



## Why Active Recess Matters

### HWDSB Health and Physical Education Team up with Positive School Climate

When older students are trained as Active Recess leaders and help their younger peers use donated recess equipment – whether it's supplies for making bracelets, skipping ropes, Frisbees, sidewalk chalk or hula hoops – playgrounds become more welcoming places, where students get more exercise and are more engaged in school and positive relationships.

Recess is an important way to promote health through moderate to vigorous physical activity, as well as improve student behavior and concentration. Boredom, bullying and obesity rates all decline when students are happy and having fun during recess.

Students vary in how active they are, even during recess. Successful ways to make recess more active include providing playground markings, activity zones, recreational equipment as well as trained supervisors and school communities. Students tell us in School Climate surveys that recess is also a hot spot for bullying and conflict.

A recent study at Brock University of Niagara schools produced this data...

*“Students were complaining about four main themes: too much social conflict, lack of activities, lack of play equipment and too little supervision. In the schools studied, staffs found that on average only about half the students were active or engaged in a meaningful activity. The others were standing around, and not always peacefully. One-third complained of bullying and fighting, and more than half said their biggest complaint about recess was “too many arguments.”*

### The Solution: Active Recess

After identifying the need for a more active recess, we discussed and reviewed the program content, cost and ease of implementation. The key to this is the need to promote active ‘play’ by children and adolescents, to build fitness levels, inclusive playgrounds, opportunities for conflict resolution through fun and adventurous activities. To achieve this, students and teachers need a variety of skills and equipment.

### Goals of Active Recess

- Provide and develop structured play and physically active recess
- Promote Safe Schools initiatives like positive school climate, bullying prevention and peer mediation
- Develop character-building skills promoting positive social interaction, relationship and team building
- Train intermediate students as recess ambassadors versed in a variety of leadership principles through CIRA workshops
- Educate school staff through workshops to assist in program implementation
- Obtain resources through partnerships and donations to support:
  - ✓ Program manuals
  - ✓ Online support
  - ✓ Activity resource books
  - ✓ Play equipment
- Program sustainability

*“Active Recess has successfully shown significantly fewer office referrals after implementation. In addition, this is an opportunity for students in high school to develop their leadership skills through mentorship and provide transitions connections to feeder schools.”*

Mark Verbeek  
Fitness and Wellness Consultant  
Hamilton Wentworth District School Board



## FACTS

- 48% of children report bullying on the Playground.
- 1/3 of Canadian children and youth are overweight or obese and only 7% of Canadian children meet the recommended level of daily physical activity.
- School budgets have less money which precludes purchasing of activity equipment outside of curriculum based funding thereby making recess equipment and student free time equipment a financial challenge for most schools, and especially those deemed high priority.
- Hamilton is the #2 destination for immigration in Canada and the HWDSB has created many initiatives to ensure all students feel included, share experiences and are able to bond with new friends and peers.

## Project Partners

### Canadian Intramural Recreation Association (CIRA)

The Voice of Intramurals in Ontario for over 40 Years!

[www.ciraontario.com](http://www.ciraontario.com)

CIRA Ontario is an incorporated, non-profit organization whose mission is to encourage, promote, and develop active living, healthy lifestyles and personal growth through intramural and recreation programs within the education and recreation communities. To assist staff and student leaders, CIRA Ontario develops publications with collections of games Ontario youth love. CIRA Ontario provides student leadership opportunities through activities that promote fun, fitness and co-operative participation in a safe and inclusive atmosphere.

## Active Recess Training

### Elementary Focus

Teaches student leaders at least three new games, as well as the ability to develop games that work at their schools. Training is offered to schools that each bring 20 students and two adults.

Sessions include:

- Ball games
- Small group or solitary games
- Mats and clothes pegs and anything else
- Restorative Justice – team building, managing conflict, reflection

### Secondary Focus

Teaches student leaders new games and the ability to work as a team to develop and implement a fun, inclusive intramural program for their schools. Training is offered to schools that each bring 10 to 15 students and two adults.

### Workshop topics include:

- Making traditional games more inclusive and fun
- Great-fun, one-time, crazy-fun challenge games
- Organizing leagues/teams
- Restorative Justice – team building, managing conflict, reflection

Each school receives a follow-up visit in November and February, so a CIRA Ontario leader can meet with recess leaders to celebrate their successes, problem solve challenges, help them learn new activities and provide access to CIRA Ontario resources.

## Measuring Impact

We will conduct school surveys, which will include the following questions:

- Are more students engaged/active now compared to before the introduction of Active Recess?
- Are the equipment boxes empty during recess and/or balanced-day breaks?
- Are participating students more focused in class after their Active Recess sessions?
- Regarding playground conflict, office referrals appeared to have decreased by \_\_\_\_\_%.
- Did the Active Recess student leaders...
  - ...enjoy working with younger students?
  - ...learn new skills related to activity, conflict resolution?
  - ...work well with each other?

## Program Sustainability

We want Active Recess to be sustainable over the long term. One way this will happen is through the commitment of HWDSB's Physical Education staff to programs that encourage students to be healthy and active. In addition, CIRA Ontario shares this goal. If we can provide funding for equipment, training for staff and students and develop each school's commitment to the Active Recess philosophy, the program can be sustained for many years.

## The Request

Active Recess is a collaborative effort between Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, City of Hamilton Public Health and CIRA Ontario. These affiliations help us offer resources and training. Surveys show that the cost of equipment and a lack of activity book resources are the two biggest barriers to the success of school programs. It costs about \$4,000 to start an Active Recess program at one school. This is enough for a school to acquire a variety of materials that will interest all students.

## ACTIVE RECESS Program Budget

*The budget below represents the costs incurred to administer and support one (1) school's Active Recess program. As this project is outside the scope of Ministry Funding, its success depends on corporate, community and private support.*

Item	Details	Donor	Cost
Half-day Training	Students, dedicated staff and parent volunteers	HWDSB	\$600
Active Recess resources	Includes books/manuals developed by CIRA	CIRA	\$100
Manuals / online support		CIRA	Intangible
Teacher release	Supply teacher needed to cover dedicated staff, 2 staff	HWDSB	\$500
Lunch	20 students and two adults	HWDSB	\$200
Transportation	Bussing for 20 students and two adults	HWDSB	\$170
<b>Activity books</b>	<b>Activity books developed by CIRA with innovative ideas</b>	<b>DONOR</b>	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Outdoor equipment</b>	<b>Through focus groups, planning and student input schools choose equipment from traditional, non-traditional and innovative items such as: footballs, soccer and basketballs, badminton sets, Nerf balls, Frisbees, hula hoops, parachutes, sidewalk chalk, yoga mats, sports sets, etc... Each school group is different.</b>	<b>DONOR</b>	<b>\$1,800</b>
Public relations	Two Plaques built in honour of donation / grant to program: one at school site, one at donor site.	DONOR	\$50
	Highlight in parent Newsletters, website, school signage, social media	School	In Kind
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$3,520</b>



## How Will You Benefit?

We count on organizations and corporate friends to recognize the importance of educating local children and ensuring they live a healthy, active lifestyle. To expand Active Recess, we depend on funders like you. In return, this is what you can expect.

- You will support an organization that reflects your organization's values. This will strengthen your reputation as you connect with the community at the grassroots level.
- You will ensure local schools have the tools in place for a sustainable Active Recess program.
- You will be profiled on school websites and in school newsletters so that a community of students, parents and staff knows about your philanthropic support.
- A plaque will be erected at a school site and/or your site location to honour your donation.

## Follow Up

After your donation has assisted our efforts, we will follow up with:

- A charitable tax receipt, if applicable.
- Examples of how we publicly recognized your donation.
- Thank you letters from our staff and students.
- Photographs of students enjoying the program you supported, to can share with your organization.
- An invitation to the launch event for the school(s) Active Recess program.
- Testimonials from students, teachers and parents to publicly share, where possible.
- A report summarizing program outcomes at the end of the grant period.



## Contact Information

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