



PLAY ACADEMY
FOUNDATION

CHARACTER CURRICULUM

The PLAY Standard

Curriculum Value Map and Delivery Architecture

Character Curriculum for Neighborhood Sport and Recreation Programming

Document 1 of 12 | Version 1.0

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Purpose of This Document

This document is the master index of The PLAY Standard. It establishes the thirty-six values that make up the core curriculum, the pillar each value belongs to, the order in which values are taught, and the scheduling models a community can use to deliver them.

It is the approval document. Once the value list and the teaching order are approved, every other document in the curriculum set is built against this index and will not change without a revision to this file.

This document does not contain lesson text. Full lesson content for each value, written for all three age bands, is contained in the four pillar documents.

The Curriculum Set

Document	Contents
1. Curriculum Value Map	This document. The 36-value index, teaching order, scheduling models, and the brand and structure standards.
2. Pillar One: Perseverance	Nine full lessons, each written for Sprouts, Climbers, and Summit.
3. Pillar Two: Leadership	Nine full lessons across all three age bands.
4. Pillar Three: Attitude	Nine full lessons across all three age bands.
5. Pillar Four: YOU	Nine full lessons across all three age bands.
6. Net Sports	Tennis, pickleball, volleyball. Sport specifications and all 36 lessons adapted.
7. Invasion Sports	Soccer, basketball, flag football. Sport specifications and all 36 lessons adapted.
8. Self-Referenced Sports	Swimming, running and track. Sport specifications, safety standard, and all 36 lessons adapted.
9. Movement Foundation	Ages 3 to 6. Fundamental movement skills, and the lessons adapted for pre-sport delivery.
10. Cross-Curricular Integration	Health literacy, applied academics, community awareness, cultural literacy.
11. Coach Handbook	Running the frame, naming a moment, common mistakes, resistance, difficult parents, escalation.
12. Research Foundations	The evidence base and every source behind the curriculum, for grant and board use.

Documents 6 through 9 are organized by tactical family rather than one document per sport. Sports within a family share the same character moments because they share the same structure of play, which means a coach who moves from tennis to pickleball recognizes the frame rather than relearning it.

Superseded numbering. Earlier drafts described a six-document set. That structure was expanded once the sport portfolio grew to nine sports and once the research base was scoped as a separate deliverable. Documents 1 through 5 are unchanged in content and numbering.

The Framework

Every session teaches a sport skill and a life skill. The sport is the vehicle. The life lesson is the cargo.

The PLAY Standard does not add a character segment to an athletic session. It runs character instruction through the athletic session, using moments that occur naturally in play as the teaching material. A coach does not stop practice to talk about perseverance. A coach watches for perseverance during practice and names it out loud when it happens.

This is what makes the curriculum deliverable by a working coach rather than a classroom instructor, and what makes it transferable across every sport Play Academy Foundation programs into a community.

The Four Pillars

Pillar	Domain	The Question It Answers
P — Perseverance	Effort, resilience, growth mindset, handling failure	What do I do when it is hard?
L — Leadership	Responsibility, initiative, teamwork, accountability	What do I owe the people around me?
A — Attitude	Respect, sportsmanship, manners, gratitude, emotional control	How do I carry myself?
Y — YOU	Identity, confidence, health literacy, personal goals, self-awareness	Who am I becoming?

The Three Age Bands

Every value is taught to every age band. What changes is the cognitive demand, not the value.

Band	Ages	Instructional Mode
Sprouts	3 to 7	Concrete and story-based. One word per lesson. The word is repeated, chanted, and pointed at. Abstraction is avoided entirely.
Climbers	8 to 12	Situational and discussion-based. Framed as "what would you do if." Children compare their own behavior to the standard.
Summit	13 to 17	Abstract and reflective. Peer-led discussion, journaling, and mentorship of younger bands. Athletes examine their own patterns.

The Five-Minute Frame

The instructional frame is identical in every session, every sport, and every age band. Total dedicated character instruction time is under nine minutes. Everything else is play.

1. Huddle In — 3 minutes. The coach introduces the day's value in one sentence and asks one question.
2. Play — 40 to 50 minutes. The sport session runs normally. The coach watches for one live moment.
3. Call It Out — during play. The coach names the moment in real time, out loud, using the child's name.
4. Huddle Out — 5 minutes. Children name moments they saw. The children talk; the coach does not.
5. Carry It Home — 30 seconds. One small challenge to complete before the next session.

Delivery Architecture

Thirty-six lessons are designed to map onto one lesson per session. How those thirty-six sessions are sequenced depends on the community's program structure. Three approved models follow. A community selects one model per program and holds it for the full term.

Model A — Pillar Block (Recommended)

Structure: Nine consecutive sessions per pillar, taught in order P, L, A, Y across thirty-six sessions.

Best for: Year-round neighborhood programs with a stable roster and weekly sessions.

Why it works: Nine consecutive weeks inside one pillar produces depth. Children begin using the pillar's language with each other by roughly the fourth session, which is when the curriculum starts to hold without coach prompting.

Watch for: Roster turnover mid-block means new children arrive in the middle of a theme. The Coach Handbook covers the mid-block entry script.

Model B — Rotation

Structure: One lesson from each pillar in turn, cycling P, L, A, Y, P, L, A, Y for thirty-six sessions.

Best for: Drop-in programming, open community sessions, and rosters where attendance is inconsistent.

Why it works: Any child attending any four consecutive sessions encounters all four pillars. No child leaves the program having only heard about one domain.

Watch for: Less depth per pillar. Coaches must reintroduce pillar language more often.

Model C — Season Core (Twelve Sessions)

Structure: Lessons 1, 2, and 3 from each pillar, taught P1 through P3, L1 through L3, A1 through A3, Y1 through Y3.

Best for: Twelve-week seasonal sessions, summer camps, and pilot programs.

Why it works: The first three lessons of each pillar are the foundational values of that pillar. A child completing Model C has received the load-bearing content of the entire standard.

Watch for: Communities that repeat Model C season after season should advance to lessons 4 through 6 in the second season and 7 through 9 in the third rather than repeating the core.

Who Selects the Model

The delivery model is set per community by Foundation programming staff at the time the community is onboarded, not by the individual coach and not by the community association. Model A, Pillar Block, is the default and is used unless the community's program structure makes it unworkable. A coach arriving at a community inherits the model already selected for it.

Changing a community's model mid-term is a programming decision, not a coaching one. Communities that need a different model should be moved at the start of the next term so that no child is left partway through a pillar.

Repetition Across Program Years

The curriculum is designed to be repeated. A child in a neighborhood program may encounter the same thirty-six values in three consecutive years, and in two cases will cross into a new age band while doing so. That is the intent. The value does not change; the child's capacity to understand it does.

Coaches running a repeat cycle with the same roster should teach the same lesson from the next age band up where the group is developmentally ready, and should hand the Huddle Out to returning children who have heard the lesson before.

The Thirty-Six Values

Values are numbered by pillar and position. The number is the teaching order within the pillar, not a ranking of importance. Order within each pillar moves from the most concrete and immediately observable value to the most internal and self-directed.

Pillar P — Perseverance

The question it answers: What do I do when it is hard?

Perseverance is taught first because it is the pillar a child needs in order to survive the other three. A child who cannot tolerate difficulty will not stay long enough to learn leadership.

No.	Value	One-Sentence Definition
P1	Effort	Effort is the part of any result you fully control.
P2	Trying Again	The time between a failure and your next attempt is where resilience lives.
P3	Mistakes	A mistake tells you what to adjust. It does not tell you who you are.
P4	Finishing	Finishing is a skill, and it is practiced at the end of hard things.
P5	Hard Things	Difficulty is not evidence of failure. It is the condition under which you improve.
P6	Patience	Progress is real long before it is visible.
P7	Courage	Courage is acting while the fear of looking bad is still present.
P8	Focus	Attention is a trainable skill and the first thing you lose when you are tired.
P9	Consistency	The athlete who shows up on ordinary days beats the one who is brilliant occasionally.

Pillar L — Leadership

The question it answers: What do I owe the people around me?

Leadership is taught second because it converts an individual who can endure into a person others can rely on. It begins with responsibility for objects and space before it reaches responsibility for people.

No.	Value	One-Sentence Definition
L1	Responsibility	You are responsible for your equipment, your space, and your own readiness.
L2	Initiative	Leaders move before they are asked.
L3	Teamwork	Your job is to make the person next to you more effective.
L4	Accountability	Own the mistake out loud, then fix it. Excuses cost you more than errors do.
L5	Encouragement	Naming what someone did well is a leadership act, not a courtesy.
L6	Communication	Say it early, say it clearly, say it loud enough to be useful.
L7	Service	Do the work nobody sees and nobody thanks you for.
L8	Integrity	Play by the rules when no one is watching and the call would go your way.
L9	Influence	You set the tone of a group whether or not you intended to.

Pillar A — Attitude

The question it answers: How do I carry myself?

Attitude is taught third because it is the most publicly visible pillar and the one parents notice first. It is also where a coach has the most immediate corrective leverage.

No.	Value	One-Sentence Definition
A1	Respect	Respect is shown to coaches, opponents, officials, facilities, and equipment alike.
A2	Sportsmanship	Win in a way that does not cost the other person their dignity. Lose in a way that does not cost you yours.
A3	Manners	Greetings, eye contact, please, and thank you are trained skills, not personality traits.
A4	Gratitude	Someone paid for, drove to, cleaned, and organized this. Say so.
A5	Emotional Control	You will not control the feeling. You are responsible for what you do next.
A6	Response	The event is fixed. Your response is the only variable, and it is entirely yours.
A7	Inclusion	The measure of a group is how it treats the person who is least like everyone else.
A8	Listening	Listening is what you do instead of waiting to talk.
A9	Energy	The energy you bring is a gift to the group or a tax on it.

Pillar Y — YOU

The question it answers: Who am I becoming?

YOU is taught last because it requires the vocabulary built by the first three pillars. A child cannot examine their own patterns until they have language for effort, responsibility, and response.

No.	Value	One-Sentence Definition
Y1	Identity	You are not your last result. You are the person who decides what happens next.
Y2	Confidence	Confidence is evidence you have collected about yourself, not a feeling you wait for.
Y3	Fuel	What you eat is the material your body builds itself out of.
Y4	Rest	Sleep is when the training you did actually becomes ability.
Y5	Body	Movement, water, and breath are the maintenance schedule for the only body you get.
Y6	Goals	A goal you have not written down or said out loud is a wish.
Y7	Self-Awareness	Know what sets you off, what settles you down, and what you are actually good at.
Y8	Honesty	The person hardest to be honest with is the one in the mirror.
Y9	Balance	Your attention is finite. Spend it where it builds you.

Progression Logic

The order of the pillars and the order of values within each pillar are deliberate. The reasoning is recorded here so that future revisions do not undo it accidentally.

Why the Pillars Run in This Order

- Perseverance first, because it is the retention pillar. A child who cannot tolerate difficulty leaves the program before the rest of the curriculum can reach them.
- Leadership second, because it converts individual endurance into contribution, and because it is the pillar that changes group behavior fastest once a few children adopt it.
- Attitude third, because it requires the emotional regulation that the first two pillars have begun to build. Sportsmanship taught to a child with no perseverance is a rule, not a value.
- YOU last, because self-examination requires vocabulary. The first three pillars supply the words a child needs to describe their own patterns.

Why the Values Run in This Order Within Each Pillar

Within every pillar, positions 1 through 3 are observable behaviors, positions 4 through 6 are habits, and positions 7 through 9 are internal dispositions. A coach can see effort in the first session. A coach cannot see consistency until several sessions have passed.

Positions	Type	What the Coach Is Watching For
1 to 3	Observable behaviors	Discrete actions visible within a single session.
4 to 6	Habits	Patterns visible across several sessions.
7 to 9	Internal dispositions	Choices a child makes when the coach is not looking.

This is also why Model C, the twelve-session season core, uses positions 1 through 3 of each pillar. Short programs should teach what a coach can actually observe and name inside the time available.

Cross-Pillar Connections

Several values deliberately echo across pillars. Coaches should name the connection when it appears rather than treating each lesson as isolated.

- P1 Effort and A9 Energy are the same choice viewed privately and publicly.
- P3 Mistakes and L4 Accountability are the same event handled internally and then socially.
- A5 Emotional Control and Y7 Self-Awareness are the same capacity in the moment and in reflection.
- P9 Consistency and Y6 Goals are the mechanism and the destination.

Brand Application Standard

Every document, handout, and screen produced under The PLAY Standard uses the Play Academy Foundation brand kit. The specifications below govern the curriculum set and should be applied to any material a coach, volunteer, or partner produces on the Foundation’s behalf.

Color

Role	Hex	Where It Is Used
PAF Navy	#0B1929	All headings, the logo mark, table header text, and bold inline labels.
PAF Green	#27C97A	Graphic elements only: the title rule, bullet glyphs, pull-quote bars, and the logo.
Deep Green	#12784A	Age-band labels and small caps text, where the primary green would fail print legibility.
Body Ink	#1F2A33	Running text.
Muted	#5F6B75	Coach notes, headers, footers, and secondary detail.
Hairline	#D6DDE3	Rules, dividers, and table borders.
Green Tint	#EAF7F0	Table header fill.

Pillar Colors

Live Mode in the coach application requires four pillar identities a coach can distinguish in under three seconds while a session is running. The brand kit defines navy and green only, so the palette is extended here. These four are an approved extension of the Play Academy Foundation brand kit and are the only pillar colors permitted in any Foundation material.

	Pillar	Display	Text-Safe	Rationale
	P — Perseverance	#27C97A	#12784A	The brand green. Growth, and the pillar the curriculum opens with.
	L — Leadership	#2B7FC4	#1B5A90	Signal blue. Steadiness and obligation to the group.
	A — Attitude	#E2A03C	#9A6412	Amber. Warmth and how a person carries themselves.
	Y — YOU	#8B5FA8	#5F3C77	Plum. Interiority and the individual.

- All four sit at the same saturation and weight so that they read as one family rather than four separate brands.
- Navy remains chrome. Pillar color is applied to identity bands, headers, and accents, never to running text.
- Color is never the only identifier. The pillar letter — P, L, A, or Y — is always present alongside the color, so the system holds for a color-blind coach and in black-and-white print.

- The text-safe variant is used wherever the color must carry words. The display variant is for fills, bars, and graphic elements only.

Print note. PAF Green is a display color. It is never used for body text at any size. Where green must carry words, Deep Green is substituted so that printed handouts remain legible in black and white and on low-quality community printers.

Logo Usage

- The stacked lockup appears once per document, centered on the title page, at approximately two inches wide.
- The color mark appears in the running header of every interior page at twelve pixels, paired with the document title.
- The horizontal lockup is used for landscape materials, certificates, and any piece wider than it is tall.
- Reversed lockups are used only on navy or photographic backgrounds. Never place the standard lockup on a dark field.
- The mark is never stretched, recolored, outlined, or rotated, and never appears without clear space equal to the height of the house roofline on all sides.

Typography

Element	Treatment
Document title	Georgia bold, 26 point, PAF Navy, centered.
Chapter and lesson headings	Georgia bold, 15 point, PAF Navy.
Section headings	Georgia bold, 12.5 point, PAF Navy.
Age-band labels	Calibri bold, 10.5 point, Deep Green, all caps.
Inline field labels	Calibri bold, 10.5 point, PAF Navy, followed by regular body text on the same line.
Body text	Calibri, 10.5 point, Body Ink.
Coach notes	Calibri, 9.5 point, Muted.

Georgia and Calibri are the print set. They are used because every coach, community manager, and grant reviewer can open these documents without a font installation, and because both remain legible when printed at reduced size and carried on a court.

The Screen Set

The print set was chosen for print constraints that do not apply to software shipping its own fonts. The coach application and any future Foundation product may use a screen-native pairing instead, subject to one constraint: it must hold the voice. That means a serif for headings with the character of the wordmark, and a humanist sans for body text at screen sizes. The type scale, the hierarchy, and the use of bold inline labels carry over unchanged. A geometric or condensed display face, or a body face without true italics, is outside the standard.

Document Structure Contract

The curriculum documents are the source of truth for the coach application. The application reads these files directly and keeps no separate copy, so the structure below is a contract rather than a style preference.

Revising a lesson means editing the document and rebuilding. Changing the structure means breaking the import.

- Each lesson begins with a Heading 1 in the exact form "Lesson <code> — <name>", where the code is one of P1 through Y9.
- Two labeled lines follow, in order: "The Standard." and "Why this lesson exists."
- Three age-band sections follow, in order, each a Heading 3: Sprouts, Climbers, Summit, each carrying its age range after a vertical bar.
- Within a band, labeled lines appear in fixed order: "Word of the Day." (Sprouts only), "Framing.", "Huddle-In Question.", the Heading 4 "Moments to Watch For" followed by exactly three bullets, "Huddle-Out Prompt.", and "Carry It Home."
- Framing, Huddle-In Question, Huddle-Out Prompt, and Carry It Home are enclosed in quotation marks because they are scripts the coach speaks. The Standard and the moments are not, because they are written for the coach.
- Every pillar document carries a Coach Notes section containing Delivery Errors, When a Child Resists, and Talking to Parents. The delivery errors are enforceable standards, not commentary, and should be treated as such by any system reading these files.

Structure Contract: Family Documents

Documents 6 through 9 carry a structure the importer depends on just as load-bearing as the pillar documents' own. A formatting change in any of the following breaks the import silently at the family level.

- The subtitle on the title page is the sport list for that family, written as a plain series — for example, Soccer, Basketball, and Flag Football. This is where the importer reads which sports a family document covers. Sports are named there, not in crosswalk headings.
- Lesson headings inside a family document are Heading 2 in the exact form "<code> — <name>", for example "P1 — Effort". The word Lesson does not appear. That distinguishes a family entry from a pillar lesson, which does carry the word Lesson at Heading 1.
- Pillar section headings inside a family document are Heading 1 in the form "Pillar <letter> — <name> in <Family>", and begin a new page.
- Exactly three annotation labels are used, always bold and always ending in a period: "Across the bands.", "In this family.", "Sport variant." The first two are present on all thirty-six lessons in every family document. The third appears only where one sport genuinely differs, and always names that sport.
- A launch gate is detected by the heading pair "Part One: The <Sport> Safety Standard" and, within it, "Standard Five: The Community Launch Checklist" followed by a numbered list. Each numbered item is one gate condition. Any family document may declare a gate this way; only Document 8 currently does.
- Document 9 is deliberately shaped differently. It covers one age band and no sport, so it carries no sport variant field at all, and its first annotation label is "Three versus six." rather than "Across the bands." Its second label, "In this family.", is unchanged.

Why labels rather than position. The importer keys on label text, not on order of appearance, so a lesson missing an optional field does not shift the meaning of the fields around it. Changing a label is therefore a breaking change requiring a coordinated update. Adding a lesson is not.

Document Furniture

- US Letter, portrait, with margins of one inch left and right and 0.82 inch top and bottom.
- Running header on every interior page: brand mark at the left, document title in muted small caps at the right, hairline rule beneath.
- Running footer on every page: the Foundation name, a green divider, the curriculum name, and the page number at the right.
- One lesson per page. A coach must never turn a page in the middle of a lesson.
- No emojis, no decorative icons, and no stock photography anywhere in the curriculum set.

Approval Checklist

Before the remaining curriculum documents are built against this index, confirm the following.

6. The thirty-six values are the right thirty-six. Any value that should be added, removed, or renamed should be identified now.
7. The one-sentence definitions carry the intended meaning and the intended tone.
8. The teaching order within each pillar is correct.
9. The pillar order P, L, A, Y is correct as a teaching sequence and not only as an acronym.
10. The three delivery models cover the program structures Play Academy Foundation expects to operate in year one.
11. The lesson format demonstrated in the Perseverance pillar document is the format to be used for all thirty-six lessons.
12. The brand application standard reflects the approved Play Academy Foundation brand kit, including the four-color pillar extension and the screen type set.
13. The document structure contract is correct, since the coach application reads these files directly and any structural change breaks the import.

Play Academy Foundation, Inc. is a national nonprofit that brings professional sports, wellness, and recreation programming directly into the neighborhoods where children live. Programming is delivered under contract by Play Academy, whose certified coaches serve residential communities across thirteen states.

Roughly half of American high school students attend no physical education in a given week, and fewer than three in ten attend daily, against a national recommendation of daily physical education. That deficit has held for thirty years. It is entrenched rather than worsening, which is precisely why it requires a permanent community intervention rather than patience.