

# No-Rules Recess Is A Good Thing!



Bullying at school is a problem around the world. Most schools have tried to reduce bullying by making more rules. Most schools have made teachers supervise recess more strictly.

But one school in Auckland, New Zealand has done the opposite. Instead of making more rules for the playground, they reduced the number of rules. What happened? Bullying and other injuries decreased!

At Swanson Primary School, during recess, students can play in the mud, climb trees, ride skateboards, and do many such things that aren't allowed at other schools. They can do just about anything they want to, as long as they're not hurting anyone else.

They may accidentally hurt themselves, but that's ok, Principal Bruce McLachlan says.

"We want kids to be safe and to look after them, but we end up wrapping them in cotton wool when in fact they should be able to fall over," McLachlan said.

Because students are able to do most anything they want, they are happier. And happier students are less interested in making trouble. That makes parents and teachers happy.

Playtime freedom also helps the students learn the dangers of reckless behavior. This will help develop the part of their brain that measures risks. When this part of the brain develops at a young age, it helps them make safe decisions when they are older.

For example, if a kid does something reckless on a skateboard and gets hurt, he or she will be less likely to repeat the reckless activity. And if kids learn not to be reckless on a skateboard, they are less likely to be reckless later in life when they're driving cars.

Safety is important, but as Swanson Primary School has shown, more rules doesn't always mean more safety.