



{inclusion outreach}

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Inclusive Recess - Elementary

Recess is an important part of the school day. It provides all students an opportunity to rest, play, imagine, think, move, and socialize in a less structured environment. There are opportunities for students to interact with others from their class as well as the larger school community. Children with disabilities may need more support and supervision to be meaningfully included during these times or they can risk further exclusion and negative emotional effects if they are not. It is best to take a few minutes before recess to pre-plan and set up activities. Ideally the students can be part of making a recess plan, and reflecting back after recess on what worked and what they might do differently next time. Students often come up with the most creative ideas of how to include everyone. Once the activity is set up and going, the intent would be for the adult to gradually step back to allow more organic interactions between students.



These are some ideas brainstormed by school teams around BC to help their students be more meaningfully included at recess:

- Swings - parallel interaction with a partner side by side
- A small group makes a plan to use an accessible area of the playground together
- Choose a joke of the day on Step-by-Step or iPad to share with others
- Skipping - hold one end of the rope, play skipping songs on iPad
- Hopscotch – roll the rock down a PVC chute, or choose a number using spinner

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- Students take turns being the equipment manager to sign out balls, ropes, etc
- Switch operated bubble machine with, everyone catches the bubbles
- Games such as "Simon Says", "What Time Is It Mister Wolf?", "Go, Go, Stop" record instructions on iPad or AAC device
- Co-operative tag games such as North Wind/South Wind – tag game - North wind freezes students and the south wind thaws them.
- Wheelchair hockey, basketball, soccer etc.
- Play catch with a basket or fishing net– bean bag and ball games with different balls - varying sizes, weights, sounds, colours and textures
- Bowling – PVC piping chute from wheelchair tray to floor. Pins can be made from 2L pop bottles with a bit of sand or water to weight them down.
- Playground or foam ball and a low target such as a chalk mark on the wall, box or bin
- Simon Says (concentrate on movements that can be done in a seated position)
- Hot Potato (could use a phone to play fun music)
- Ball toss with lightweight balls or kick in a large circle
- Work together to keep the balloon in the air
- Follow the leader around cones/marks on paved surfaces of the playground
- Cones or hula hoops to create a slalom course or as goal posts
- Short handled, lightweight racquet for hitting balloons and sponge balls
- Velcro ball and catch mitts
- Silk scarves for tossing & catching or dancing
- Stomp rockets (stomp pad can be squeezed between hands or placed on footrest)
- Use a sensory table to bring sandbox sand and other outdoor natural materials (leaves, pinecones, rocks, and water, snow/slush, etc.) to an accessible height
- Maker station /loose parts bins with containers, lids, twist ties, buttons, beads, pipe cleaners etc.
- Chalk art on a wall or on blackboards zap strapped to fence
- Mix chalk dust with water to create chalk paint for painting walls and pavement
- Try taping a wet paintbrush to a ruler or stick to create a long-handled paint brush. Have a peer push the student while they “paint” the pavement using the tool
- Use bucket of water and paint brushes or sponges to “paint” a brick wall
- Dance party in the gym. Turn the lights off and use flashlights or glow sticks

References: Queen Alexandra Occupational Therapy department recess handout, McNamara et al, 2020
“The Role of Recess in Canadian Elementary Schools: A National Position Paper.

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