



## Doctoral Student Assistantship Positions Available Fall 2026 | University of Tennessee, Knoxville



**Dr. Kip Webster** and **Dr. Dawn Coe**, co-directors of the Move + Play Laboratory in the Department of Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport Studies at the **University of Tennessee, Knoxville**, are seeking highly motivated doctoral students for **Fall 2026**. The lab conducts cutting-edge research on motor skill competency, physical activity, outdoor play, and cognitive development in childhood, utilizing diverse settings to promote lifelong health by emphasizing motor skill acquisition and fostering healthy activity behaviors. The MOVE + PLAY Lab offers exceptional training opportunities for doctoral students passionate about advancing pediatric health and development through movement and play, providing hands-on research experience, close mentorship, and opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and scholarly dissemination.

### Faculty Biographies



**Dr. Webster's** research is dedicated to advancing early childhood health by improving motor skills and physical activity. Through innovative assessments, interventions, and policy initiatives conducted in both home- and school-based settings, her work targets these foundational health behaviors to support children's physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development. By promoting active lifestyles from a young age, Dr. Webster aims to set children on a trajectory toward lifelong health and well-being.



**Dr. Coe's** research focuses on physical activity assessment, outdoor and playground play, and the relationship between physical activity and cognitive function in pediatric populations. Dr. Coe is actively engaged in interdisciplinary research aimed at optimizing activity behaviors and fostering cognitive development in young children through motor skill acquisition and the promotion of activity and play behaviors.

### Application & Assistantship Information

The application portal is currently open and applications will be accepted until **January 1, 2026**. Please refer to the [Graduate School](https://gradschool.utk.edu/) [https://gradschool.utk.edu/] and [Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport Studies](#) websites for application information requirements. Competitive assistantships include tuition and mandatory fee waiver, monthly stipend, and health insurance. Responsibilities include teaching in the Physical Education Activity Program or classes in the undergraduate curriculum. PhD Assistantships in Exercise Physiology (Dr. Coe) or Sport Psychology and Motor Behavior (Dr. Webster) are renewable for up to four years based on adequate student academic progress and meeting position expectations.

### Applicant Qualifications

Applicants are required to hold a Master's degree in kinesiology or other movement/health-related field and GPA that meets program standards. Desirable qualifications and experiences include prior research experience in motor development, exercise physiology, physical activity, or related areas, particularly in data collection, professional presentations, and publications. Previous teaching experience is also valued. Applicants should be highly motivated, independent, and demonstrate strong time management and analytical skills, as well as the ability to thrive in a collaborative environment. Please contact **Dr. Webster** [kipwebster@utk.edu] and/or **Dr. Coe** [dcoe@utk.edu] to set up a Zoom or in-person meeting prior to submitting an application.