

## How do we get started?

- ◆ Build support within your community and school staff.
  - Educate parents
  - Educate students
  - Obtain teachers' input and "buy-in" from the start
- ◆ Realize that adapting the schedule is a work in progress.
- ◆ Develop a hand washing routine.
- ◆ Schedule adequate time for students to eat (at least 20 minutes after students receive their trays).
- ◆ Take care of lunch money prior to recess.
- ◆ Practice this new routine with the students. Spend as much time in the lunchroom as possible during the first few weeks.

## STAT FACTS

**When fed lunch *after* recess compared to lunch *before* recess, elementary students:**

- \* Eat **24** percent more food by weight.
- \* Waste **30** percent less food by weight.
- \* Eat **8** percent more calories.
- \* Consume **35** percent more calcium.
- \* Consume **13** percent more vitamin A.

**When the lunch period time is 30 minutes versus 20 minutes, elementary students:**

- \* Eat **21** percent more food by weight.
- \* Waste **40** percent less food by weight.
- \* Consume **16** percent more calories.
- \* Consume **56** percent more calcium.
- \* Consume **46** percent more vitamin A.

Source: Relationships of Meal and Recess Schedules to plate waste in Elementary Schools. National Food Service Management Institute, Insight, Spring 2004.

Adapted from Recess Before Lunch, Montana Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs, Montana Team Nutrition, June 2003.

## For More

## Information contact:

### CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Oklahoma State Department of Education  
Phone (405) 521-3327  
<[www.sde.state.ok.us](http://www.sde.state.ok.us)>

This publication has been funded with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, these programs are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

# Benefits of Recess Before Lunch



## Students Play and Then Eat!

## What is a Recess Before Lunch Policy?

Students go to recess first, and then eat lunch.



### Why change our lunch schedule?

- Students who eat lunch first and then have recess often anticipate recess and may not focus on eating.
- Students who anticipate recess rush through lunch and waste more food.
- Not focusing on eating and wasting food may contribute to a lack of energy in the afternoon, resulting in poor attention and an inability to learn.

## What are the Benefits of Recess Before Lunch?

- Students are not rushing through lunch to get outside for recess.
- The atmosphere in the lunch room is more conducive to eating and is much more calm and relaxed.
- Students focus on eating and take time to socialize with each other.
- Plate waste studies indicate that children eat more fruits and vegetables, drink more milk, and waste less food.



- Studies indicate that the overall nutrient intake of students increases.
- Studies indicate that students consume more vitamin A and calcium when given a longer time to eat lunch.
- Teachers note that kids are more settled upon returning to the classroom after lunch, and ready to start classes.
- Principals and teachers also note decreased behavioral problems on the playground, in the lunchroom, and in the halls.