

School Play Space... how much is enough?

Background

Only a minority of Australian children meet recommended physical activity levels. With increasing student numbers, our schools need to ensure they maintain sufficient playground space to support physical activity and wellbeing.

The study

The relationship between primary school playground size and children's physical activity levels was examined. Free play space was mapped within forty-three randomly selected NSW primary schools. The play space data was cross matched with physical activity data from the 2015 Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey.

Results



Increased free play space (up to 25m² per student) led to increased physical activity where loose play equipment (such as balls and skipping ropes) was available.



25m²

15m²

The probability of students meeting physical activity recommendations increased sharply between 15m² and 25m² per student.

Recommendations

1

25m²



Set a benchmark of 25m² free play space per student when planning and designing schools.

2



Ensure loose play equipment is available.

3



Undertake further research on real world variables such as school design, surrounding open space and population density.

Reference:

1. Ecological study of playground space and physical activity among primary school children, 2020
Anne Grunseit, Blythe O'Hara, Bradley Drayton, Vincent Learnihan, Louise L Hardy, Eve Clark, Paul Klarenaar, Lina Engelen <https://bmiopen.bmj.com/content/10/6/e034586>

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