

Helping children return to play – coaches' key role in the nation's recovery

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For many families, this week feels like the first real step forward out of 'lockdown' as thousands of children return to school.

The environment for the children who are able to return may be very different but the fact that they are back amongst their friends is to be celebrated.

Teachers have done a great job in supporting key worker children over the past two months and they are to be congratulated in adapting so well to the challenges of the national emergency.

Many people may not be aware that **a number of coaches have also continued to deliver sport and physical activity sessions in some schools during lockdown.**

Adapting to the latest advice, these **community heroes** have kept a number of our children active and should be recognised for the fantastic work that they have done. They know what has worked safely and how they can do more to deliver physical activity to children of a school-age both in and out of school hours.

As more children now return to school, parents and teachers should be encouraged to support coaches to deliver sport and physical activity within their communities.

Play will be hugely important for children in dealing with the effects of ten weeks of lockdown. Whilst coaches have provided a strong online presence for young people to keep active and connected, it is now time for coaches to start supporting young people to adjust to the changing circumstances of a phased return. **A positive coaching environment is the best way for children to return to play safely and enjoy socialising with others.**

There is likely to be some nervousness from coaches upon their return, particularly if they have vulnerable people in their household or they themselves are classed as high-risk, but having seen the sense of community across the coaching family over the last two months, it is important coaches receive all the help and support they need to plan effectively and create positive coaching environments which are safe, fun and enjoyable for all.

Don't forget to contribute to the ConnectedCoaches thread on ['how coaching whilst maintaining social distancing will work for you'](#). Additionally, if you register at ukcoaching.org you can download [two new infographics containing questions to help you plan for your return to coaching](#).

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