CHRD 2024: Abstract Submission Form

Presenter Name
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Presenter Status
Undergraduate Students

Role in the project
Analyze Data
Write Abstract

Research Category
Community Health / Policy

Title
From Four Walls to Open Skies: Exploring play during indoor and outdoor recess

Background
Recess is an essential element of the school day, providing students with dedicated time to play. With the ongoing impacts of climate change, there has been an increase in extremely hot days and precipitation changes, which might negatively affect children's access to play outside during recess.

Objective
This study aims to examine children's recess activities in different weather conditions and environments.

Methods
Data was collected from students in grades 3 and 4 using a multi-tool and multi-time point approach. Three separate data collection tools/procedures were used for this study. First, children's play was observed and recorded during outdoor recess in the winter, spring and during indoors recess. Second, children were asked to draw activities that they participated in during outdoor recess in the winter, spring and during indoors recess. Third, children were interviewed about their play preferences during recess. Data was analyzed using frequencies for observations and drawings and content analysis for interviews.

Results
Observations and drawings revealed that physical play was most common. This often-involved gross motor activities like soccer during outdoor recess and fine motor skills, like manipulating objects during indoor recess. Bioplay was more prevalent during outdoor recess, with no bioplay observed indoors. Interviews indicated students preferred spring outdoor recess, partly because they were restricted from using play equipment during winter due to safety concerns.

Conclusion
During indoor recess, there is a lack of gross motor physical play and bioplay. These two types of play have important health benefits for children including, enhancing their strength, and agility, and fostering a connection to the environment and promoting positive health and pro-environmental behaviors. Classrooms should be designed to allow these types of play as climate change will continue to make weather patterns more extreme and more disruptive to outdoor recess.

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