Exposing the relationship between physical activity levels and social behaviors on elementary school recess yards.

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between physical activity levels and pro-social behaviors at recess. This study found levels of physical activity in 2nd and 3rd graders are positively correlated with verbal conflicts, and negatively correlated with boys and girls interacting together.

Methods

This cross-sectional study 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 collected data, using two instruments we adapted from other tools: SOPLAY (physical activity levels) and SOPEER (social interactions) in 14 low-income New York schools.

Subjects

We observed all recess sessions for 2nd and 3rd grade schools and 2 central schools, we observed 2nd and 3rd grade students on two school days (2015-2016 observation days). We collected measures of physical activity using an observational tool developed by McKenzie et al (2002). The SOPLAY form was specifically tailored to the data needed for this intervention to collect information on both physical activity level and pro-social behaviors. The following are made:

- % of boy/Girl interaction
- Physical conflict
- Verbal conflict
- Physical sportmanship
- Verbal sportmanship

The following counts are made:

- Number of students in each interaction
- Time each student is involved in each event

Discussion

This study provides evidence to suggest that with structured play programs at recess that are aimed at increasing vigorous physical activities and pro-social behaviors, paying careful attention to alleviate verbal conflicts, increase positive social interactions and also work to encourage boys and girls play together.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Physical activity level</th>
<th>Physical activity level</th>
<th>Verbal conflict</th>
<th>Physical sportmanship</th>
<th>Verbal sportmanship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys (2nd grade)</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls (2nd grade)</td>
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<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys (3rd grade)</td>
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<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls (3rd grade)</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


Funding Source

Wellness In The Schools

Wellness In The Schools (WITS), founded in 2004, is a non-profit organization that implements programs in elementary schools that focus on healthy eating and positive group for its children. WITS currently has two main areas of programming: 1) Cook for Kids, where a WITS Chef works with schools to prepare daily recipes designed to educate for school lunch and teach cooking and nutrition education classes, and 2) Coach for Kids, where WITS coaches and facilities opportunity for students to have organized physical activity as motivating ways to encourage students to interact with each other.