

Youth should get at least one hour of physical activity each day. But about 1/3 don't even get that much playtime. They are too busy sitting, hanging out, or interacting with a screen somewhere.

Our organization is committed to getting kids doing what they love most: play. Every kid loves to play, and we specialize in helping them play some of the greatest games ever.

Meanwhile, those playing kids are helping to solve the nation's obesity problem. And, they don't even know it. They're just having fun.

Problem 4: Us vs. Them

America is a divided place. It's often us vs. them. People divide by race, gender, clothing styles, class, and neighborhood. And these divisions can create hard feelings and conflict. But our differences can also make us stronger, richer, and more understanding, if we allow them to.

Playgrounds are divided places too. Three girls exclude a fourth who wants like everything to be their friend. A child with a disability is last to be chosen. Every time. A kid gets picked on for the way he runs. And the teasing is turned into a nickname that sticks—in the classroom, in the hallways and on the bus, for years.

At Lead2Play we believe the best way to break down social barriers between youth is play.

Play is a powerful thing. It is hard to hate someone you are laughing with. It is even harder to put down a teammate or someone you've had loads of fun with.

At play, we discover our common humanity. We all want to have fun. We all want to succeed. We all want to connect with others.

When youth play hard and play right, they create a connection. Play brings people together. And, before you know it, smiles and laughter melt prejudice away.

Conclusion

Well, what do you think now? Are we right? Can play solve some of our world's biggest problems? Because if your answer is yes, we would love for you to join us in the effort.

If you do, there is no question you'll be making the world a better place. And, you'll make yourself a better human, with greater confidence and much improved leadership skills. So come on, let's use the power of play to make a better world!

Can you see it?

Do you want to be there right now?

Sure you do. Who doesn't love recess?

Well, lots of adults and not so few kids too.

Listen, there is a reason most adults avoid recess. There is a reason why teachers on duty can't wait for play at recess or lunch to be over.

Stand and watch a large playground in action for just 30 minutes and you'll see what we're talking about. Two kids are yelling at each other over the disputed score of the handball game they are playing. A boy is being mocked because he's too slow or uncoordinated. A child is sitting alone on a bench, sadly bowing her head. She has no one to play with. Farther out, away from adult eyes, we see a big kid throwing another child to the ground: outright bullying.

Play is a powerful thing, but uncontrolled, unorganized play can cause conflict galore.

And, that's the second big problem that Lead2Play can solve. Our programs promote fun, healthy play. We make sure all kids are included. In fact, we often lead games where the score doesn't matter at all. Youth play just for the fun of it.

By creating safe and supportive play opportunities, we eliminate the dangers of unorganized play. We help kids resolve conflicts by agreeing to disagree, compromising, or talking it out. And as a result, we teach life lessons kids can take from the playground right into the rest of their lives.

Problem 3: Childhood Obesity

Kids are bigger than ever. And that's not a good thing. Since 1980, childhood obesity rates have tripled. Obese youth are more likely to experience serious health issues. They get diabetes or asthma, both illnesses that can result in a lifetime of costly medical challenges.

In fact, obesity costs the U.S. \$190 billion dollars every year.

Now, that really is a big problem. And that's where Lead2Play comes in.

Youth should get at least one hour of physical activity each day. But about 1/3 don't even get that much playtime. They are too busy sitting, hanging out, or interacting with a screen somewhere.

At Lead2Play, we believe play is a very powerful thing. In fact, we think play can solve some of our world's biggest problems. Does that sound silly to you? Is play really that powerful? Well, let's take a look—one big problem at a time.

Problem 1: Lack of Genuine Leadership Opportunities for Youth

Organized youth sports have grown dramatically in the last 25 years. So youth get told how to play from the time they are tiny. In fact, they get told how to do just about everything. Parents tell kids what to do at home, teachers tell them what to do at school, and coaches tell them what to do on the playing field.

Here's what we think: all of that telling misses an incredible opportunity to develop young people. Because, as it turns out, the playground is the perfect place to learn to be a leader.

At Lead2Play, we empower youth to organize and lead play—with younger kids or with peers at their own school or nearby.

Youth can lead. And they can do so effectively, as long as they have the right support and structure.

So, our mission is to lead kids to move and move kids to lead.

That's why Lead2Play is first and foremost a leadership-training program. We teach young people everything from conflict resolution to public speaking skills to leadership fundamentals. And the training occurs in a place where kids are doing what they love most.

Play.

Problem 2: Playground Problems

When most of us think of playgrounds, our minds are flooded with pictures of happy, joyful children—running, jumping, climbing, chasing, and squealing with delight.

The sun is shining, grass gleaming, and the playground might just be the finest place on earth.