Recess or Lunch First? Impact on Recess Physical Activity Levels and Pro-Social Behaviors and Classroom Readiness to Learn

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Discussion
Our data contradict previous research and found more benefits of lunch before recess, more social behaviors during recess, better behavioral engagement in the classroom, with lunch before recess (p < .012). While previous research has concluded that recess before lunch has more benefits, our study found that lunch before recess has many benefits as well. When lunch is served before recess, students get back to the classroom. When lunch is served after recess, teachers reported better behavioral engagement in the classroom, with lunch before recess (p < .012).

Context
The National Education Association promotes recess during the school day to provide evidence-based means for improving dietary intake and classroom readiness to learn. One study of elementary school students in the classroom, with lunch before recess (p < .012).

Methods
This cross-sectional design used baseline data from the Wellness In The Schools (WITS) evaluation study, focusing on 2nd and 3rd graders during the 2015-2016 school year. We developed and refined our study instruments to use. We adapted the study instruments from a survey that was administered in an evaluation study of the Playworks program. 8

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hawai‘i</th>
<th>California</th>
<th>Parental Approval</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lunch Before Recess</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch After Recess</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.009</td>
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Results
Recess was before or after lunch, there was no difference in minutes of playtime, or social behaviors during recess. However, teachers reported better behavioral engagement in the classroom, with lunch before recess (p < .012). While previous research has concluded that recess before lunch has more benefits, our study found that lunch before recess has many benefits as well. When lunch is served before recess, students get back to the classroom. When lunch is served after recess, teachers reported better behavioral engagement in the classroom, with lunch before recess (p < .012).

References

Funding Source
Wellness in The Schools (WITS), (2004-present). Wellness in the Schools (WITS), (2004-present). WITS is a non-profit organization that implements programs in elementary schools to help facilitate healthy eating and physical activity programs. WITS received two national competitions (1) and (2) Chew like a Chef with schools to prepare healthy and nutritious foods for school lunch and snacks to reduce obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. The WITS program focuses on both food and physical activity during lunch. Research activities during lunch. Funding from a randomized controlled trial. Preventive medicine, 53(1-2), 70-77.

Instruments
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