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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**RESEARCHERS FIND PEACEFUL PLAYGROUNDS RECESS PROGRAM
INCREASES VIGOROUS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION UP TO 25%**

Southern California-based company believes every child deserves a safe space to play and promotes physical activity and social interaction while reducing bullying and injuries.

LAKE ELSINORE, CA, (June 28, 2018) - A recently released study reports that the proportion of students involved in vigorous activities during recess and lunch recess, increase significantly when adding **Peaceful Playgrounds' Recess Program**. Researchers documented an increase ranging from 15% to 25% over a 12-month period.

The results were recently published, based on research project titled "**The HAPPY Study**" conducted in 2016 by Australian researchers in metropolitan primary schools. Through the course of the **Healthy Active Peaceful Playgrounds for Youth** study, sedentary activities decreased significantly while there was a significant increase in vigorously active students on hard surfaces (asphalt and blacktop) and soft surfaces (grass) through implementation of the **Peaceful Playgrounds' Recess Program**.

Increasing physical activity in youth is a health priority. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that children under 12 received 60 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous physical activity. This study aimed to increase the proportion of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) during recess and lunch of primary school children. Previous research documented there is strong evidence that physical activity (PA) is associated with a large number of physical benefits, as well as increased cognitive function, academic achievement, and mental health.

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Peaceful Playgrounds Recess Program uses open surfaces to create a safe playing environment to encourage activity and positive interactions. **The HAPPY study** found that painted game markings on blacktop can increase children's physical activity at recess. It also looked at two additional components: developing the grass areas for games through markings and cones and introducing a social component that encourages children to be physically active. Both environmental modifications indicated that this intervention contributed to an increase in vigorous physical activity of both girls and boys at recess and lunch.

A social component was developed by Australian educators and added to the **Peaceful Playgrounds Recess Program**. It was designed to encourage physical activity by fellow students and teachers with materials and specific training for this component. While the other interventions did show a significant increase in vigorous physical activity outcomes, this intervention of social prompting did not show a significant difference and needs further development and study.

The complete research study is part of the BMC Public Health Series and is open for public review here: <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-018-5397-6>

Peaceful Playgrounds, Inc. is headquartered in Southern California and serves schools in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Approximately 8,000 schools across the U.S. use the Peaceful Playgrounds Recess Program. For more information on Peaceful Playgrounds, please visit www.peacefulplaygrounds

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ABOUT THE HAPPY STUDY

Funded by the Department of Education and Communities NSW and conducted by Macquarie University with lead researcher Dr. Dean Dudley from the Faculty of Human Sciences/School of Education. The stepped wedge design used in the study included 20,468 students across 713 scans observed using iSOPARC instrument developed by U.S. researcher Thom McKenzie.

The intervention followed the Peaceful Playgrounds Recess Program components of painted markings (designs), teaching resources (posters, rule books, activity guides) and moveable equipment (e.g., balls, skipping ropes), combined with activity suggestions related to each marking provided and explained at a school staff training.

Like the U.S., the Australian Government is looking for interventions that support increasing children's physical activity level to combat the rising childhood obesity levels in Australia.

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ABOUT PEACEFUL PLAYGROUNDS

It all started while serving as Principal at E. Hale Curran Elementary School in Murrieta, California. Melinda Bossenmeyer, Ed.D. put into use a program designed to get more children involved in physical activity rather than waiting in line for their turn or just standing around talking while on the playground.

Teachers and recess monitors immediately saw the tenor of the playground change. Student involvement was overwhelming and the atmosphere changed from one of chaotic energy to calm focused cooperation. There was a dramatic reduction in playground injuries and as activities spread out, with students making use of a larger play area, stress and conflict due to what was perceived as overcrowding declined.

Peaceful Playgrounds was created in 1998. Through her understanding of physical activities and infrastructure of the playground, Dr. Bossenmeyer developed the components that would make up the first Peaceful Playgrounds® program to be manufactured and distributed to K-8 schools. This commitment to expose more schools, more teachers, and more children to the benefits of Peaceful Playgrounds had immediate impact and continues today.

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