

BROCK UNIVERSITY

The Recess Project

Program Manual

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BROCK UNIVERSITY

Table of Contents

TITLE PAGE	PAGE 1
TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE 2
ABOUT THE RECESS PROJECT	PAGE 3
WHO IS THE RECESS PROJECT FOR?	PAGE 4
GETTING STARTED	PAGE 5
ROLES AND DUTIES	PAGE 6
RECRUITMENT	PAGE 7
TRAINING	PAGE 8-12
LUNCHES	PAGE 13
STATIONS	PAGE 14
EQUIPMENT	PAGE 15
BEAD PROGRAM	PAGE 16
EXTRA AND LARGE SCALE GAMES	PAGE 17
RAINY DAYS	PAGE 18
MEETINGS	PAGE 19
VOLUNTEERS	PAGE 20-21
TRAINERS	PAGE 22
LEADERS IN TRAINING (LIT)	PAGE 23
HELPFUL HINTS	PAGE 24

About The Recess Project

Our Mission

- Extreme Octopus, anyone? How about Tag? Soccer? Zumba? The mission of The Recess Project is to provide children with active, engaging and fun, recess activities and games.

Rationale

- Recess is often an unstructured and unmonitored time of day, which often results in creating opportunities for developmental and disciplinary related problems to occur. A lack of supervision and organization often acts as a catalyst for bullying, teasing, social exclusion and fighting. These problematic issues should be addressed, as they inevitably affect the long-term health and well-being of children, and ultimately the community at large.

How does it work?

- The Recess Project is a program that supports vulnerable and at-risk students in local elementary schools.
- Research Assistants from Brock University are placed at various elementary schools, and under the guidance of Lauren McNamara, facilitate the program.
- Brock University students are also able to volunteer for the program. These volunteers are placed in local elementary schools, and are given responsibilities and guidance from the Research Assistants.
- Students from grades 5-8 are recruited by the Research Assistants, and are instructed to lead organized games and activities during primary recess.
- Games and activity stations are set up around the playground and these stations are facilitated by the grade 5-8 students.

Who was it created by?

- Lauren McNamara, a professor from Brock University, is the founder and creator of The Recess Project Program.
- The program is rapidly growing and expanding each year to various local public schools in the region.

Community Partners

- Canadian Tire
- YMCA
- United Way

Who is The Recess Project for?

For the Primary Students, The Recess Project...

- Assists in the alleviation of problematic behaviours, such as bullying or exclusion during recess
- Promotes active and healthy lifestyles through interactive games and activities
- Develops positive relationships between students

For the Junior/Intermediate Student Leaders, The Recess Project...

- Provides role modelling and leadership opportunities for junior/intermediate students, through the facilitation of station games and activities
- Creates opportunities for the leaders to display empathy and care towards the primary students
- Provides students with proper conflict resolution strategies
- Helps students feel as though they are making a difference in their school community
- Helps the leaders feel a sense of accomplishment and responsibility (the students are recognized and awarded through the Bead Program)

For the School, The Recess Project...

- Makes recess a positive and safe environment for children
- Creates unique experiences and memories that will remain with the students for the rest of their lives
- Provides extra support and reduces the amount of negative incidents during recess
- Encourages interactions and collaboration between students in different grades
- Provides school-wide activities that will promote positive attitudes about being active and living healthy

For You, The Recess Project...

- Provides leadership opportunities and creates unique experiences with children
- Creates opportunities for developing relationships, and interacting with students, peers and school staff
- Intrinsically rewarding, as you can see how being a part of The Recess Project can have a positive impact on school environments and student development

Getting Started

First off, breathe! The first few weeks are always difficult when entering a new school. Although, once the program has been implemented, and you become a familiar face, running the program becomes much easier (and fun!). To start, having an initial meeting with the principal/vice principal is very beneficial, as it is important that the school understands the purpose and structure of the program, and your role in facilitating it. The principal/vice-principal can also help to incorporate you into the school, and create opportunities for you to meet the teachers and discuss the program. Remember that it is important to be flexible with the program, as each school is different.

During the meeting with the principal/vice-principal determine:

- Where you can keep the program equipment (or where current school equipment is located)
- Gym availability during recess (often the gym is used for meetings/training, but if not, find out where you can meet and train the students)
- The recess bell times and the general school day structure
- A place for you to keep your folders and belongings at the school (potentially a locker)
- If there is a lunch monitor program already in place
- If it is possible to make regular announcements regarding the program
- Opportunities to go to each class and introduce yourself and program, and recruit students to become Junior Recess Leaders (JRLs)
- A place to post announcements, letters, schedules or questions about the program (a school bulletin board)

Once you become acquainted with the school's routine, and the technicalities of implementing the program, you can modify the program to meet the needs of the project and the school. In addition, it is important to explain the Bead Program with the school and determine a time to hand out the beads to the leaders (such as at the monthly school assemblies). Again, all of these questions may not be answered right away, but in time the program will start to unfold. Overall, remember to be positive and fun, as this is an exciting program to implement!

Quick Tips:

- Spend time getting to know the school
- Get to know the students and build relationships
- Be flexible
- Breathe and have fun!

Roles/Duties

Junior Recess Leaders (JRL): At lunch and recess, the JRLs are responsible for building positive peer relationships and interacting with the children. At recess, the JRLs are encouraged to lead stations, through the facilitation of games and activities. The JRLs seek to reduce exclusion and bullying, and encourage shy children to participate in the recess games and activities. The program provides the JRLs with leadership and role modelling opportunities. Also, the JRLs are responsible for helping to take out and clean up recess equipment.

Senior Recess Leaders (SRL): The SRLs share the same responsibilities as the JRL's. Although, the SRLs who have been a part of the program for three months or more, are also expected to assist in encouraging new volunteers to join The Recess Project.

Trainers: The Trainers are children who have been a part of the program for at least five months. These Trainers are paired up with the Leaders in Training, in order to assist them in running the recess stations. Also, the Trainers provide guidance, and answer any questions that the LITs may have. Overall, they are expected to be role models for the primary children, as well as the LITs.

Leaders in Training (LIT): The (grade 4) Leaders in Training are under the guidance of the Trainers. As the LITs begin to understand the program, they are incrementally given opportunities to assist in running station games and activities. The LITs are also encouraged to develop relationships with the primary students. This training will assist the LITs in becoming JRLs for the following year.

Brock Recess Leaders (University/College Students, Parents Volunteers etc.): The Recess Leaders often interact with the primary children at lunch and recess, and generally lend a helping hand with equipment, games, activities, or wherever needed. They also provide assistance at recess should issues present themselves.

Research Assistants (RA): The Research Assistants implement The Recess Project at each selected school. The RAs communicate and collaborate with the students, teachers and principals. The RAs also monitor the JRLs, SRLs, Trainers, LITs and any other Recess Leaders at the school. The RAs are generally the 'go-to' people for any leaders who need assistance. They also keep track of attendance, equipment, the Bead Program, and the general flow of the Project.

Community Members/ Parents: Community members and parents play an essential role in ensuring children's optimal, developmental outcomes; by supporting The Recess Project's mission of providing active, engaging and fun recess activities and games.

Teachers/ Principals/ Staff: Teachers, principals and school staff have a powerful influence on children's behaviours and attitudes. Thus, it is important for school staff and teachers to recognize students' achievements, offer feedback, and support children who are upholding leadership positions. School staff support and recognition of the program's influences on the students, will in turn create a positive school environment.

Recruitment

The process of recruiting students to become Recess Leaders may seem daunting at first. Although, in time, recruitment becomes routine, and the students become comfortable and expect to see you in their classrooms. Recruitment often occurs once a month or whenever new Recess Leaders are required. During the first recruitment presentation, it is helpful to have a general script of what you would like the students to know. In the presentation be sure to outline the mission of the Recess Project, the Recess Leader's roles, duties and required commitment details, and general information. *The Recess Project Template & Exemplar Manual* includes an example of what a 'recruitment speech' could look like. Most importantly, be energetic, enthusiastic and show the students that this is an exciting opportunity that you would like them to be a part of. Furthermore, inform students who are interested in becoming Recess Leaders about training days, the program schedule, the location for meetings, what they are required to bring, commitment requirements and any other important information.

Quick Tips:

- Keep it brief
- Be energetic
- Be organized
- Give students details about training (when, where, what to bring)

Training

Introduction

Icebreaker. At the training session it is a good idea to begin with a game, such as Huckle Buckle (see *The Recess Project Games and Activities Manual*). In this particular game, students are required to find a partner, which may be helpful knowledge in order to figure out which children should be placed together at each station. Overall, icebreaker games help the students to feel more comfortable with each other and with you.

Ourselves. Introduce yourself! It is recommended that you say your name, your role, why you are excited about The Recess Project, the purpose of the program and other general information. It is also fun and interesting to share something personal about yourself, such as your favourite food or movie. The students are usually very interested in who you are and your life. Thus, it is beneficial to open the doors to communication right at the beginning, so the students get the opportunity to know you and build a relationship with you from the start.

Them. It is a good idea to have the children share something about themselves as well. This will help you get to know the students a bit better, open communication, and it also allows you to see some of the personalities within the group. Going around in a circle and having the children say their name, their favourite food and their grade is a great way to get to know them a bit more.

The Recess Project (RP). It is important for the students to understand the significance and purpose of The Recess Project. Thus, it is beneficial to inform the students that the goal of the Recess Project is to play organized games during primary recesses, in order to prevent problem behaviours, exclusion and bullying. Overall, we want students to enjoy recess, have fun and be active with their peers.

Bullying Paper. In order for the students to grasp the importance of the program and its relation to bullying prevention, the “Bullying Paper” may be a good tool to use. In front of the students, take a piece of paper and crunch it up into a ball. After this is done, pass the paper to a student, and ask them to try and flatten the paper out completely. Once this has been attempted, you can say to the students that no matter how many times you try to flatten it out, the lines are still there. These lines are similar to the scars that are left on children after being bullied, and no matter how many times you try to fix the paper again, the scars will still remain. Therefore, this program is trying to prevent bullying and these scars (or lines) from ever occurring. Thus, the JRLs play a key part in helping to make recess a fun and safe environment for children.

Explain Stations

Who, what, when, where? Depending on the number of Recess Leaders at the school, you will need to determine how many students will run each station, and how long their commitment will be to the program. The leaders are expected to run the designated stations that they have signed up for, at each recess. It is generally a good idea to place the leaders in partners, as the stations often run more smoothly in pairs. Furthermore, the leaders enjoy being partnered up with a friend.

The following suggestions for stations will vary according to the school landscape:

- **Tarmac:** Stations in this area may include: tag, skipping, four square, hopscotch, basketball, circle games, chalk station and red bud. Please see *The Recess Project Games and Activities Manual* for a list of games.
- **Field:** Stations on the field may include: soccer, soccer-baseball, tag, no-touch football and generally games that require more space to carry out. A list of games for these stations can be found in *The Recess Project Games and Activities Manual*.
- **Playground:** This station may include games such as: grounders, tag, and hide-and-seek. Generally this station is more structured and supervised than other areas. *The Recess Project Games and Activities Manual* has a list of games for this station.

Responsibilities for the Leaders, Trainers or Leaders in Training (LITs)

- Be energetic and excited (the primary students look up to you).
- Attend all the recesses you have committed to.
- Tell a Research Assistant if you cannot make it outside for one of the recesses.
- Eat lunch in a primary classroom. This lunch period provides opportunities to build relationships, connect with the students and find out what activities the children enjoy.
- Be an appropriate role model, as the primary students look up to you.
- Reward good behaviour. If you see a child being inclusive, sharing or helping one of their peers, make sure you praise them for doing so and point out this positive behaviour to the other children.
- If conflicts occurs, discuss the problem with a yard duty supervisor or one of the RA's immediately. If a child needs to go inside for any reason (bathroom, injury etc.), a yard duty supervisor must to be contacted.
- Encourage students to participate. Make sure all students are included, regardless of whether or not they know how to play.

Quick Tips:

- Two students per station is a manageable amount (giving students the option of working with a partner is a great motivational tool).
- Three recesses a week is a fair commitment, and it still allows time for students to have their own recess times with their peers (dividing this up into mornings or afternoons can help students remember their commitments).

Lunch Breaks

- Eating lunch in a primary classroom helps to build relationships with the younger children and find out what kinds of activities they enjoy. This will help you to further connect with the students outside at recess.
- It is important to inform the Junior Recess Leaders that eating lunch in the primary classrooms is beneficial, as it engages the children in friendly conversation, bridges the gap between grades, provides Recess Leaders with role modelling opportunities, engages everyone in pro-social conversation, and it provides opportunities to get to know the younger children. It is also especially important to get to know the vulnerable kids, and engage them in conversation. The purpose of having lunch in a primary classroom is not to simply monitor the children, but interact with them.

Scenarios

In order to get the students into the mindset of a being a Recess Leader, it is helpful to provide scenarios that the students can work through individually or in pairs. The following are examples of some scenarios that could be used.

- 1 At recess there are two children in your group that are fighting over a piece of equipment. What do you do?
Possible Answer: Intervene, find out what the problem is and encourage the children to play together, by providing a game for them or making sure that they take turns using the piece of equipment.
- 2 A few children would like to use your equipment. Although, they do not want to be a part of your station because they do not like the game you are playing. What do you do?
Possible Answer: You may change the game in order to cater to the student's likes and dislikes. You are ultimately responsible for the equipment. Thus, if you are not using the equipment you can let the children use it, as long as you ensure that it is returned.
- 3 You notice that a child in your group is not displaying good sportsmanship and is making fun of the other children. What can you do?

Possible Answer: As soon as you see this inappropriate behaviour, immediately acknowledge it. Make sure that the student understands that they are playing for fun, not solely as a competition. It is also important to point out to the child that making fun of others likely hurts their feelings. Throughout the game, keep an eye on the child and reinforce positive behaviours displayed. It also would be beneficial to have the student apologize to any of the hurt children.

- 4 One child is poking another child who obviously does not enjoy it. What can you do to stop this?

Possible Answer: Have the child describe how he/she would feel if the same action was being done to him/her. Furthermore, describe how this incident is an example of bullying. Make sure to acknowledge this action right away, and again, an apology is always encouraged.

- 5 Johnny fell down and scraped his knee during soccer. He is now crying and wants a Band-Aid. What do you do?

Possible Answer: Ask Johnny “What happened?”. Determine if he is feeling well enough to move and go to the office for a band aid. If he is not okay to move, you may stay with him and ask another child to get a teacher to take control of the situation. It is important to remain calm and be sympathetic towards the injured child. It is also helpful to distract the child from thinking about the injury by asking positive questions. Also encourage any children gathering around Johnny to continuing playing.

- 6 There is a child standing against the wall by him/herself. What can you do to include him/her?

Possible Answer: Always watch for excluded or shy children, and encourage them to join in your station. If they refuse, try again the next day. It is also beneficial to gain close proximity to the shy or excluded child when playing your game. If you notice that they are interested, you can continue to ask them to play, but never force a child to play a game with you. It is important to ask the child if something is wrong or if anything is bothering him/her, and make sure that he/she has not been instructed by a teacher or supervisor to stand against the wall for a time out.

Quick Tips:

- Always remind the Recess Leaders that they should report any injuries or bullying incidents that may occur, by informing teachers or recess supervisors.
- The Recess Leaders assist in preventing negative incidents from occurring.

Bead Program

The Bead Program is a reward system that recognizes students' achievements and monthly commitments. At the end of every month, students who participate in The Recess Project will be awarded character and commitment beads (often beads are handed out at the monthly assemblies). There are two different types of beads that the leaders can earn:

- **Character Beads.** These beads are given to each child who have displayed particular positive characteristics. Students can earn character beads such as:
 - RED:** *Compassionate*- Displays a caring attitude towards the children.
 - BLUE:** *Role Model*- Displays exceptional leadership skills.
 - GREEN:** *Responsibility*- Is reliable, and assists in bringing out and putting away equipment.
 - YELLOW:** *Commitment*- Always shows up to each recess and performs duties.
 - ORANGE:** *Enthusiasm*- Displays a positive attitude towards the children and for The Recess Project.
 - WHITE:** *Inclusiveness*- Always seeks to include others in games and activities.
- **Commitment Beads.** These beads are earned on a monthly basis, and are given to the students to encourage them to continue to participate in the program. Check the Bead Program Heading for more details.
 - BLUE:** Jr. Recess Leader- 1st to 3rd month
 - SILVER:** Sr. Recess Leader- 3rd to 5th month
 - GOLD:** Trainer Bead- 6th to 10th month
 - RED:** Starter Bead for JRL- 1st month
 - PINK:** Ultimate Commitment Bead- 9th month
 - PURPLE:** Completion of JRL- 10th month
 - GREEN:** Starter Bead for Recess Leaders in Training- 1st month

To Conclude the Training. Make sure to leave time to answer any remaining questions (the students will likely have lots!). For those students who are willing to commit to the program, bring sign-up sheets, determine which stations each student will run, and organize primary classrooms for the Recess Leaders to have lunch in (A Sign-Up Sheet exemplar can be found in *The Recess Project Template & Exemplar Manual*).

Optional. At the end of the training, you could get the students organized into their stations, provide them with equipment and a list of games from this manual, and create a mock recess in the gym. The students can also incorporate their own game ideas. This is a great way to get the students to feel comfortable with the Project before they actually go outside.

Lunches

During each lunch period, the leaders should be placed into a primary classroom to eat with the children. The purpose of having the leaders eat lunch in the primary classrooms is to engage the children in friendly conversation, bridge the gap between the different grades, provide role modelling of pro-social behaviours, and get to know the children further, in order to connect with them on the playground. This time is also particularly important for the leaders to get to know the kids (especially the vulnerable ones), and become more comfortable with the children outside. The intention of the lunch period is not to simply monitor the children, but provide opportunities for the leaders to eat lunch and engage with the younger children. Once again, this is a preventative program, not a supervisory program.

Quick Tips:

- Ensure that the Recess Leaders understand why they are in the primary classrooms for lunch, which classroom they will be eating in, and the importance of taking time to eat their lunch.
- Check on the Recess Leaders during their lunchtime to make sure they are not skipping lunch.
- Be in constant communication with teachers, as well as the lunch monitors, to ensure that having the Recess Leaders in the primary classrooms at lunch does not cause problems.
- Remind each leader that they are not lunch monitors, but are there to build relationships with the students (ensure teachers are also aware of this).

Stations

In the school, it is beneficial to post a list of games, as well as a map of where the stations will be located in the schoolyard. This visual guide will help bring more organization to your program and allow the leaders to better understand their role outside (see *The Recess Project Template & Exemplar Manual* for a map of the stations and *The Recess Project Games and Activities Manual* for a list of games). The stations can vary, depending on the school layout and children's preferences. Therefore, it may be beneficial to get the student's opinions regarding station games and activities. Usually 2 to 3 students are in charge of facilitating the games that correspond to their assigned station. Make sure that the leaders are enjoying the stations that they are assigned to organize and run, in order to ensure that they are having fun at recess. In addition, it is important to have the location of the stations around the major parts of the playground and spread out from one another to target many different areas. The leaders are also provided with equipment that they can use at their station, in order to enhance and make the games more exciting. The leaders are also in-charge of looking after the equipment and bringing it in after recess is over. Overall, the stations were created to promote physical activity, advocate pro-social behaviours and provide an inclusive environment during recess.

It is important to note that following suggestions for stations will vary according to the school landscape. These are some examples:

- **Tarmac.** Stations in this area may include: tag, skipping, four square, hopscotch, basketball, circle games, chalk station and red bud.
- **Field.** Stations on the field may include: soccer, soccer-baseball, tag, no-touch football and generally games that require more space to carry out.
- **Playground.** This station can include games such as: grounders, tag, and hide-and-seek. Generally this station has less playing and more supervision.

Equipment

The management of equipment at each school will likely be different. Some schools may have a lot of equipment that can be used by The Recess Project, while other schools may have very limited equipment. It is helpful to have a separate bin for the equipment donated by The Recess Project (preferably locked or only accessible by the leaders), in order to be able to better manage and keep track of equipment that is not the schools’.

Normally the Junior Recess Leaders retrieve the equipment that they are going to use for their particular game or activity right before they head outside. During recess, the leaders are responsible for monitoring the equipment and bringing it inside after recess is over.

Possible Ways to Manage Equipment

- It is beneficial to bring some of your equipment outside in an additional bin. This way, the children can use the equipment that is available to them and then put it back if they do not wish to use it anymore. Keep the additional bin by the door, so they know where to place the equipment when the bell rings to come back inside. You may also find it helpful have a volunteer, Junior Recess Leader, Leader in Training or Brock student, to be in charge of this equipment bin. These volunteers may be called “Recess Sweepers”, and they can scan the playground at the end of recess for any possible existing equipment that has accidentally been left outside.
- You may also use tags with an image of the equipment on it. When a child uses a certain piece of equipment, they must make sure to grab the appropriate tag that corresponds with it. This is an excellent method to keep track of the equipment.

Quick Tips:

- It is important to use gradual amounts of equipment over the school year. All of the equipment should not be used right away, because often it will go missing and there will be a lack of equipment by the end of the year.
- Slowly gaining trust and responsibility with the kids is also important when administering equipment.

Bead Program (Monthly Assembly)

The purpose of the Bead Program is to encourage the volunteers to stay committed to their position. The Bead Program also helps students recognize their achievements, and encourages positive behaviours and characteristics, which are all essential aspects of the program. The Research Assistants use a form to keep track of which beads they have handed out to the leaders each month (see *The Recess Project Template & Exemplar Manual*). A bead timeline is also available in the *The Recess Project Template & Exemplar Manual*, which you can use to post in the school and determine which beads the leaders earn after each month. Also, the colour and type of beads may vary. Be sure to alter your template to correspond with the beads that you will be handing out at the end of each monthly assembly. Normally the students are given zip lock bags with their names on them, so the beads can be handed out easily. A letter to the parents is also provided, which will be in the zip lock baggy with the bead that has been earned (see *The Recess Project Template & Exemplar Manual* for a parent note exemplar).

What you will need:

- String (felt usually works best so the beads don't slide around)
- Round Coloured Beads- For character traits
- Star Beads- For monthly commitments
- Small Prizes- Basketballs, Volleyballs etc.
- Big Prizes- Family swim pass to the local YMCA etc.
- Separate coloured beads if you implement the LIT program

Extra and Large Scale Activities

The Recess Project also includes various activities outside of recess time. It is beneficial to create or plan extracurricular activities, games or guest speakers, to incorporate all of the students at each school. Therefore, large scale activities are a great way to get the older kids active and having fun, while creating opportunities to get to know these students better. These extra activities, provided by The Recess Project, assists in the development of a positive school environment.

Possible Ideas

- Games in the gym (this can be split up into grades, for example 4-6, 7-8)
 - Ball Hockey teams/tournaments
 - Various forms of Dodge Ball
 - Capture the Flag
- Craft clubs
 - Having a Recess volunteer, parent or teacher run a craft club during the winter months is a great way to spark children's creativity. Be mindful of the time that is available for a large-scale activity, as it may take quite a bit of prep work to start a craft club. Although, children love to get their creative juices flowing.
- Zumba Instructor (this program is partnered with the YMCA)
- Gymnastics Instructor
- Local volunteer: Firemen, Policemen...
- Local Junior Hockey Team

Rainy Days

During rainy days, the children will not be able to go outside and therefore, spend recesses indoors. When it is a rainy day, the leaders are expected to remain in the classrooms that they were in during lunch, and play games with the children. *The Recess Project Games and Activities Manual* has a list of rainy day games that you can play with a class during recess time. Even indoors, the leaders are expected to keep an eye out for bullying incidents and exclusion that may occur in the classroom. Rainy days provide a great opportunity for the JRLs to create positive relationships with the primary students and generally, get to know the children better.

Another option during rainy days is to play games in the gym. Before this can occur, make sure to check with the principal to see if the gym is available. Often you can bring down 1 or 2 grades, and play a large scale game in the gym (refer to *The Recess Project Games and Activities Manual* for a list of games). Also double check if a teacher must be present to supervise in the gym. Playing games in the gym insures that the children are active and getting exercise. It is also a good idea to mix grades together so the children can meet other students. The JRLs can also come to the gym and work with you to help facilitate the games being played. Having the JRLs play the games with the younger kids, assists in creating a stronger bond between the leaders and the children.

Meetings

It is a good idea to have monthly meetings, in order to keep lines of communication open between yourself and the Junior Recess Leaders. It is beneficial to select a regular monthly meeting time, as it will help the Recess Leaders remember when the meetings are. Furthermore, regularly scheduled meetings add additional structure to the program. Having a meeting at the beginning of every month can help you to refocus the group and resolve any issues that may come up. These meetings should revolve around getting to know the students, refocusing, making sure expectations are clear and resolving any issues.

- **Get to know the students**
 - Set aside extra time during your meetings solely to get to know the Recess Leaders.
 - Play a fun game or do an activity with the leaders to develop a relationship.
- **Refocus**
 - Make sure everyone is on the same page.
 - Allow leaders to ask questions.
 - Redefine responsibilities and commitments if necessary.
- **Resolve**
 - Have the students write anonymous notes about positive or negative things that they have observed and/or experienced. This will help the leaders to become more open with you. Also it will present any underlying issues within the group of leaders or The Recess Project in general. It is necessary to address any issues that come up, either one-on-one with the individuals involved (if specific people are mentioned), or in a group setting at the next meeting.

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Quick tip:

- Have fun!
 - Be organized.
 - Make sure issues are addressed early on, rather than ignored.
-

Volunteers (University Students, Parents etc.)

- The Recess Project trains and places volunteers into schools, to lead an array of team-building games and activities. Part of our mission is to bring the *community into the school*.
- All of our volunteers require an interview, a police and background check, and must complete our training session. Our training sessions are offered several times per year.

Possible Volunteers:

- University Students
- Community Members
- Sports Instructors
- High School Students
- Teachers
- Parents

University Students

The purpose of volunteer training is to provide an overall understanding of the mission and goal of The Recess Project, and the volunteer's part in reaching this goal. The training includes:

- **Getting to Know the School:** It is important to introduce the volunteers to the principals, secretaries and teachers. This is to ensure that the school staff is able to recognize the volunteers for the program. Furthermore, if there is a problem or emergency, the volunteers will be able to notify the appropriate school staff members. It is also helpful to provide the volunteers with a tour of the school, as it is important for the volunteers to become familiar and more comfortable with the school environment. During the tour, explain the procedures for entering and exiting the school, inform the volunteers of the school dress code, where they are able to leave their belongings, bathroom locations, and the location of the storage area for The Recess Project equipment.
- **Expectations:** Volunteers provide extra support and assistance, while participating in station games with the children. The volunteers can also fill in for any of the Recess Leaders that are unavailable. Walking around the schoolyard and encouraging children to join in one of the station games is also beneficial. During the children's lunch time, the volunteers are encouraged to spend time in the classrooms getting to know the children and determining what sorts of activities the kids would like to do during recess time.

Also, inform the volunteers about the appropriate school procedures for handling injuries at recess times.

- **Placements:** Some volunteers may be joining the Recess Project in order to fulfil course requirements or to gain volunteer hours. If volunteers need placements for a course requirement, ask them to contact the principal, vice principal or other staff member to arrange a placement, classroom volunteer opportunity etc. If the volunteers are collecting hours, make sure to keep track of the number of hours that they spend at the school.

Quick Tips:

- Be patient with volunteer orientation, as the volunteers will likely have many questions.
- Have a list of essential information ready to share with the new volunteers.
- Give yourself and the volunteers plenty of time outside of recess to explain the program and allow for questions.

Trainers

- The Trainers are students who have been a part of the program for five months and demonstrate excellent leadership abilities. These students often display strong commitment to the program, and are enthusiastic about informing the younger children about The Recess Project and its goals. Once the Junior Recess Leaders volunteer for 5 months, they are able to either continue as Senior Recess Leaders or become Trainers.
- Once a Junior Recess Leader becomes a Trainer, they are paired up with one or two Leaders in Training. The Trainers encourage the LITs to run the stations, and assist in preparing the LITs to become JRLs for the following year. The Trainers provide guidance and answer any questions that the LITs may have. The Trainers also take the LITs outside during primary recess, and explain how the stations work and what types of games could be played. The LITs are also shown positive problem solving skills and essential leadership qualities.
- Overall, the Trainers are expected to be positive role models for the primary children, as well as the Leaders in Training. The Trainers are also responsible for choosing the monthly character beads for their assigned LITs.

Quick Tips:

- The Trainers are required to encourage LITs to take part in leading stations and selecting games to play.
- The Trainers help LITs recognize signs of exclusion, bullying and other problematic behaviours found on the playground.
- Ensure that the Trainers are organized and have many game ideas/plans. This organization and structure will help the Trainers to educate the LITs in a more effective manner.
- Be sure to create a separate attendance sheet for the LITs to keep track of attendance and monthly commitments (see *The Recess Project Template & Exemplar Manual* for an example).
- Carefully monitor the Trainer and LIT groups to make sure there is no conflict present. This process is a bit of a power struggle, as the Trainers must give up some of their responsibilities, in order for the LITs to take charge and uphold new responsibilities.

Leaders in Training (LITs)

- The LITs are under the leadership of the Trainers. Under this leadership, they will begin to understand the program, and will slowly be given opportunities to assist in running station games and activities.
- The LITs are required to openly communicate and develop relationships with the primary students.
- These Leaders in Training will learn problem solving skills by monitoring their Trainer, and these skills will be an effective tool for alleviating conflicts that will arise in the schoolyard at recess. They will also be instructed on the procedures for handling injured children, or bullying situations.
- It is beneficial for the LITs to shadow the Trainer's positive role modelling and behaviours, in order to become effective Junior Recess Leaders the following year.

Quick Tips:

- Ensure that the LITs understand their position and the responsibilities that come along with the job.
- Often the LITs have difficulty focusing on their role, and enjoy spending time with their peers. Thus, it is important for the LITs to understand that being a leader is a responsibility, where they are required to spend time with the primary students, rather than their own friends.
- Do not overwhelm the LITs with too many recesses. One or two recesses a week is plenty, and this gives the leaders lots of time to spend with their peers, while also taking on leadership opportunities.

Helpful hints

- When holding meetings with leaders, prepare a list of what you would like to say to the students. This helps keep the meeting organized and focused.
- Breathe! It can be stressful to implement a new program but it is rewarding.
- It is best not to start trainees until January or February of the school year. Grade 4's are very enthusiastic about the program, but are not necessarily ready to commit regularly to a leadership position. Four months is plenty of time for them to be apart of the program, and this allows time for Trainers to become fully comfortable in their positions. This time period also lets you see who is truly committed to the program.
- Having an initial meeting with the principal or vice principal is an important part of the program, as building a closer relationship with the school staff will likely help lighten your load for implementing the program. This communication also helps to push schools towards implementing this program themselves, without outside assistance.
- Be sure to monitor the relationship between the Trainers and Trainees, especially if they are very close in age. It is also beneficial to provide Trainers with extra responsibilities, such as choosing the character beads for the Recess Leaders in Training.
- Be sure to set goals for yourself! Having definite goals, while implementing the program will help to keep you on track.