

A Sensory Life

Recess is Nutrition for the Brain

If you have received this handout, please don't take it the wrong way. I realize you been given guidance and instruction on how to handle certain situations within the classroom. These suggestions were likely given without the knowledge of sensory integration and the importance of sensory nutrition for the brain. I am simply here to provide further understanding on this concept. Thank you for taking the time to read this and being receptive to this change in protocol.

You would not take lunch away from a child at school if he/she did not complete an assignment right? Of course not! Nutrition from food has been established as valuable and important for healthy brain development and essential in helping the brain and body get through the school day. This exact same concept applies to sensory nutrition...it is absolutely critical to assist the brain in maintaining ready state and to self-regulate throughout the day.

- Withholding recess should never be used as a discipline tool.
- Recess should not be taken away; the movement and sensory input involved in recess is what is going to help the child self-regulate, attend, and focus in the classroom.
- Students who are deprived of recess can become sensory starved. With the regular and frequent muscle breaks, the brain has the sensory diet/nutrition it needs to focus and attend in the classroom as well as improve behavior in the classroom.
- Encourage monkey bars, just simply hanging in place provides much needed proprioception to the joints of the entire body.
- Encourage hanging upside down on a safe low bar on the playground, if the child is able, hanging from legs without support OR hanging from legs with hand support on the ground.
- Climbing slides is excellent proprioception!
- Be sure to watch the children who are on your sensory radar, as they may just be wandering around out on the playground and not getting the necessary sensory input the playground can offer, encouragement and guidance may be needed.
- Indoor recess in the gym on rainy or extra cold days can still meet the sensory needs... possibly scooter board activities, basketball, hanging from chin up bar, crab walking or wheelbarrow races, etc.

~Angie Voss, OTR

