

Setting up your recess team

To launch and sustain safe and healthy play at your school, we encourage you to identify and assign school staff to fulfill the roles defined below. These roles may overlap and may be filled by one or more school staff members. Remember, it will be important to designate time for staff professional development and coaching!

- 1) Recess Manager:** A school staff member who is responsible for setting overall goals for recess program implementation, and leads the team in assessing and improving recess. The Recess Manager provides ongoing support, observation, and management of the Recess Coach and the Recess Team throughout the school year. The Recess Manager does not necessarily have to be present during all recess periods, but should be aware of the current status of recess and be present at all regular recess team meetings. The Recess Manager can be the school's strongest advocate for play by serving as a liaison between the Recess Team and the school's leadership team.

* Recommendation: Ideally, a member of the school leadership team (such as a Principal, Assistant Principal, or Director) holds the role of Recess Manager. We often find that the more the school leadership team directly participates in recess support and implementation, the better the outcomes for safe and healthy play.

- 2) Recess Coach:** 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.

- 3) Recess Team:** School staff who actively support the planning and implementation of recess. The Recess Team proactively engage in the the development of students, the success of recess, and the build of positive school climate. The Recess Team does this by leading and participating in games, proactively managing students through use of attention getters, signals, and transitions, and engaging positively with students and other staff.

* Recommendation: Include teachers on the Recess Team, especially Physical Education teachers. Often schools with the greatest success implementing the concepts and strategies covered in our trainings have their P.E. teacher(s) fully engaged in the process. P.E. teachers introduce new recess games during class to build student skills and knowledge of new games. Additionally, P.E. teachers build school culture and community by modeling group management strategies and serving as strong advocates for the value of play.

Other Considerations for Success

Recess Team meetings: Having an opportunity to meet on a consistent basis will provide your team with the time and space to evaluate recess, make progress towards goals, and discuss any barriers to further success. The frequency and duration of these team meetings is ultimately at the school's discretion, but we recommend meeting on a monthly basis at minimum.

Class game time: Finding a member within the Recess Team to provide 10-15 minute game instruction for classes is another great way to teach students new recess games and build school-wide awareness of what students should expect at recess. This person will work closely with teachers to set up a game time to teach new recess games to individual classes at least monthly. Consider rotating this responsibility across members of the Recess Team.

Leverage youth leaders: Empowering students to lead and take on roles & responsibilities at recess allows for shared responsibility between adults and students on the playground. Create student leadership opportunities (or utilize an existing leadership program at your school) to help manage recess with your Recess Team. A youth-led recess leadership program bridges all the tools that adults know about creating safe and inclusive spaces, and passes them onto the youth. Find a member within the Recess Team to provide recess youth leaders with ongoing training and a clear, meaningful incentive system. This will give students the necessary tools to develop the confidence and knowledge they need to take ownership over the playground.