

## **What is a Recess Coach?**

A Recess Coach is a school staff member who is dedicated to delivering and strengthening a great recess, every day. The Recess Coach is a vital part of continuing a consistently high-functioning recess, and is ideally present at most (if not all) of the recess periods at your school. This person leads the implementation of recess every day – setting up and tearing down games, supervising the junior coaches, modeling our strategies for the students and other recess staff (rock paper scissors, high fives, “good job nice try”), and engaging with students in playing the games. This person models the expectations of recess, leads the way for impact through play at school, and supports all staff and students during recess.

## **How do I choose an internal Recess Coach?**

Many times schools have current employees that would make great Playworks Recess Coaches. Think of those staff that have a flexible schedule allowing them to be out at recess each day, maintain a high energy level, and possess the ability to build rapport with all grade levels. Some ideas for transitioning an internal employee to serve as a Recess Coach are:

- **Classified Lunch Duty** – This person was already hired for the purpose of lunch duty. Can you repurpose them to be the Recess Coach and still maintain the overall lunch duty schedule with the other staff?
- **Paraprofessional** – Most schools have paraprofessionals supporting lunch duty already, just not always every day or every grade level. However, do you have a stellar paraprofessional that could create enough flexibility in his/her daily schedule to fill the recess coach position?
- **Any Part-Time position** – Often schools have a staff member that holds a position that is part-time and he/she may want more hours at the school. This could be a crossing guard, bus driver, before/after care staff, etc.
- **Counselor/Health & Wellness Coordinator/Family Liaison** – These individuals have many different roles depending on the school and district. This person is sometime that is on your campus full-time to support your students and families. What better way to support them then with ensuring the Playworks programming is strong?

When necessary, the Recess Coach position could be split between two strong staff members. For instance, one for lower grade recesses and one for upper grade recesses. This is not ideal, but the bottom line is making sure however that Recess Coach position is filled that it provides consistency and momentum throughout the school year.

## **How do I hire an external Recess Coach?**

Finding a good Recess Coach for the limited hours (usually 2 to 2.5 hours a day) that this position entails can be challenging. Below is a job description that can be used to post the Recess Coach position for hire, job advertising suggestions, and interview guide.

### **Recess Coach Job Description:**

The Recess Coach (on the Recess Team) supports recess at school, leading the way for impact through play, and supporting all staff and students during recess. The Recess Coach encourages proactive engagement in the success of recess, the development of students, and a positive impact on school climate. S/he does this through leading and participating in games, proactively managing students through use of attention getters, signals, and transitions, and engaging positively with students and other staff.

[SCHOOL NAME] is partnering with [Playworks](https://www.playworks.org) to make recess a fun, inclusive time for every student in our community. Playworks is the leading national nonprofit using play to transform schools. A Playworks recess creates a place for every kid on the playground to feel included, be active, and build valuable social and emotional skills. You can learn more at [www.playworks.org](https://www.playworks.org).

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Independently manages all recess periods and supervision of the Junior Coach Program
- Model Playworks core values, program implementation, group management, and rapport building strategies for students and school staff
- Meets with Playworks for coaching, feedback, and best practice sharing
- Attends Playworks trainings which may take place during or out of school time
- Meets monthly with Recess Coach Manager (school administration) regarding program quality

### **Profile for placement:**

- Accessible to all recess periods each school day throughout the year
- Desire to learn skills to support recess programming
- Ability to engage and inspire students
- Ability to set clear goals and follow through with flexible and creative problem solving tools

### **Professional Development & Resources:**

Recess Coaches may be provided the following training resources as part of their role:

- Ongoing coaching and consultation in game facilitation, group management, safety and systems, youth leadership, and program assessment throughout the school year
- Access to Playworks Playbook, Recess Coach Manual, and other resources
- Becomes part of Playworks local community and national network

### **Job Advertising Suggestions:**

You can condense the job descriptions to help advertise the position:

- **District Job Board** – Just as you would with any position you are hiring for, make sure you post the Recess Coach position on your district's job board. This will support you in receiving internal and external applicants.
- **School Marquee** – Put a simple message on your marquee about hiring. It could be that semi-retired neighbor to the school or a college student that notices the sign and is interested in working with kids part-time.
- **School and/or Teacher Newsletters** – There may be some stay-at-home parents in your school that would be interested in working part-time at their child's school.
- **Community College Student Job Boards**

### **Recess Coach Interview Guide**

Below are questions to reference when interviewing for a Recess Coach. You can use these questions as they are, change or add to them to fit your specific school situation and needs.

1. (Review job description) Describe your educational and work background, specifically focusing on any experience you have working with K-\_\_ students.
2. How important is inclusive play for a K-\_\_ setting involving ### students?
3. What steps would you take to ensure that your training is being properly implemented for the students?
4. What support do you expect each month? What would you do to ensure that the goals you set with him/her during this time will impact students in a positive way?
5. How would you engage and inspire students to include everyone in a game?
6. How would you model and encourage conflict resolution during recess?
7. With \_\_ minutes for lunch recess at each grade level, how would you maximize that time to engage all students in activities?
8. How would you manage/supervise Junior Coaches during recess time?
9. What type of collaborative relationship would you expect from admin and teachers?
10. What would you do if you had a concern regarding an aspect of the program? What would you do if you had a concern regarding a student?
11. What personal strengths would you bring to this position? What are some areas you would need support, especially from Playworks or the Recess Manager?