

**PlayCore Scholar Series**  
**Session 3: Bringing Play Opportunities to ALL Kids through Play Streets**  
**Aug 12, 2020**  
**Attendee Questions**

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***1. How do you fund Play Streets in communities? Are their funding resources that organizations and local jurisdictions can apply for to support great programs like this?***

Dr. Pollock Porter: Maybe I'll just jump in and start. I'm sure, Renee, and we'd love to hear from Micah too actually, because of some funding, our people, were issues, actually started without any money. You know, we were very fortunate to have some flexible funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to be able to give each of these organizations \$6000, Was the amount everybody got, and you, and so you might think that's a lot of money. Some people think, Oh, I thought it was way more expensive than that. Everybody got \$6000 to purchase the sort of permanent equipment and supplies, used to rent things, or even provide volunteers. Some of our groups were creative and actually did some fundraising from local philanthropy or local partners and community partners to get donations. That was one way of getting some resources, but we also are people would also bring things together that they had, you know, so people brought some balls or jump ropes or hula hoops. We also had the good fortune of evaluating the play streets model that's been lifted up in Chicago. And so, learning from other cities, we see that people sort of come together and pool resources, but having asked us to, like, foundation funding has been useful. I'll pause and see if Renee or Micah have anything to add to that.

Micah Holcombe: Yes, I think one of the things I would say is, if you don't have those funding opportunities available, is maybe work with partnering with all the community organizations in your community, and your county. And so like our AgriLife Extension Service, we have an agent, every single county, and so partnering with your local AgriLife Extension Service or also in another state or another site. There are extension services there. Your local government is a great opportunity, there's sometimes funding there. Also WIC local, WIC and health departments have funding for educational purposes, though I'm just, you know, bringing those organizations together to see where you can help out.

Dr. Umstattd Meyer: Building on what Micah was saying, libraries often have physical activity resources that can be checked out. And I think it's partly identifying who in your town, or your area, is already in your play/physical activity corner, and coming together and saying, OK, well, what can we do? And if I don't have this piece then, I can bring some People Power if you bring play some equipment.

And I would say the other thing that was a phenomenal Micah, as with Cameron County was kind of two things, and I'm going to make sure that it was our debrief in our second year, the superintendent principle, and the county chose the newly elected county job, which were in attendance. And by the end of that meeting, the county judges, like, oh, if you need money, you should just ask. I'm like, oh, and some partnership can come out of that. And it was just Micah sharing her experience. I wasn't her planning that meeting to ask for money, but realizing that it's a positive thing in the community, And from that standpoint. Our Maryland Community's Health District realized that kind of idea that they could add weight to the things they were already doing, and so they had some internal

funding. There's kind of an *aha* moment of, wow, I didn't know to be that easy to add, like, a mini Play Street, or a smaller play straight to the stuff we're already doing. And we have some of the equipment, or be easy to get some of the extra equipment, just to do that.

Dr. Pollock Porter: To follow up on Rene's point, the second year, we give everybody \$500, I think, right. So, you know, ultimately, the first year, people were able to use the funds to buy some of those, the balls and the other equipment that they needed, and then we realize that the 500 was really that sweet spot and give people enough to write inflatables from that one, that one place that they were doing or to buy some additional things that they might need food or drinks for other things.

## ***2. Did the school cover the water bill?***

Micah Holcombe: We are a school. We had it at our school. And so therefore, the school did not have a problem with hooking up to the water right there. So we didn't actually have to worry about a water bill or a water. We just hooked up to the school, and they were fine with that. So, no water bills.

Dr. Umstadd Meyer: And I think one of our other communities that had water, it was that our parks and rec work, and they use water and parks so, we didn't get charged for it. Right?

## ***3. Are there liability issues to consider when using inflatables?***

Dr. Umstadd Meyer: I will say, from our experience, we, because I was a research grant and that loop through Johns Hopkins, all of our organizations had to have liability insurance. And so that's something that right modeled off of Chicago is also required, kind of from a big liability standpoint. So all of our organizations, have some version of our insurance already in place, or working with kids in public spaces.

So, I'll start, there are different from what was being asked. But I think Inflatables piece comes up in tech has come up in several of our conversations, but we do have some different things around in the guidebook itself, around liability, and so some in Texas, you heard Micah talk about the heat of the inflatables and being aware. So there's some things around putting inflatables in the shade. That might be more of a southern thing, because it was definitely chilly up in Maryland, one of the play streets that I went to, which was completely opposite to Texas. But also, this idea of where you have cords running to the generators and trying to make sure that there aren't extra tripping hazards from that. We also had, we had volunteer monitors at all of our play streets that looked different in each community in some of our communities that was a staff from the inflatable company that actually was next to the inflatables monitoring the kids going in and out.

Then in Texas and in, well, gosh, maybe I was only in Oklahoma where that occurred, and our other three locations, it was actually volunteers that were around the inflatables monitoring. And so one of the things that Micah actually recognized in her Play Streets was having a space for the little kids that was separate from the big kids. And so, that if there were, was an inflatable and what we saw at another place occur was, do you have, like, a time you switch it on and off of when the little kids are going on versus the vacant? So we So those are some of the pieces that were around there. We do kind of skill and recognize

that, there are definitely risk with all play and Keisha. Please chime in if there was something that you were wanting me to mention that I didn't just highlight.

Dr. Pollock Porter: I'll just add that we also monitored injuries to me to see if there were, I mean, I'm trained as an injury epidemiologist, and we thought about safety, and as when he said, this has come up for us. I think that the strategy of separating kids by age and ability worked out well, and it was a Maryland site also has a vendor, stay there as well, as a requirement. As Renée said, we partnered with Teens Lab Solutions, which is a public health, a legal organization, and they actually did some specific sector liability. So, that's a concern that people raise, but it actually ended up not being as serious as we thought. We guide provides a very clear language about liability that you'll find helpful.

Dr. Umstatted Meyer: And I would just chime in, thank you, Keisha, for those details that, um, we, all of our sites had first aid kits and sunscreen and water and bug spray. Those were some things that are around us, those pieces and really, our injuries that we had documented across, was we had a skinned knee at Texas. and then, one of our, one of our evaluation team members. So, it wasn't even our kids other than that. We didn't have a second, I think if there was any.

Micah Holcombe: And we actually forgot our First Aid Kit on our end, and so we were glad y'all brought it on yours. And so the story, we had a second first aid kit, so we have extra just to make sure that we did learn, learn from that. And we also, on the labels, like you were saying, we did have volunteers or parents that watch them inflatables and since we had two inflatables we did a little kids inflatable and a bigger kids or switch off the times.

**4. *Do you suggest creating permanent play destination to use as play area, or is there an advantage to more mobile resources for Play Streets?***

Dr. Umstatted Meyer: I'm going to say both, that's where I'm going to land with that, but I think that there's a that both help get to all kids and our families in a different way. And depending on what a community looks like, that's not a yes, or no. Sorry for whoever asked that question.

Dr. Pollock Porter: Yeah, yeah, both, depends on the community. Totally agree with Renee. Yeah, you just want to have a kids. We want to really think about accessibility.

Micah Holcombe: I do think mobile on my end, just because you can go to different events throughout my community and hit a lot of different events, so making it mobile and able to do all over the place is great.

**5. *Most of the focus today has been on child physical activity. Do you have any suggestions to encourage teen or adult activity?***

Micah Holcombe: Yes, we, at the one that I was talking about earlier, we have the community- wide cook out. In our community, we coupled it and the actual school provided hot dogs and chips to all the families in the school district, and they do it in the neighborhoods. So, what we did there, we provide the footballs. And, Frisbees, those were the huge things for teens, especially the footballs, the kids. The teens really love those. So,

having our volleyball, football things that they're doing in sports. So, that's the main thing and it's fun because it's simple stuff for the teens. The teens really like that. And also they liked the music.

Dr. Pollock Porter: Yeah. We saw some teens serving as volunteers. Right. And so, they, were, you know, at the at the inflatable. You know, sort of eyes on the equipment and playing with the kids. I think that was, the thing, I think, was really impactful for me, is seeing how much the adults and teens and guardians were active as they were engaging with the kids around the play activities.

Micah Holcombe: my actual teens, we have NHS our, so National Honor Society. We also have a scholarship program that our kids need, community service hours. So we had three sets of kids that need a community service hours. So it was a great way to provide them what they needed during the summer before school got busy. So they were all about helping out and they are great with playing with the kids. Even that, the potato sack races, they love that.

Dr. Umstatted Meyer: I would say that the little kids loved playing, getting to engage and play with the bigger kids, the teens, and adults, even if it wasn't their own family members. And that, the other thing that I'd say along those lines that we heard, and that we think there would have been a third year of us thinking through is, I would say, take some time to talk to the teens in your town. As get a hold of a few of them and say, hey, what is it that you would want to do? If you aren't helping out playing with kids, and you're wanting to do something, isn't the sports or for the girls, is it something else? If there's some sort of, like, walk and talk thing that you can help permit. We had a color run at one of our 5K and another one of our base rates, different communities. And so I think one of the things that all of our communities data, to different extents Well, let's get feedback and hear from the kids, the teens, what they would want to do in the parents.

**6. *Where will the recording be located?***

Russ: In follow-up email sent to all registrants and attendees. Can also access here: <https://www.playcore.com/events/playcore-scholar-series>

**7. *Will COVID and Play Streets be addressed? Any examples of getting kids outside during COVID?***

Russ: Yes, the possibilities of Play Streets during COVID-19 addressed in last few slides by Dr. Umstatted Meyer, along with wonderful examples.

**8. *Does anyone on site for each event have First Aid/CPR training?***

Micah Holcombe: We did not. However, we provided first aid kits for those who got hurt. It would not be a bad idea to have some one there who had these trainings.

**9. *Micah, with all this great experience and insight you've had organizing Play Streets, what would be one thing you would go back and tell yourself before implementation OR what is one thing you wish you knew before implementation?***

Micah Holcombe: I would say to keep it simple and not overthink the activities for the youth. Many of them are happy with just a football, frisbee, or another simple item/ball.

The other items and activities are great but sometimes simple items are the best and the kids have a blast just having the opportunity to play. One more thing would be to plan and buy items at the end of the summer before you do your Play Streets the next summer. The items are so much less expensive, and you can get more for your money.

***10. If looking to implement Play streets, what would you say should be their very first step?***

Micah Holcombe: Determine the who, what, where, and when. Who will you work with (partners and collaborators)? Who will be your volunteers? Who will contribute money toward your event? Where will you have it and is it safe and free to hold the event there? Where- are you planning it with other events? Where- is there plenty of shade available? When is the best time to have your event- summer or all year? When- can you hold it with other summer programs to maximize your audience and attendance? When- is the temperature too hot during that time?

Drs. Pollock Porter and Umstattd Meyer: We would say to check out our guide, but to also start looking for partnerships. Partnering with others in your community looking to promote safe play opportunities is a great way to pool resources and make Play Streets more accessible and beneficial for the whole community.

***11. Are their adaptations to consider for implementing Play Streets during school breaks or holidays, particularly for cold weather climates?***

Drs. Pollock Porter and Umstattd Meyer: Communities have held Play Streets in colder weather. The biggest precaution is to remind the parents to dress for the weather if you are holding it outside as well as having a potential spot close by to warm up like a library. Otherwise some communities have used policies like shared use agreements for community organizations to use gyms or indoor facilities.

Micah Holcombe: I have done my event with the community wide cookout held during a school holiday and it was great. I did scale it down and only brought items that were easy to transport (ie footballs, frisbees, bean bag toss game, etc) I would say to make sure you implement it with another event to make sure you have the audience. We do not have many cold days or climates so I am not sure on this one however I would look for gyms to do it in a cold climate.

***12. What other places or spaces can be “activated” through the use of Play streets?***

Micah Holcombe: I think you can easily do it at a park, playground, gym, or any place you have space and a safe place to play for families! This program is so easy to adapt and work with!

Drs. Pollock Porter and Umstattd Meyer: Aside from the street, Play Streets can activate any freely accessible space that can have activity. We have seen parking lots, parks, library property, church yards, and outside of community centers. All of these areas may have been present but not activated or used for active play. Play Streets provided an opportunity for children to safely be active in these areas.

