



PLAYWORKS

# School Recess.

A solution hiding in plain sight that can improve Minnesota children’s health, well-being, & life outcomes.



## The Need for State Level Programming and Intervention

Play is a critical element in healthy brain development and emotional regulation in young children. Researchers and child development experts have been ringing the alarm bell for years on the grave impact of play deprivation in young children. Play and recess are currently not required in Minnesota elementary schools and when, how, why and by whom it is removed as a form of punishment is not stipulated in statewide policy. Therefore, recess is often neglected and on average generates nearly 90% of student disciplinary incidents in the school day. Many districts struggle to staff and train recess staff to make it a productive time of the day for students – to be physically active and to learn valuable life skills like conflict resolution, teamwork, and empathy. Because it is not mandated like every other aspect of a child’s curriculum in elementary school, recess is the first item to often get cut, reduced, or eliminated altogether when a school experiences staffing shortages and/or an academic need takes priority.

For over 25 years, Playworks has given kids foundational skills for success on the playground, in the classroom, and in the community. Playworks is the leading organization in Minnesota leveraging play to promote healthy behaviors and increase social and emotional learning, at recess and throughout the school day.

**Playworks social emotional interventions meet the highest criteria for evidence of impact under the federal education law, Every Student Succeeds Act.** (Rand Corporation Review 2017)

Playworks evidence-based interventions are **backed by controlled and independent studies that verify Playworks:**



### INCREASES STUDENT

- Attendance
- Emotional and Physical Safety
- Positive Peer & Adult Interactions
- Academic Engagement
- Teaching time, 18 hrs. (avg) per classroom per SY
- Vigorous Physical Activity



### DECREASES STUDENT

- Chronic Absenteeism
- Physical and Verbal Conflicts
- Discipline Incidents
- Bullying

**91% of MN schools with Playworks programming increased their recess quality last year. This year Playworks is partnering with 45 Metro Area Elementary Schools serving 18,740 students.**

### Proposed Program Model

Playworks will help reimagine and redesign Minnesota’s K-5 recess program to build the internal capacity of and empower the school/district staff to lead safe, healthy and inclusive recess independently. **Playworks proposes to provide tiered interventions to at least 18 high need Minnesota schools that have 40% or higher FRL (approx. 6,300 total children) each year for two years, SY2023-25.** All schools will receive Universal Supports, 12 Twin Cities Metro Area Schools will receive Intensive Capacity Development Supports and as a pilot expansion, 6 Greater Minnesota Schools will receive Targeted Supports.

[www.playworks.org/minnesota](http://www.playworks.org/minnesota)



# WHY PLAY MATTERS.



More and more research confirms the importance of play and why it must be an integral part of a child's day,

**Yet, children today play 50% less than their parents did.**

Play "is critical for becoming socially competent, coping with stress and building cognitive skills such as problem solving" (The Serious Need for Play, 2009).

## The relationship between young children's social competence & future wellness.

A 20-year longitudinal study concluded that social emotional competence in young children was a consistent and significant indicator of both positive and negative future outcomes across all major domains: education, employment, criminal justice, substance use and mental health.

## Elementary students with strong social emotional skills are:



**54% more likely to earn a high school diploma**

**2x**

**as likely to attain a college degree**



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

For every one-point **decrease** in a child's social competence score he/she has:

**67%** higher chance of having been arrested by early adulthood;

**82%** higher rate of drug usage; and

**82%** higher chance of being in public housing.