

JUMP INTO PLAY



Increasing Children's
Physical Literacy
in Early Learning
Settings

**Just like reading and writing,
children need to learn how to move!**

Jump into Play: Increasing Children's Physical Literacy in Early Learning Settings

Developed and distributed by the following North East Ontario Cancer Prevention and Screening Network's Physical Activity Working Group (CPSN-PAWG):

Algoma Public Health
North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit
Porcupine Health Unit
Timiskaming Health Unit
Sudbury & District Health Unit

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For further information, regarding the toolkit please contact:

Natalie Philippe, RN
Public Health Nurse
Sudbury & District Health Unit
1300 Paris Street
Sudbury, ON P3E 3A3
Phone: 705.522.9200, ext. 556
Toll free: 1.866.522.9200, ext. 556
E-mail: philippen@sdhu.com

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Introduction

Many people assume that young children are naturally active and that motor skill development progresses as a normal function of growth. However in reality, many children are neither active nor competent and confident movers. The adoption of a physically active lifestyle early on and its maintenance throughout the life-course contributes to the building and maintaining of physical and mental health in later life.ⁱ

Movement is a child's first language. Early exposure to fundamental movement skills is essential as they form the first building blocks of physical literacy.¹

As an early learning practitioner, it is vital that you recognize the important role that physical activity plays in children's healthy growth and development. You can become a key player in improving their physical literacy skills by promoting and creating opportunities for children to develop important movement skills through play and active settings.

For individuals to be physically active, they need to feel confident and competent in active settings. That confidence stems from having learned fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills – physical literacy – as a child. Learning fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills is key to enriching children's confidence and competence.

What is physical literacy? Simply put, it's the ability to demonstrate a variety of fundamental movements and fundamental sport skills confidently, competently, creatively and strategically across a wide range of physical activities. The earlier children correctly learn these skills, the more "fluent" and confident they will be in an active setting. That confidence affects every part of their lives, from academic to social. With physical literacy, they will have more fun in a variety of sports and they'll be more likely to be active throughout their lives.ⁱⁱ

To learn this physical "vocabulary", children need to start learning it in early childhood, before they even start to learn their ABC's and 123's. As basic math leads eventually to accounting, and the knowledge of the alphabet leads eventually to writing essays and stories, fundamental movement skills will grow into more refined sport and physical activity skills.ⁱⁱⁱ

Physical literacy doesn't just happen on its own. It's a "vocabulary" of movements that has to be learned.²

Without physical literacy, children are much more likely to be physically inactive. Being physically inactive can result in lower school grades, reduced confidence, lower self-esteem, poor social skills and significant acute and chronic health problems.^{iv}

Physical literacy is not just something for jocks. It represents the skills that are essential for **all** children. If you want children to be active, healthy and successful, physical literacy will provide this foundation.

Purpose of the toolkit:

This toolkit is designed to help you increase physical literacy in your early learning setting, by decreasing sedentary behaviours among children and increasing opportunities for active play. Early learning settings are ideal environments to offer activities and quality programs.

How to use the toolkit:

Jump into Play: Increasing Children's Physical Literacy in Early Learning Settings is intended for those who work in Early Learning Settings (daycare, early years centres, before and after school programs, home daycares, etc.).

Assessing the environment of your early learning setting is important to ensure that you are adequately supporting the growth and development of the children in your care. The toolkit will help you assess the physical literacy programming and environment of your early learning setting and prepare an action plan for addressing areas of improvement.

Ideally, your early learning setting should be assessed at least one time per year. This provides you an opportunity to keep track of changes and accomplishments, and to set new goals on a regular basis.

Begin with **Sections 1 to 5** to become familiar with physical literacy including physical activity and sedentary behaviours, then complete **Section 6: Early Learning Environment Assessment Tool**. **Sections 7 to 10** will provide you with additional tools and resources to help you develop your action plan and related policies and procedures.

If you require more assistance, contact your local Health Unit.



Section 1: Setting the Stage - Creating Early Positive Experiences for Children

Children should learn about healthy activities by doing them. This way, not only will they discover the joy of movement but they will develop skills that lead to a lifetime of healthy active living. They will also come to understand how to further apply the skills and principles they have learned.^v

It is important for children to see adult role models incorporating physical activity into their day and to view this as a normal, fun and positive experience. Playing with children and showing enjoyment in various group activities will have a positive impact and encourage children to participate and to keep active. Quality programs offer activities to develop children's physical literacy.^{vi} You can influence their physical literacy skills by organizing and providing a variety of activities meant to develop important movement skills through play. When you play with children they will mimic your movements while having fun.

In order to ensure all children are being included to participate, modify the activity or game before they start. To provide a positive experience, support the development of physical literacy and increase self-esteem by choosing games and activities that are age appropriate according to a child's physical developmental stage. This way all participating children can play and feel good about themselves and their capabilities. Gradually modify the activity or game as they improve. Demonstrating the activity can help children understand how to perform the activity and encourage their participation.

Here are some ways you can nurture the development of children's physical literacy and positive self-esteem in group activities:

- Children learn by doing. Encourage them to try new activities and skills, move to their ability, play, and have fun!
- Remember to praise children on their effort, participation, skills, abilities, and improvements.
- Provide challenges that are developmentally appropriate and encourage them to overcome various challenges.
- Modify games for all levels of ability. Replace balls with rubber chickens or beach balls to make it fun rather than structured and competitive.
- Make sure that all children have the opportunity to participate in a meaningful way, regardless of their abilities.
- Increase the number of balls in a game to increase the number of players who are playing directly.

Just like reading and writing, children need to learn how to move!

- Emphasize enjoyment, personal best and team improvement rather than winning or losing. Physical activity is not about “winning”, but about the feeling of accomplishment.
- Introduce variety, choice and non-traditional activities to suit different interests and skills. Give children choices about what they can do, make or play.
- Encourage children to work as a team to solve problems, practice cooperation and work towards a common goal.
- Introduce individual and recreational activities such as walking, running, dance, yoga, hiking, gymnastics.^{vii}

Teaching children the joy of being active and noticing how their bodies feel and perform will help develop physical literacy and promote a positive body image. You can teach children that no matter their age, height, weight, natural abilities or skills, they need to be physically active to stay healthy and strong and can have fun doing it.



Section 2: Fundamental Movement Skills

What are Fundamental Movement Skills? Fundamental movement skills (also known as basic movement skills or fundamental motor skills) form the basic building block for the overall development of physical literacy. Examples of movement skills are catching, throwing, jumping, and swimming. Just like the alphabet and phonics are fundamental skills needed to read, write and become literate, the development of fundamental movement skills is critical for children to participate in and/or perform across a number of physical activities.^{viii}

Fundamental Movement Skills are the basic building block of physical literacy. Examples: running, jumping.

Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) are typically broken down into three movement categories:^{ix}

Stability: (also known as body control) is the skill that provides the ability to balance the body in one place (static) or keep the body balanced while moving (dynamic). Examples: body rolling, dodging, balancing, bending, stretching, twisting, turning, swinging, stopping, pushing, pulling, rising and/or stretching, collapsing, swaying, shaking.

Locomotor: is the skill used to transport the body from one place to another. This includes walking, running, jumping (vertically and horizontally), hopping, galloping, sliding, gliding, skipping, leaping, chasing, climbing, fleeing, cycling, skating, swimming, skiing.

Object manipulation: skills that involve movement responsible for either sending away or receiving, and traveling with an object such as a ball, puck, or disc. Examples: underhand throw, overhand throw, rolling, kicking, striking, punting, volleying, and catching.

Young children learn these fundamental movement skills through play by exploring their environment, experimenting with new activities, and practicing learned skills. For example, children can experience making a few steps using their feet and with practice they become more confident walkers.

Each child will develop at his or her own rate and will learn movement skills when their body is ready.

Early childhood is the time when, through play and exploration, simple running, throwing, catching and kicking skills often emerge and need to be fostered and developed.

As they get older and gain more practice, children become more confident in their abilities and often seek new challenges. For example, they will be climbing higher on the playground equipment. Children will need to learn new fundamental movement skills as well as become more comfortable with previously acquired skills in order to overcome new challenges.

By the age of **seven to eight years** (depending on their personal growth and development), children should have a solid foundation of skills that can be used and practiced in different activities. They continue to master fundamental movement skills while being introduced to fundamental sport skills. Throwing, for example, can be adapted for throwing a baseball, a rugby ball or a curling rock. At this age, children should practice how to connect their skills in the context of a game. For example, children should be able to kick while running when playing soccer.^x

Active for Life has created the Skills Builder web tool. This tool tells you what fundamental movement and sport skills children should be learning each year of their growth and development. To access the Skills Builder, visit <http://activeforlife.ca>.

Section 3: Learning Fundamental Movement Skills through Play

Early learning practitioners play a key role in influencing the youngest of children to engage in unstructured or structured physical activity. Children learn valuable life lessons from role models like you while participating in physical activity. Benefits of these learning opportunities go beyond being active; children will develop the ability to cope with success and failure, resolve conflicts with others, and learn concepts of sharing. In addition, exploring and risk-taking in a safe environment is essential to a child's growth and development. All learning experiences happen through a process of **learning-based play**.^{xi}

Research shows that play stimulates physical, social, emotional and cognitive development in the early years. For healthy growth and development, children need different types of play. When children play with small toys, building blocks or crayons, they are developing the small muscles in their fingers and hands. This type of play develops fine-motor skills, which involves fine and delicate control of the fingers. These skills will be useful later when the child starts to learn to use tools like knives, forks, and scissors, and when they learn to write and draw.

Learning-based play is the process where children can manipulate objects, act out roles, or experiment with various materials. They are engaged in learning through play.⁽³⁾

The other type of play that every child needs is play that uses all of their big muscles. This type of play develops gross motor skills, where children need to move their whole body around, in vigorous physical activity. It is through this type of play that children develop their ABC's (Agility, Balance and Coordination).

Types of games that help develop large muscles^{xiii}

Throwing and catching games

For children to learn how to throw and catch, use soft objects that a child can hold easily in his or her hand. You can teach them how to throw an object at a target and then take turns throwing objects at the target as hard as they can. Consider using both the left and right hand when throwing.

Active play is vigorous enough when children are breathing faster and deeper, start to sweat and get warm, can feel their heart beat faster, or have redness in their cheeks.

Kicking games

Just like teaching children how to throw and catch, play games where children can kick a soft lightweight ball (e.g., beach ball or foam ball) at an object (e.g., pins) to knock them down.

Jumping games

Jumping games will support the development of fundamental movement skills such as jumping, hopping, galloping, skipping, leaping and landing. For example, try games where children jump and make shapes in the air, or practice jumping with a skipping rope, or you can have them imagine they are jumping over puddles by having them jump over dots. Make a game of how high he or she can jump. Make sure that children bend their knees when they land.

“Body Shape” games

Children should play games where they make “body shapes”. For example, making their bodies “slither” like a snake or “roll” like a rolling pin on the floor. These games will help children develop fundamental movement skills like stretching, balance, rolling, and twisting.

Running games

Not only do running games support the development of the fundamental movement skill for participating in many activities, it also develops other skills such as starting and stopping. Children love to play group activities like tag and hide and seek, where they can practice all of these skills as well as dodging and pushing. These games will also help children develop speed.

As children age, you can modify these games to become gradually more challenging. For example, include hand and foot speed to running games and add dribbling to throwing and catching games.



Including Physical Literacy in Your Daily Program

Many resources with sample activities and games are available to help you include physical literacy in your programming. Here are a few examples:

A Hop, Skip and a Jump: Enhancing Physical Literacy

The original A Hop, Skip and a Jump: Enhancing Physical Literacy resource is a collection of activities developed by students in the Early Learning & Child Care (ELCC 1121) Course at Mount Royal College. This **free** resource is available to download at www.mtroyal.ca/wcm/groups/public/documents/pdf/wcmdev_017044.pdf.

Healthy Opportunities for Preschoolers

Hop™ is designed for early learning practitioners, caregivers and families as they interact with children who are three to five years old. Part of the LEAP BC™ family of resources, the Hop Family Resources includes 50 fun-filled activities and ideas for play that integrate physical movement, oral languages, early literacy and healthy eating. This **free** resource is available to download at <http://decoda.ca/children-families/leap-bc/hop/>.

Move with me from birth to three

Move™ was created for caregivers and families with children from birth through three years. Move™ Family Resource provides 40 activities in a beautifully illustrated book and is part of the LEAP BC™ family of resources. Move™ is designed to promote physical movement patterns in infants and toddlers, while incorporating early language and literacy development and healthy eating. This **free** resource is available to download at <http://decoda.ca/children-families/leap-bc/move/>.

The Ophea Early Learning Resources

Through the OPHEA Early Learning Resource, children are given the opportunity to develop physical literacy and health literacy skills that will be the foundation for their future learning. This resource will encourage children to establish positive attitudes and an appreciation for lifelong participation in order to lead healthy, active lives. This **free** resource is available to download at <http://earlylearning.ophea.net/>.

Active for Life - Physical Literacy Lesson Plans

These five lesson plans were designed for activity coordinators to use to teach fundamental movement skills. Each lesson plan provides a series of fun games that develop early skills in running, jumping, throwing, catching, kicking, hopping, and more. These **free** lessons are carefully laid out and easy to use <http://activeforlife.com/physical-literacy-lesson-plans-for-summer-camps-and-daycares/>.

Move & Play: Through Physical Literacy

Move & Play activity cards are designed to integrate physical literacy and fundamental movements into a variety of programs, activities and environments for children ages 3 to 12 years.

www.provincialfitnessunit.ca/bffl-k-6-school-programs/

Section 4: Physical Activity Guidelines and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology has released **Physical Activity Guidelines** for all age groups. These guidelines give Canadians basic information about the types, intensity and frequency of physical activity needed to promote good health. To summarize:

- Infants (aged less than 1 year) should be physically active several times daily – particularly through interactive floor-based play.
- Toddlers (aged 1 to 2 years) and preschoolers (aged 3 to 4 years) should accumulate at least 180 minutes of physical activity daily, at any intensity and in a variety of environments. In addition to activities that develop movement skills, they should work towards at least 60 minutes of energetic play by the age of 5 years.^{xiv}
- Children aged 5 to 11 years should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate-to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily, including activities that strengthen muscle and bone.^{xv}

These guidelines are considered a minimum. You are encouraged to meet or exceed these recommendations to get the most benefit of learning through play.

The **Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines**^{xvi} were created to help adult influencers limit the time children spend watching TV, playing video and computer games, and other sedentary behaviours. They provide the maximum measured amount of time children should be sedentary. A key aspect of these guidelines is to address the importance of minimizing sedentary “screen time” in the earliest years of development. For healthy growth and development, sedentary behaviour guidelines state that caregivers should:

- Minimize the time infants (aged less than 1 year), toddlers (aged 1 to 2 years) and preschoolers (aged 3 to 4 years) spend being sedentary during waking hours. This includes prolonged sitting or being restrained (e.g., stroller, high chair) for more than one hour at a time.
- For those under 2 years, screen time (e.g., TV, computer, electronic games) is not recommended.
- For children 2 to 4 years, screen time should be limited to less than one hour per day; less is better.
- For children aged 5 to 11 years, screen time should be limited to no more than 2 hours per day; less is better. Motorized transportation should be limited, including extended sitting and time spent indoors throughout the day.

For additional information, take a look at the **Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines** – Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology located in Section 10: Tools, Resources and Website.

For additional information, take a look at the **Canadian Sedentary Behaviours Guidelines** – Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology located in Section 10: Tools, Resources and Website.

You play a significant role when it comes to the amount of time children are active throughout the day as they spend many hours in your care. It is important to provide **physical activity opportunities**.

What are physical activity opportunities in an early learning setting?

Physical activity opportunities not only reflect the amount of time children spend being active to meet Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines, it also refers to two categories of physical activities children are engaged in. The two categories of physical activity opportunities that can be offered in early learning settings include;

- Adult-led activities (also known as structured play-based learning) are organized activities that are led by an adult. A few examples include playing “Simon says”, dodge ball, interactive songs, and playing a sport such as soccer. This category of activity is ideal for the development of fundamental movement skills as early learning practitioners can take the time to teach children as they are leading the activities.
- Child-led activities (also known as unstructured play or child-initiated free play) are activities that children can do on their own, with other children or with an adult. Examples of this category of activity includes: running, jumping, climbing and exploring at their own pace. This type of activity promotes the development of fundamental movements as children practice skills they learned while enjoying the activities.

It is important that children participate in both categories of activities, indoors and outdoors.

Should children who misbehave be removed from active play?

There is a belief that removing children from active play when they misbehave is an effective way of responding to their actions. As a matter of fact, there are greater disadvantages to removing children from play. Not only will this be an ineffective form of discipline, but a child will also miss out on the opportunity to engage in play – to learn and practice fundamental movement skills – which will decrease their physical activity for the day. Evidence shows that children who participate in regular physical activity have greater concentration, improved memory, creativity, problem solving skills, social skills and more.^{xvii}

When working with children with varying levels of developmental and behavioural disabilities, the safety of all children is always a priority. There may be occasions when the behaviour of a child having “tantrums” or “an episode” will endanger him or her or other children. In these instances, it is appropriate to remove the child from the activity to provide a safe environment for working through the behaviour and returning to a stable state. It is important that the person who is more familiar with the needs and behaviours of the child be with him or her at all times.^{xviii}

How can you help reduce sedentary behaviour in a early learning setting?

Cut down on screen time! There is growing evidence that spending sedentary time watching television, playing video games or spending time on the computer can have a negative effect on both brain and physical development.^{xix} Follow the **Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines** and remember that less screen time is better for children's health.

Limit prolonged restrained sitting! Restricted sitting refers to a child being sedentary with little movement for more than one hour. Examples of restrained sitting include strollers and highchairs.

Encourage children to participate in quiet play. Quiet play usually consists of children sitting and relaxing. This form of play is very healthy for them as it allows them to develop fine motor skills. During quiet play consider reading books to children that have a physical activity and play themes. Children can learn about being active and you can have a quiet conversation about the themes. Quiet play is also a great opportunity for children to play with blocks and puzzles.



Section 5: Indoor and Outdoor Movable and Permanent Play Environments

There is growing evidence that both indoor and outdoor play environments have a significant and positive impact on children's short and long-term physical, social and mental well-being. Children are more likely to engage in dramatic play indoors and to engage in exploration, experiment and practice fundamental movement skills in the outdoors. Therefore, each of these environments will play a complementary role in the development and education of children.^{xx}

The attainment of moderate to vigorous physical activity in preschoolers is associated with outdoor playtime. It is important to encourage gross motor activity when playing outdoors to compensate for lighter intensity and sedentary activities while indoors.^{xxi} In light of this, it is important that both indoor and outdoor play environments be equipped with movable and permanent play equipment that is age appropriate for all children.

Movable play environment: refers to any play materials that can be transported and used in various locations. It is good practice to have these materials available and freely accessible to children.

What are ways of creating an age appropriate movable play environment?

Infants should be given age-appropriate toys and objects to explore various textures: soft, squishy, hard, bumpy, rough. Toys and equipment that will allow infants to practice fundamental movement skills should be provided as well. Examples include: push toys for walking, mats for crawling, and small toys for grasping.

As for **toddlers and preschoolers**, movable play materials for indoor and outdoor use should be available at all times, such as small trucks, riding toys, balls, floor mats, and tunnels. These toys need to be freely accessible to children to use at the same time. In addition, play materials that allow a toddler and preschooler to build things should be provided. Examples include building blocks, puzzles, crayons, and paint.

Children ages four to twelve years should have access to outdoor movable play equipment to practice fundamental movement skills and be introduced to fundamental sport skills. Examples of this play equipment include bicycles, and sports-equipment, such as baseball equipment.

Permanent play environment: refers to any solid play structures that are anchored and cannot be moved by children.

What are ways of creating an age appropriate permanent play environment?

Infants should have access to solid equipment like furniture or any structure that provides stability. For example, a large table to encourage them to walk (this is known as cruising and is the fundamental movement skill that help them to eventually walk on their own). Infants should also have access to a safe space to crawl and walk that is free of clutter and obstacles.

Toddlers and preschoolers should be provided with a sufficient variety of play materials to stimulate different kinds of play. Outdoor play environments should include grassy areas and a track or path for wheeled toys, sandboxes, and climbers. Indoor play spaces should include a large open space for children to run and practice fundamental movement skills.

Just like toddlers and preschoolers, **school aged children** need access to outdoor permanent play equipment. Age appropriate play equipment includes playground equipment to practice fundamental movement skills like climbing and balancing. Children also need access to grassy areas, and a space to ride bicycles. They also need access to an indoor play environment that will allow them to practice fundamental sport skills like volleyball and basketball.

The outdoor play environment is as important as the indoor play environment because it enhances equal opportunities for all children to be physically active and enjoy their environments.



Section 6: Early Learning Environment Assessment Tool

As mentioned previously, early learning settings are ideal environments to offer activities and quality programs to foster the learning and development of physical literacy, to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviours in the early years. The Early Learning Environment Assessment Tool was created to assist early learning practitioners with identifying strengths and areas for improvement in their programs.

What is the Early Learning Environment Assessment Tool?

The Early Learning Environment Assessment Tool (provided on the next page) is a group of checklists that are easy to complete and will assist you in assessing your early learning setting programming in terms of physical literacy opportunities. By completing the checklists, you will be able to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in your program.

How do I complete the Tool?

Focus on completing the assessment checklist that pertains to the age group of children you work with. For example, if you work with children ages 5 to 12 years, you do not need to complete the checklist for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. You only need to complete the checklist for children and adult influencers.

To complete the assessment checklist:

- Read each statement carefully and check the response that best fits your early learning facility.
- Honestly assess your child care facility's environment and practices to help better identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Consider what your early learning facility provides and practices the majority of the time.
- Involve any key staff members that may help in answering questions.

What do I do with the checklists once completed?

Once you have completed filling out the assessment checklists, you should share it with the individuals that are responsible for policy development in your workplace. They will be able to collect all responses from you and your colleagues to examine program strengths and areas for improvement. Collectively, you will be able to use the responses to help create a plan using the **Action Planning Guide in Section 7**. This information is important in planning for the promotion of physical activity.

Infants (0 to 18 months)

	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Physical activity opportunities						
Infants are engaged in floor based play several times daily						
Infants are engaged in tummy time for a total of 30 to 60 minutes every day						
Children over 1 year old are engaged in active play (e.g., climbing stairs and moving around the daycare) for 180 minutes or more every day						
Sedentary behaviour						
Infants are seated (excluding naps and meals) more than 60 minutes at a time						
Movable play environment						
Infants are given age-appropriate toys and objects to explore, with the following textures: soft, squishy, hard, bumpy, rough						
Equipment/toys that allow infants to practice movement skills are provided (e.g., push toy for walking, floor mats for crawling, small toys for grasping)						
Permanent play environment						
Infants have access to solid equipment/furniture/structures to provide stability (e.g., large table and chairs to encourage them to walk safely)						
Infants have access to a safe space to crawl and walk that is free of clutter and obstacles						

Toddlers (19 to 30 months)

	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Physical activity opportunities						
Toddlers are engaged in active play (e.g., running, jumping, dancing) for 180 minutes or more each day						
Toddlers are engaged in adult-led activities (structured play)						
Toddlers are encouraged to participate in child-led activities (unstructured play)						
Staff play with toddlers so that they can practice kicking (e.g., kicking a large and soft ball)						
Staff play with toddlers so that they can practice throwing and catching (e.g., throwing a large and soft ball)						
Toddlers play in different environments of the daycare (e.g., climbing stairs, playing outside)						
Toddlers are participating in outdoor play every day						
Toddlers are removed from active play when they misbehave						
Outings are planned to allow children to play in different environments (e.g., parks, playgrounds, water pads)						

Sedentary behaviour	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Toddlers are seated (excluding naps and meals) for more than 60 minutes at a time						
Screen time (e.g., TV, computers, video games) is not provided to children under the age of 2 years old						
Quiet play time occurs in the afternoon for 20-30 minutes (e.g., reading, quiet conversation, playing with puzzles, and blocks)						
Movable play environment	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Outdoor portable play equipment (e.g., small trucks, riding toys, tunnels) is easily accessible to toddlers						
Play equipment that allow toddlers to build things are provided (e.g., blocks, puzzles)						
Play materials that support the development of large muscles (e.g., balls, floormats) are available for toddlers						
Play materials that support the development of small muscles (e.g., crayons, paint) are available for toddlers						
Permanent play environment	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Indoor spaces are available for all activities (e.g., running)						
Permanent outdoor play spaces include grassy areas, a track, path for wheeled toys, sandboxes, climbers, etc.						

Preschoolers (31 months to 4 years)

	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Physical activity opportunities						
Preschoolers are engaged in active play (e.g., running, jumping, dancing) for 180 minutes or more each day						
Preschoolers are engaged in adult-led activities (structured play)						
Preschoolers are encouraged to participate in child-led activities (unstructured play)						
Staff play with preschoolers so that they can practice kicking (e.g., kicking a large and soft ball)						
Preschoolers are taught or have opportunities to gallop, skip, hop, walk backwards, etc.						
Staff play with preschoolers so that they can practice throwing and catching (e.g., throwing a large and soft ball)						
Preschoolers are participating in outdoor play every day						
Preschoolers play in different environments of the daycare (e.g., climbing stairs, playing outside)						
Preschoolers are engaged in progressing towards 60 minutes of energetic play (e.g., playing tag)						
Preschoolers are removed from active play when they misbehave						
Outings are planned to allow children to play in different environments (e.g., parks, playgrounds, water pads)						

Sedentary behaviour	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Preschoolers are seated (excluding naps and meals) for more than 60 minutes at a time						
Screen time (e.g., TV, computers, video games) is limited to less than one hour						
Quiet play time occurs in the afternoon for 20-30 minutes (e.g. reading, quiet conversation, playing with puzzles and blocks)						
Movable play environment	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Outdoor portable play equipment (e.g., small trucks, riding toys, tunnels) is easily accessible to preschoolers						
Play equipment that allow preschoolers to build things are provided (e.g., blocks, puzzles)						
Play materials that support the development of large muscles (e.g., balls, floor, mats, jump ropes) are available for preschoolers						
Play materials that support the development of small muscles (e.g., crayons, paint) are available for preschoolers						
Permanent play environment	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Indoor spaces are available for all activities (e.g., running)						
Permanent outdoor play spaces include grassy areas, a track or path for wheeled toys, sandboxes, climbers, etc.						

Children (5 to 12 years)

	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Physical activity opportunities						
Children are engaged in active play (e.g., running, jumping, dancing) for at least 60 minutes each day						
Children are engaged in vigorous intensity activities at least three times per week						
Children participate in activities that strengthen muscles and bone at least three days per week						
Children are engaged in adult-led activities (structured play)						
Children are engaged in child- led activities (unstructured play)						
Staff play with children to practice kicking (e.g., kicking a soccer ball)						
Staff play with children so that they can practice throwing and catching (e.g., throwing a baseball)						
Children are participating in outdoor play every day						
Children play in different environments of the daycare (e.g., climbing stairs, playing outside)						
Children are removed from active play when they misbehave						
Planned outings to allow children to play in different environments (e.g., parks, playgrounds, water pads)						

Sedentary behaviour	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Children are seated (excluding naps and meals) for more than 60 minutes at a time						
Screen time (e.g., TV, computers, video games) is limited to less than two hours						
Quiet play time occurs in the afternoon for 20-30 minutes (e.g., reading, quiet conversation, playing with puzzles, and blocks)						
Moveable play environment	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Outdoor portable play equipment (e.g., bicycles, baseball equipment) is easily accessible to children						
Indoor portable play equipment (e.g., sports equipment-volleyball) are easily accessible for children						
Permanent play environment	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Fixed play equipment (e.g., tunnels, balancing equipment, climbing equipment, overhead ladders) is available to children						
Outdoor play spaces include plenty of open spaces for running or for group activities						
Indoor play spaces are available for all activities (e.g., running)						

Adult Influencers

Adult participation	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
During active play time, staff often encourage children to be active and join children in active play						
Supportive environment	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Support for physical activity is visibly displayed in common areas of our facility by displaying posters, pictures and books about physical activity and physical literacy						
Physical activity education for staff, children, parents and caregivers	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Physical activity training opportunities are provided for staff (not including playground safety)						
Physical activity education (motor skills development) is provided for children through a consistent program						
Physical activity education is offered to parents (e.g., workshops, activities and take home materials)						
Physical activity policy	always	usually	occasionally	rarely	never	comments
Our organization has a written policy on physical activity						

Section 7: Action Planning Guide

This section is intended to help you use the results of the assessment you completed in **Section 6: Early Learning Environment Assessment Tool**. Begin by collecting all responses from your colleagues to examine strengths and areas for improvement. Once you compile all of the responses, you can begin to identify goals for each area assessed with the help of the tables listed below (**Areas for Improvement/Specific Goals, and Actions to Reach Goals**). Fill in the tables to identify the specific actions (what, who, when) that need to occur to reach each goal.

Refer to the Best Practice Recommendations and the tools and resources listed in **Section 10: Tools, Resources and Websites** to help you formulate your goals and to access resources that may help you with planning and implementation. Once you complete the action plan, refer to **Section 8: Writing Policies and Procedures to Address Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviours** to help you write your policies and procedures.



Areas for Improvement/Specific Goals

Self-Assessment Area	Goals	Target Date for Completion
1. Physical Activity Opportunities		
2. Sedentary Behaviour		
3. Movable Play Environment		
4. Permanent Play Environment		
5. Adult Participation		
6. Supportive Environment		
7. Physical Activity Education		

Actions to Reach Goals

Goal 1: _____

Actions to reach above goal (what)	Persons involved (who)	Target date for completion (when)

Goal 2: _____

Actions to reach above goal (what)	Persons involved (who)	Target date for completion (when)

Goal 3: _____

Actions to reach above goal (what)	Persons involved (who)	Target date for completion (when)

Goal 4: _____

Actions to reach above goal (what)	Persons involved (who)	Target date for completion (when)

Goal 5: _____

Actions to reach above goal (what)	Persons involved (who)	Target date for completion (when)

Goal 6: _____

Actions to reach above goal (what)	Persons involved (who)	Target date for completion (when)

Goal 7: _____

Actions to reach above goal (what)	Persons involved (who)	Target date for completion (when)

Goal 8: _____

Actions to reach above goal (what)	Persons involved (who)	Target date for completion (when)

Best Practice Recommendations

Assessment Area	Best Practice Recommendations
1. Physical Activity Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure each child meets Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines for their age group each day. • Ensure infants are engaged in floor based play several times daily. • Ensure infants are engaged in tummy time for a total of 30 to 60 minutes every day. • Provide opportunities for children to practice fundamental movement skills, such as kicking, throwing, catching, running and jumping daily. • Provide structured (adult-led) physical activity two or more times daily. • Provide outdoor active play at least 120 minutes each day (weather permitting).
2. Sedentary Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure each child is not engaged in sedentary activities (excluding naps and eating) for more than 30 minutes at a time each day. • Rarely (less than one hour per day) or never provide screen time (including television, computer, and video games).
3. Movable Play Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a large variety of movable play equipment available for children to use at the same time. • Ensure outdoor movable play equipment (such as tricycles, slides, balls, etc.) is easily accessible at all times to each child.
4. Permanent Play Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a wide variety of permanent play equipment available that accommodate the needs of all children. • Ensure that outdoor play space is available with plenty of open running spaces and a track, path or area for wheeled toys. • Ensure indoor play space is available for all activities including running
5. Adult Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff encourage children to be active and join children in active play. • Staff encourage both child-led and adult-led activities on a daily basis.

Assessment Area	Best Practice Recommendations
6. Supportive Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide visible age appropriate physical activity supports (such as posters, books, pictures) in all areas.
7. Physical Activity Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide staff with opportunities to participate in training related to physical activity (such as webinars, online courses, workshops, conferences, etc.) at least once per year. • Ensure resources and information related to physical activity are available on-site and accessible to staff during work time. • Provide children with physical activity education using a standardized curriculum at least one time per week.
8. Physical Activity Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a written policy on physical activity that is available, followed and revised annually. The policy may include all or some of the topics from the previous key areas.

Section 8: Writing Policies and Procedures to Address Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviours

You are a key player in children's health

Creating a healthy environment that will aid children in maintaining a healthy lifestyle should be on your organization's agenda. This can be achieved by developing and implementing policies and procedures on physical activity and sedentary behaviours.

Policies and procedures are foundational documents in helping to create an environment that encourages physical activity and decreases sedentary behaviours in children. A policy is an action plan; for example, supporting and promoting physical activity. A procedure is a more specific course of action intended to achieve the policy. An example of a procedure is: screen time is not provided to children under the age of 2 years.

How to Develop Your Own Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Policy and Procedure

Depending on the setting and the organization, people are more likely to be enthusiastic and supportive about adopting a policy if they are involved in its development.

These pointers may help you to get started:

1. Set up a meeting to discuss the development of a physical activity and sedentary behaviour policy. Invite representatives from key groups including the management team, health and safety coordinators, staff and people that will be directly impacted by the policy such as children, parents and caregivers.

At the meeting, decide who will be responsible for developing and championing the policy.



2. Using the completed **Early Learning Environment Assessment Tool**, look at what the organization is already doing to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary behaviours. This will help you identify what needs to be done and how much progress you are making. Think about the following:
 - a. Are employees knowledgeable about the Canadian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviours Guidelines for early years and children?
 - b. Do employees receive training on physical activity and sedentary behaviours?
 - c. Do employees use the play-based learning approach?
 - d. Do employees act as role models?
 - e. Do employees join children during active play time?
 - f. How often do employees play with children outdoors?
 - g. What are the areas of improvement noted in the Early Learning Environment Assessment Tool?
3. Prepare a draft of the policy in consultation with users. Try to:
 - Make sure every point is relevant to your organization and the users.
 - Check if the policy is realistic given finances and time available.
 - Be clear about who is responsible for implementing each task.
 - Agree on timelines for implementing the different points on your plan.
4. Get feedback on your policy and present the final draft to key decision makers for their approval.
5. Implement the policy and publicize it so everyone is aware of why you are adopting the policy and what you are trying to achieve. It is helpful for families involved with your organization to know that the policy exists and understand how they can assist. Be sure to share this information with them. Consider sending information out in registration packages, newsletters, or posting it on notice boards.

In addition, you may choose to hold an assembly where parents and caregivers have the opportunity to ask questions. Parents will support you if they understand that you are taking responsibility for their children's welfare while they are in your care.

6. Policy review

It is important to set a date to review your policy. Include the date on the policy. Review your policy at least once a year or every two years. Regular reviews ensure that everything is working well and that the policy includes the most current information. It is important to keep updating your plans. This can be accomplished by:

- Keeping records of the implementation process: dates, costs and the names of people involved.
- Continue to collect completed early learning environment assessment tools. This will help you identify your organization's strength (no need to make changes to the policy) and areas of improvement (identify what possible changes can be made).

7. Policy Checklists (Early Learning Environment Assessment Tool)

The checklist will help your organization to start thinking about a physical activity and sedentary behaviours policy. The checklist will help you identify the strengths and areas of improvement in your program that will strongly support physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviours. We suggest you request employees to complete the checklist that is relevant to their work on a yearly basis. Compile all of the responses into one checklist. For example, if seven employees checked occasionally for “infants are engaged in floor based play several times daily”, enter a 7 under the “occasional” in the row. Once completed, you can use this checklist to help you identify the strengths and areas of improvement according to employees. The checklist should also be completed by key decision makers, in particular, the checklist for adult influencers. Implementing changes in small steps is the best way to move with your plan.

Remember that your local health unit can support you as you develop policies that suit your needs.

For examples of sample policies that you can use to help guide the development of your early learning setting policy, check out Section 10: Tools, Resources and Websites located on page 39.

Section 9: Supporting and Encouraging Parents and Caregivers

The responsibility for developing physically literate children rests with parents and caregivers. Just as parents and caregivers ensure their children are in learning situations that result in them having the ability to read, write and do mathematics, they must also ensure their children develop physical literacy.

As early learning practitioners, you might be approached by parents and caregivers with questions about their child's healthy growth and development. Here are a few key messages you can share with them as it relates to physical literacy.^{xxii}

For children under the age of 6 years

Remind parents that physical activity should always be fun, and part of a child's daily life. The Canadian Sport Centres (2008) recommend that parents should consider:^{xxiii}

- Playing games that require the child to make body shapes. For example, by making their bodies slither like a snake, roll like a rolling pin on the floor, or down a small grassy slope.
- Playing throwing games with soft objects that a child can hold easily in his or her hand. They can try throwing at a target or sometimes throwing as hard as they can. Consider using both the left and right hand when throwing.
- When in a small space or during quiet times, consider playing balancing games. For example, play a game where you need to balance on different body parts, like standing on one foot and then the other and so on.
- Jumping is a fun activity. Try jumping and making shapes in the air. Play a game with your child to see how high he or she can jump. Make sure that children bend their knees when they land.

For additional examples and tips for parents, caregivers, and early learning practitioners, take a look at the factsheet titled "Active Start" at the end of this kit.

For children 6 to 12 years

According to Canadian Sport Centres, parents and caregivers of children in this age group should consider:^{xxiv}

- Playing with their children in local parks, trails and playgrounds as well as ice pads. Children in this age group should take part in a wide range of sports (recreational, not necessarily a league). They should be encouraged to participate in activities that are ground, water, ice and snow-based at different times of the year.
- Continuing to encourage their children with engaging in unstructured physical play with their friends every day.
- Encourage children to take every opportunity to play different sports and participate in physical activities in school, during physical education class and intramurals or on school teams (if their school has them).
- Keep sports and physical activity FUN.

Parents can obtain additional information along with ideas to keep their children active on the **activeforlife.com** website.



Section 10: Tools, Resources and Websites

Assessment Area	Best Practice Recommendations	Resources
1. Physical Activity Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure each child meets Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines for their age group each day. • Ensure infants are engaged in floor based play several times daily • Ensure infants are engaged in tummy time for a total of 30 to 60 minutes every day. • Provide opportunities for children to practice fundamental movement skills, such as kicking, throwing, catching, running and jumping daily. • Provide structured (adult-led) physical activity or more times daily. • Provide outdoor active play at least 120 minutes each day (weather permitting). 	<p>Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines – Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for the Early Years (0 to 4 years) - for Children (5 to 11 years) <p>www.csep.ca/guidelines</p> <p>Leap BC™ – Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Move™ – integrates physical activity, early language development and healthy eating for infants and toddlers, from birth to 3 years of age. http://decoda.ca/children-families/leap-bc/move/ -Hop™ – has the same focus as Move but is geared towards preschoolers from 3 to 5 years. http://decoda.ca/children-families/leap-bc/hop/ <p>Bring Back Play Mobile App - ParticipACTION www.bringbackplay.mobi</p> <p>A Hop, Skip and a Jump: Enhancing Physical Literacy (the original) is a collection of activities developed by students in the Early Learning & Child Care (ELCC 1121) course at Mount Royal College. This free resource is available to download at www.mtroyal.ca/wcm/groups/public/documents/pdf/wcmdev_017044.pdf.</p> <p>KidActive App - Active for life. This web app provides parents with dozens of fun activities to help develop their child's physical literacy. It also tracks children's skill development as they practice the activities. www.kidactive.activeforlife.ca/login</p> <p>CIRA Ontario (Canadian Intramural Recreation Association of Ontario) Games and Resources https://ciraontario.com/resources/downloads</p>

Assessment Area	Best Practice Recommendations	Resources
2. Sedentary Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure each child is not engaged in sedentary activities (excluding naps and eating) for more than 30 minutes at a time each day. • Rarely (less than one hour per day) or never provide screen time (including television, computer and video games). 	Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines – Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for the Early Years (0 to 4 years) - for Children (5 to 11 years) www.csep.ca/guidelines
3. Movable Play Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a large variety of movable play equipment available for children to use at the same time. • Ensure outdoor movable play equipment (such as tricycles, slides, balls, etc.) is easily accessible at all times to each child. 	Materials/Equipment List for Childcare Centres – Manitoba Family Services and Labour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for infant and toddler - for preschooler - for school-age www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/publications.html#providers
4. Permanent Play Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a wide variety of permanent play equipment available that accommodate the needs of all children. • Ensure that outdoor play space is available with plenty of open running spaces and a track/path/area for wheeled toys. • Ensure indoor play space is available for all activities including running. 	Outdoor Playground, Outdoor Play Equipment – Day Nurseries Act for Child Care Supervisors of Ontario http://childcarelearning.on.ca/child_care_setting/?room=21&item=37 Planning & Design Guidelines for Child Care Centres – Ministry of Education www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/planning_and_design.pdf

Assessment Area	Best Practice Recommendations	Resources
5. Adult Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff encourage children to be active and join children in active play. 	<p>Active for life – www.activeforlife.ca</p> <p>Active Healthy Kids Canada – www.activehealthykids.ca</p> <p>Canadian Sport For Life – www.canadiansportforlife.ca</p> <p>KidSport Canada – www.kidsportcanada.ca</p> <p>Ontario Physical Health Education Association Ophea – www.ophea.net</p> <p>ParticipACTION – www.participaction.com</p> <p>Physical & Health Education Canada – www.phecanada.ca</p>
6. Supportive Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide visible age appropriate physical activity supports (such as posters, books and pictures) in all areas. 	<p><i>Having a Ball Together – Best Start Resource Centre</i></p> <p>Posters, brochures, activity cards, bookmarks and stickers can be ordered online. www.beststart.org/resources/physical_activity/index.html</p> <p><i>Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines Posters – PARC</i> parc.ophea.net/resources/key-messages-posters</p> <p><i>Active Kids, Healthy Kids -</i> Canadian Paediatric Society Posters and more www.caringforkids.cps.ca/active-kids/active-actifs</p>

Assessment Area	Best Practice Recommendations	Resources
7. Physical Activity Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide staff with opportunities to participate in training related to physical activity (such as webinars, online courses, workshops, conferences, etc.) at least once per year. • Ensure resources and information related to physical activity are available on-site and accessible to staff during work time. • Provide children with physical activity education using a standardized curriculum at least one time per week. 	<p>College of Early Childhood Educators of Canada www.college-ece.ca/Pages/default.aspx</p> <p>Early Childhood Educators Qualifications Upgrade Program www.ecegrants.on.ca/English/home_en.html</p> <p>Early Learning Resource – Ophea The Ophea Early Learning Resource assists kindergarten teachers, early-childhood educators and early-learning teams with the implementation of The Full-Day Early Learning – Kindergarten Program, 2010 - 2011 (Draft Version), Health and Physical Activity learning area. http://earlylearning.ophea.net/</p> <p>PlaySport – Ophea PlaySport is an educational website with all kinds of great activities designed to teach kids games by playing games!</p> <p>PlaySport allows you to search for activities based on the equipment you have, the skills you want to teach, the complexity of the game or the space you have available. www.opheaprograms.net/playsport/</p> <p>Skills Builder web tool - Active for Life tells you what movement skills and sport skills children need to be learning each year of their development. To access the Skills Builder, visit http://activeforlife.com/kids-skills-builder/.</p>

Assessment Area	Best Practice Recommendations	Resources
		<p>Sport New Zealand - Active Movement Videos these videos show how to get children under the age of five years old moving and consequently learning. www.youtube.com/channel/UCOh1-UZIQNtUKggJI7D63eg</p>
8. Physical Activity Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a written policy on physical activity that is available and followed, and revised annually. The policy may include all or some of the topics from the previous four physical activity key areas. 	<p>Sample Policies</p> <p>Below are links to existing and sample policies that you can use to help guide the development of your early learning setting policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.healthpromotion.com.au/Documents/Munch_Move/Physical_Activity_Policy.pdf www.abcqualitycare.org/Grow_Healthy/GH_SAMPLE_Level_B_Physical_Activity_Policy.pdf



References

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- ⁱⁱ Canadian Sport Centres (2008) Developing Physical Literacy: A guide For Parents of Children Ages 0-12, 2008
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- ^{iv} Canadian Sport Centres (2008) Developing Physical Literacy: A guide For Parents of Children Ages 0-12, 2008 p.5
- ^v Ophea (2010) A New Year, A revised Curriculum, A New Way of Looking at Students Health: How the Revised Elementary H&PE Curriculum Will Help Kids Choose a Healthy Lifestyle
- ^{vi} J. Mandigo, N.Francis, K. Lodewyk, and R. Lopez(2009). Physical Literacy for Educators. Physical and Health Education Journal 75, no.3 (2009): 27-30.
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- 1. Canadian Sport Centres (2008) Developing Physical Literacy: A guide For Parents of Children Ages 0-12, 2008 p.5
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