

Richard J. Bailey School Reinvents Recess

Process of Creating Change

Richard J. Bailey School in the Greenburgh, NY school district signed up for Westchester County's Fit Kids program in September 2006 and implemented "Wellness Wednesdays".

"Wellness Wednesdays" is a concept promoted by Fit Kids to build health awareness among students, teachers, administrators and parents. Schools pick a theme for the day such as "Eat 5 A Day of Fruits and Vegetables" and highlight that message throughout the day – over the public address system, in the cafeteria and through flyers sent home to parents.

Richard J. Bailey School, implemented "Wellness Wednesdays" to encourage physical activity. Teachers and students walk around the track for 20 minutes during recess each week and use pedometers to count their steps.

The "Wellness Wednesdays" activity was presented to parents at a PTA meeting in November. As a result, parents asked the school to provide additional opportunities for more active recess.

In December, the lunch schedule was modified to enable children to have more time for active play during recess. Rather than schedule an entire grade level of approximately 140 children to all eat lunch at the same time and then go to recess together, 70 children eat lunch first and proceed to recess, while the remaining 70 children participate in recess, followed by lunch.

Evidence of Change

Both the lunch period and recess have benefited from this adjustment. Cafeteria lines are significantly shorter so children have additional time to eat at a more leisurely pace. On the playground, there is less competition for available equipment and more space to move around thereby facilitating active play.

The principal estimates that the children have about 10 extra minutes of recess each day.

Costs Incurred

A key aspect of this success story is that these adjustments involved no direct costs to the school or change in staffing.

The Westchester County Department of Health gave the school 140 pedometers through the Fit Kids program, which provided the impetus to initiate Wellness Wednesdays.

Other Money Leveraged

Richard J. Bailey School did not receive any monetary or grant funding to support this initiative.

Richard J. Bailey School did receive an in-kind contribution. Six 10 inch playground balls were provided by the New York State Department of Health

Activ8Kids! program to promote active play during recess.

Lessons Learned

- ♥ The intervention was successful because it represented a simple approach requiring reorganization of available resources. Extra funding and changes in staffing were not required.
- ♥ Another lesson to be learned from this experience is that parents often promote and are the source of beneficial change. The home-school connection can produce successful outcomes.



Type of Change:	Policy, Practice
Risk Factor:	Physical Activity
Location:	Richard J Bailey School, Westchester County
Reach/Impact:	442 Elementary School Children