



## **Indoor Recess Guidelines**

Time spent outdoors is an important part of the school day. It is difficult to set guidelines that fit every circumstance and condition in regards to outside activities. Principals are advised to use their discretion and good judgment as to whether or not students will go outside and the duration of the outside activity.

Conditions that should be considered in the determination:

- Temperature and wind chill or heat index (see attached for specific guidelines)
- Air quality condition
- Age of students and their tolerance for hot and cold weather
- Length of time outdoors
- Adequacy of clothing of the children
- Availability of water for students to maintain hydration

In preparation for when indoor recess is warranted, schools will:

- Designate the space/facilities where indoor recess will be held.
- Have a list of physical activity options or an indoor recess protocol.

During indoor recess, schools will:

- Ensure that students have the opportunity for 20 minutes of physical activity.
- Strongly encourage teacher involvement.

## Cold Weather Guidelines

Weather	Recess Held
Wind chill above 32°	Outdoors
Wind chill at or below 32°	Indoors

### Understanding Wind Chill:

- Wind chill is the temperature the body feels when the air temperature is combined with the wind speed.
- As the speed of wind increases, it can carry heat away from the body more quickly, causing skin temperatures to drop more rapidly.
- With higher winds, serious weather-related health problems are more likely even when temperatures are only cool.

Schools should exercise the following precautionary measures if holding recess outdoors:

- **Precipitation:** rain, snow and icy conditions should be evaluated for student safety and proper attire.
- **Student preparedness:** students should have appropriate outdoor attire to stay warm and dry during outdoor recess.
- **Playground safety:** the playground equipment and surface (i.e. icy conditions) should be evaluated to determine whether students can safely play outdoors.

### Resources:

- Weather Bug (App) - will use your phone location to give you the temperature, feels like temperature and radar for lightning in your area.

## Hot Weather Guidelines

Weather	Recess Held
Heat index below 100°	Outdoors
Heat index above 100°	Indoors

### Understanding Heat Index:

- Heat index is how the heat and humidity in the air combine to make us feel.
- Higher humidity plus higher temperatures often combine to make us feel a perceived temperature that is higher than the actual air temperature.
- Keep in mind, heat index values were designed for shady, light wind conditions, exposure to full sunlight can increase values by up to 15 degrees.

Schools should exercise the following precautionary measures if holding recess outdoors:

- **Activity level:** students should participate in only light to moderate physical activity.
- **Student preparedness:** students should wear appropriate attire during warm weather. It is recommended that students wear sunscreen when outdoors.
- **Playground equipment:** the playground equipment and surfaces should be checked prior to recess. Supervisors should ensure that students do not play on equipment that is extremely hot to the touch.
- **Water access:** students should have access to water before and/or after recess. Additionally, students who show signs of heat related illnesses (i.e. heavy sweating, weakness, muscle cramps, nausea, weak pulse, clammy skin, etc.) should be removed from the heat and provided with immediate access to water.

### Resources:

- OSHA NIOSH Heat Safety Tool (App) - will use your phone location to give you real time information on temperature and heat index. The app also has valuable information regarding Signs and Symptoms of Heat Related Illnesses and how to treat them.
- Weather Bug (App) - will use your phone location to give you the temperature, feels like temperature and radar for lightning in your area.

## Indoor Physical Activity Space Inventory

**Directions:** Staff who lead recess at a school can utilize this inventory to document all the locations inside their school site that are suitable to use for indoor physical activity in the event that it is necessary. Record each location and list any potential activities that can be safely conducted in that space. When creating this list, be mindful of the characteristics of the space (i.e. ceiling height, floor type, windows, doors, etc.). Also include a list of equipment on hand that would be needed to conduct the listed activities.

Name of Space or Classroom	Activity	Equipment Needed
