Supporting healthy, inclusive, safe play throughout the nation for 25 years and regionally for 10.
ADJUSTING AND ADAPTING

After almost a year of virtual learning, Wisconsin kids, teachers, and families returned to school excited, but worried about safety, engagement, and the impact that a year of uncertainty would have on individual students and the overall school climate. Throughout the year, Wisconsin educators accomplished great things while also dealing with widespread teacher shortages and uncertainty around COVID related closures. School leadership considered a variety of strategies to mitigate these challenges, and many chose play.

WHY PLAY?

Recess has proven to have immense cognitive, social, emotional, and physical benefits even in the most ideal times. But, in these unprecedented times, when students have experienced isolation, loneliness, boredom, and trauma, a thoughtfully planned recess and the opportunity to play can support students to feel safe, experience joy, and reconnect with their school.

- Physically active play
- Increase in dopamine
- Elevated feelings of joy and happiness
WHY PLAY IS ESSENTIAL, ESPECIALLY NOW

In October, Playworks founder and social entrepreneur Jill Vialet sat down with Forbes to talk about her new book, "Why Play Works," and how we can leverage the power of play to build a more equitable and joyful future. So why is play essential?

Promotes physical and mental health
Physical play helps children manage anxiety, increase coordination, and build gross motor skills.

Improves academic engagement
Children learn problem-solving skills, creativity, and focus, which are important classroom skills.

Teaches important social-emotional skills
Conflict resolution, collaboration, and resiliency are all important life skills taught through play.

BY THE NUMBERS IN 2021-22

15,584 Students experiencing the power of play
18 Partner Schools receiving Playworks direct service TeamUp
1000+ Educators & youth professionals trained statewide
19 Schools receiving Pro training & consultative services statewide
The TeamUp program model provides an experienced Site Coordinator on-site for one week per month for the duration of the school year who implements and models three key program areas alongside a school staff member identified to lead recess: high-functioning safe recess, Junior Coach Leadership Program, and instructional class game time with each class in the school.

28 Pro Partners in 22-23

Pro services build capacity for positive play with Playworks professional development through hands-on trainings and empower school staff, paraprofessionals, and youth-serving organizations to create and maintain a great recess and play environment throughout the school year.

OUR 21-22 AND 22-23 PARTNER SCHOOLS

Browning Elementary School
Rogers Street Academy
Lowell International Elementary School
Milwaukee French Immersion School
LaFollette Public School
Milwaukee Spanish Immersion School - Upper Campus
Milwaukee Spanish Immersion School - Lower Campus
Prairie Elementary School
Banting Elementary School
Heyer Elementary School
Lowell Elementary School
Hadfield Elementary School
Lake Mills Elementary School
Douglas Elementary School
Bryant Elementary School
Cunningham Intermediate School
Zablocki Public School
Albrecht Elementary School
Thomas Jefferson Middle School
Manitoba Elementary & Middle School
Orchard Lane Elementary School
Edgerton Elementary School
Highland Community School
Cedar Hills Elementary
Jefferson East Elementary
St Marcus Lutheran School
Marshall Elementary School
Story Elementary School
Jeremiah Curtin Leadership Academy
Elmwood Elementary School
Hillcrest Elementary School
Aldrich Intermediate School

Waukesha STEM Academy - Randall Campus
Dodgeland School District
Lake Mills Middle School
Penfield Montessori Academy
Bethesda Elementary School
Hawthorne Elementary School
Rose Glen Elementary School
Summit View Elementary School INC - School of Integrated Arts, Design, and Creativity
Meadowbrook Elementary School
Ixonia Elementary School
EBSOLA Creative Arts
Badger Elementary School
St. Marcus Harambee Campus
McNeel Intermediate School
Fruzen Intermediate School
La Escuela Fratney

PLAYWORKS WISCONSIN
ANNUAL EDUCATOR SURVEY DATA

“Our Junior Coaches flourished this year! They gained so much self-confidence. Additionally, their attendance increased, their classroom behavior was outstanding, and leadership skills grew even more. They absolutely rose to the challenge of being school leaders and they flourished. THANK YOU!!” - Wisconsin Teacher

“My students are more easily able to problem solve with each other rather than involving staff members. They have more confidence and on more than one occasion per recess will invite others to play.” - Wisconsin Teacher

2021-2022 Results for Direct Service - 409 respondents

93% of educators agree that Playworks helps students demonstrate empathy toward one another;

95% of educators agree that Playworks helps students learn cooperation skills;

96% of educators agree that Playworks helps students connect with their peers;

95% of educators agree that Playworks helps create an environment of belonging;

94% of educators agree that Playworks helps create opportunities for inclusion of diverse groups of students.

“I value how Playworks brings our community (classroom, students, recess, etc.) all together! Playworks is such a great way to bring positivity and kindness!” - Wisconsin Teacher
STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

A major component of Playworks’ services is our Junior Coach Leadership Program (JCLP). With our the program, Playworks seeks to develop the next generation of leaders and role models in Wisconsin. The JCLP is an innovative peer leadership program designed to train 4th and 5th graders in cooperation, conflict resolution and facilitation. With schools short staffed, we decided to double down on our Junior Coach Student Leadership program in 2021-22. At each school, we recruited more leaders per school than ever before. This was a huge support to teachers and they responded with some of the highest impact scores on our annual survey for Junior Coaches that we have ever seen.

Corporate Kickball Tournament 22-23

Corporate teams from all over the Greater Milwaukee Area laced up their sneaks and lived out their kickball dreams! Corporate Kickball is an active employee engagement event and fundraiser for Playworks Wisconsin that gets your team of 10-15 co-workers out of the building and onto the field for a day of team building, networking, and fun through tournament play of a nostalgic game of kickball.
THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Thank you so much to our 2021-2022 corporate partners

GAME CHANGERS: $25,000+

PLAYMAKERS: $10,000-$24,999

SUPPORTERS: $1,000-$7,500

KICKBALL TEAMS: $2,000

OneAmerica
Johnson Controls
Children's Community Health Plan
UnitedHealthcare
WaterStone Mortgage

Johnson Controls
General Mills
Northwestern Mutual Foundation
Anon Charitable Trust

United Way
Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County

Children's Community Health Plan
UnitedHealthcare
WaterStone Bank

WaterStone Bank
2021-2022 BOARD MEMBERS

DeShaun Robinson
Greater Milwaukee Committee and Scale Up Milwaukee

Denise McDowell
Children’s Community Health Plan

Trishya Brown
Greater Milwaukee PSA & Advocate Aurora Health: Healthcare Behavioral Health Services

Christopher Latterell
OneAmerica Financial Partners

Kyle Hager
WaterStone Bank

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