:

- Eat 24% more food by weight
  - Waste 30% less food by weight
  - Eat 8% more calories
  - Consume 35% more calcium
  - Consume 13% more vitamin A
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Build Support Within Your School and Community by educating:

- yourself
- your team
- the parents
- the community
- the students

Implementation



# Key Steps for Implementation



- Re-evaluate a hand washing plan in the lunch schedule
- Allow adequate time for children to eat lunch
- Increase the presence of school staff in the lunch room (at first . . .)
- Lunch Room Logistics →

# Logistics/Tips for Success

- Anticipate schedule changes
- Be open to receive teachers' input and collect their "buy-in" from the start
- Decide where to store cold lunches and lunch tickets/punch cards for easy access
- Expect kids to likely be hungrier and thirstier with this change.



# Pilot

- Implement RBL as a one year pilot
- Pilot a RBL schedule with younger kids (grades K-2)
- Piloting may occur best at the beginning of the school year

Expect  
Challenges



Seek Solutions

## Scheduling

- Pilot
- Educate
- Review Samples Schedules

## Hand Washing

- Add 5 minutes to lunch session
- Hand sanitizer\*

## Lunches boxes & cards

- Buckets to collect lunch boxes
- Lunch cards ready for students to collect

\*refer to CDC's handwashing notes, Mo RBL Toolkit



# North Elementary

## Struggle

"Our biggest struggle is that our playground is not located near our cafeteria and we had to make an extensive plan for how students would be supervised from our playground to our cafeteria...and you can't have people going in the same door others are trying to go out!"

## Success

"We actually LOVE having the students go to recess first...they are much more settled for class and problems don't carry in off the playground."

-Barb Martin, Principal, Jefferson City SD

## Sample Schedule: North Elementary School

Grade	Lunch/ Recess	Time	Escort to Cafeteria	Exit Building	Enter Building
K	Recess	10:40-11:00		Kdg door	
	Lunch	11:00-11:20	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Teachers		4-5 door
1st	Recess	11:00-11:20		Kdg door	
	Lunch	11:20-11:40	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade teachers		Kdg door
2nd	Recess	11:20-11:40		4-5 door	
	Lunch	11:40-12:00	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade teachers		Kdg door
3rd	Recess	11:40-12:00		4-5 door	
	Lunch	12:00-12:20	4 <sup>th</sup> grade teachers		Kdg door
4th	Recess	12:00-12:20		4-5 door	
	Lunch	12:20-12:40	5 <sup>th</sup> grade teachers		4-5 door
5th	Recess	12:20-12:40		Steps	
	Lunch	12:40-1:00	Counselor		4-5 door

Mo Team Nutrition

# Babler Elementary

- Rockwood School District, located in suburban West St. Louis County
- Full Day K-5th grade
- Total Student Population: 640
- 9% on Free and Reduced Lunch
- Staff: Approx. 75
- 6 lunch shifts overlapping/35 minutes
- 15 minutes recess, 20 minutes lunch

## Sample Schedule: Babler Elementary

Grade	Lunch/ Recess	Time
5 <sup>th</sup>	Recess	11:25-11:45
	Lunch	11:45-12:05
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Recess	11:50-12:10
	Lunch	12:10-12:30
4 <sup>th</sup>	Recess	11:50-12:15
	Lunch	12:15-12:35
1 <sup>st</sup>	Recess	12:20-12:40
	Lunch	12:40-1:00
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Recess	12:20-12:45
	Lunch	12:45-1:05
K	Recess	12:50-1:10
	Lunch	1:10-1:30

Mo Team Nutrition



# Babler Elementary Successes

- The Child Nutrition Department saw a 10.8% increase in milk sales.
- Began selling a 10oz water containing calcium during the 2005-06 school year and sold over 106,000 bottles
- Students are consuming more of their lunch, especially fruits and vegetables.
- Playground discipline has been reduced and kids are more settled when returning to class

# Lawson Elementary

"We really see the positives of having lunch after recess so children are not eating only part of their lunch to hurry and get to recess, plus they seem to have worked up an appetite after playing some."

Dr. Patricia Tavenner,  
Principal, JC SD



## Sample Schedule: Lawson Elementary

Grade	Lunch/ Recess	Time
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Recess	11:00-11:20
	Lunch	11:20-11:40
1 <sup>st</sup>	Recess	11:20-11:40
	Lunch	11:40-12:00
K	Recess	11:40-12:00
	Lunch	12:00-12:20
5 <sup>th</sup>	Recess	12:05-12:25
	Lunch	12:25-12:45
4 <sup>th</sup>	Recess	12:30-12:50
	Lunch	12:50-1:10
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Recess	12:55-1:15
	Lunch	1:15-1:35

Mo Team Nutrition

## Sample Schedule: Callaway Hills Elementary , JC SD

Grade	Lunch/ Recess	Time
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Recess	10:50-11:10
	Lunch	11:10-11:30
K	Recess	11:05-11:25
	Lunch	11:25-11:45
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Recess	11:20-11:40
	Lunch	11:40-12:00
1 <sup>st</sup>	Recess	11:40-12:00
	Lunch	12:00-12:20
4 <sup>th</sup>	Recess	11:55-12:15
	Lunch	12:15-12:35
5 <sup>th</sup>	Recess	12:10-12:30
	Lunch	12:30-12:50

“Its my 1<sup>st</sup> year at Callaway Hills . . . The schedule has been in place for several years . . . Recess followed immediately by lunch”. . . .

Todd Shalz,  
Jefferson City  
Schools

## Decreasing Plate Waste

Aside RBL, other contributing factors to consider when addressing food waste are. . . .

- Implement Offer vs. Serve for all grades
- Integrate self-serve food bars
- Serve bite sized fruits and veggies
- Lengthen time for students to eat
- Support training of culinary skills staff . . . Like [Missouri's Culinary Skills Program!!](#)

# Decreasing Plate Waste

(continued . . . . ;)

- Incorporate local produce into recipes
- Offer periodic student surveys
- Implement progressive menu planning
- Keep accurate food production records
- Incorporate Smarter Lunchroom principles into your cafeteria

# Questions?

