

Playworks is recognized as a top-tier program under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the federal education law. A 2017 RAND Corporation review confirmed that Playworks meets the highest standard of evidence for effectiveness in creating positive school experiences. The Playworks approach has been evaluated in over a dozen independent studies and journal articles.

TIER 1 Evidence Controlled Studies

**PLAYWORKS SCHOOLS
HAVE LESS BULLYING** **43%
LESS**



Teachers in Playworks schools reported significantly less bullying and exclusionary behavior during recess*, a 43% difference in average rating scores.

STUDENTS ARE READY TO LEARN

34% FEWER MINUTES
to transition to learning

Teachers in Playworks schools reported spending significantly less time to transition from recess to learning activities (34% fewer minutes).

Positive findings from a randomized controlled trial, [Mathematica Stanford University 2013](#).

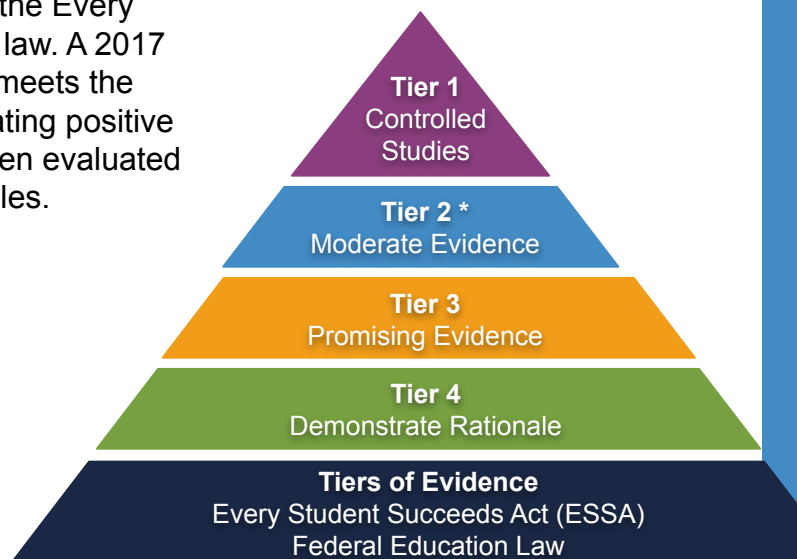
TIER 2 Evidence

MORE POSITIVE INTERACTIONS

5X Students at Playworks schools were five times more likely to have a positive interaction with an adult on the playground than at non-Playworks schools.

LESS CONFLICT

3X Students at Playworks schools had 3 times less conflict.



Student Growth Indicators

- 1 On-task Behavior
- 1 Class Readiness
- 1 Positive Language
- 2 Leadership
- 2 Empathy
- 2 Problem Solving
- 2 Critical Thinking
- 2 Motivation
- 2 Conflict Resolution
- 3 Emotional Control
- 3 Adaptability
- 3 Confidence

"Our students, like many others, faced challenges reconnecting after the pandemic. Playworks brings energy and joy back to our school day—and helps both students and staff build strong relationships"
- Elementary School Principal

*Tier 2 studies meet all criteria except threshold of 350 participants in more than 1 school district.

Massey, W. V. et al. (2017). "The impact of a multi-component physical activity programme in low-income elementary schools." [Health Education Journal. 76\(5\), 517-530.](#)

Why Play Matters

Play is a Cornerstone for Learning and Health

Play is an essential part of childhood that helps students grow in meaningful ways. Through games and group activities, kids learn how to work with others, express themselves, manage emotions, and build confidence. These everyday experiences teach important life skills—like patience, teamwork, and problem-solving—that support success in school and beyond.

Why Early Experiences Shape Lifelong Outcomes

A 20-year longitudinal study¹ found that children who learned to work well with others, manage their feelings, and navigate group settings at an early age were more likely to succeed later in life. These early experiences were linked to higher graduation rates, stronger employment prospects, and fewer challenges related to health, housing, or the legal system.

What Early Strengths Can Predict Later in Life:



54% more likely to earn a high school diploma



as likely to attain a college degree



46% more likely to have a full-time job by age 25



For every drop in early developmental skills, children faced increased risks later in life:



higher chance of having been arrested by early adulthood;



higher rate of drug usage; and



higher chance of being in public housing.



¹Damon E. Jones, Mark Greenberg, and Max Crowley, 2015:Early Social-Emotional Functioning and Public Health: The Relationship Between Kindergarten Social Competence and Future Wellness American Journal of Public Health 105, 2283_2290, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302630>