



FREQUENTLY ASKED EXPANSION QUESTIONS

The mission of Playworks is to improve the health and well-being of children by increasing opportunities for physical activity and safe, meaningful play. Playworks currently operates its on-site program in 170 low-income schools in 10 cities across the United States. The organization will expand to serve schools in 16 cities by the 2010-11 school year, and to serve 27 cities by 2013. This FAQ is designed primarily for principals, teachers, parents and others who are affiliated with schools and would like to know more about how Playworks works within the school environment.

How can I get Playworks to my city?

Please contact the national office or visit our web site at www.playworks.org. We may not have plans to be in your city this year, but hopefully we will in future years. Our vision is that one day every child will have an opportunity to play every day. Although it may take some time, we are excited to be a part of a movement to make that vision a reality.

How many staff are assigned to a school?

One full-time, caring and consistent Playworks program coordinator implements the entire program. They work Monday through Friday, usually 9:00–5:00, depending on the school bell schedule. Through a selective hiring process, intensive and thoughtful training, and an ongoing support process, our staff is provided with a comprehensive set of tools and resources to help them run successful programs.

Who are your staff members? What are their qualifications?

Energetic, fun, and consistent are three words that capture a Playworks program coordinator, or “coach” as they are known to students. A common thread among our staff is a commitment and passion to support the health and well-being of children. All program coordinators come to Playworks with prior experience working with children and generally have worked within after-school programs, youth leagues and summer camps, or within other youth service agencies in the non-profit sector.

Do we still need to provide supervision at recess periods?

Yes. The role of the program coordinator on the playground is to create structured, safe opportunities for play. They should not be a substitute for a “yard supervisor.”

Does your staff teach PE classes?

No. Our program coordinators are not PE teachers and are not required to have a teaching credential. Playworks does offer 30-45 minute structured physical activity classes. During these “class game times” students and teachers are able to learn and practice the games and physical activities that will be provided during recess periods.

How would you work with our existing after-school program?

The Playworks after school program model works with the same 20-25 students for the entire school year with the goal of developing a strong, on-going relationship with students and their families. We have found that our format often complements larger after school collaborative programs by working with those students who would benefit from being a part of a smaller community were they will receive greater attention during the after school hours.

Do you work with Kindergarten?

Yes. We work with all grade levels through our recess and class game time components.

Do you work with middle schools or K-8 schools?

We work solely with elementary and k-8 schools in our expansion cities.

Do you provide part-time staff?

No. One of the essential aspects to our program's success is that our staff becomes a part of the larger school community. By having a consistent presence during the in-school and after school hours, our program coordinators build strong relationships with students, families, and staff, throughout the school year.

Who is responsible for supervising the Playworks staff person?

Playworks provides each school site with an area director, whose role is to supervise and support a group of 8-12 program coordinators. Area directors are responsible for overseeing and maintaining program quality at each school site and serve as the primary contact person for school administrators.

How much does it cost?

The total cost for your school to have the program is \$23,500. This covers a full-time program coordinator for the entire school year. We also ask schools to provide a basic set of playground equipment (balls, cones, jump ropes, etc) that usually cost no more than \$500 and can be supplemented by existing equipment at the school site.

How do schools pay for their portion of the program?

The majority of schools use funding within their own school budget. Some schools supplement their funds through external sources.

How do schools apply?

School Interest Forms are generally sent out in January of every year. After conducting school site visits we make decisions beginning in March on which schools we will be working with during the upcoming year. Schools which are not selected are placed on our waiting list. If we are currently in your city or region, contact your local Playworks branch. If you are in a potential expansion region, please contact the national Playworks office.

When can you start?

Our school-based programs are designed to start on the first day of school. We recruit our staff throughout the year; train them in the summer, with programming set to start at the beginning of the school year. We generally do not start up programming mid-year.