

# healthyschools ALBERTA

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# ADVERTISING

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# IN THIS ISSUE

*We love what we do. Ever Active Schools is grateful to work alongside incredible schools and amazing people every single day. We are welcomed into school communities to listen, provide professional learning and spearhead new projects. We see positivity, volunteerism and a wonderful dedication to healthy students. At Ever Active Schools, we are grateful to work with you, we can't wait to visit your community and we wish you all the best for the new year ahead. Thank you for all you do. Please reach us at [info@everactive.org](mailto:info@everactive.org) or [@everactiveab](https://www.facebook.com/everactiveab). We love feedback, questions and stories!*

~ The Ever Active Schools Team



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Our team has gotten a little animated in this issue!

We had fun creating a cartoon version of ourselves doing our favourite activities... real or imaginary! To create your own bitmoji, check out: [www.bitmoji.com/](http://www.bitmoji.com/)

# MEET OUR TEAM



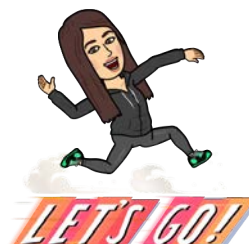
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# PLAN YOUR YEAR

## 2018 Healthy School Community Events

### PAN-CANADIAN SCHOOL HEALTH SUMMIT: SHAPING THE FUTURE 2018

January 31 to February 3, 2018 Ever Active Schools is hosting the annual Shaping the Future Conference with over 500 delegates in attendance. Join us in Lake Louise to discuss and learn about Comprehensive School Health and follow along on twitter #EASSTF. [www.everactive.org/stf](http://www.everactive.org/stf)

### HEALTHY ACTIVE SCHOOLS SYMPOSIA

Our 13th and final Healthy Active School Symposium of the 2017/18 school year is happening on February 7, 2018 in Fort McMurray! [www.everactive.org/hass](http://www.everactive.org/hass)

### WINTER WALK DAY

Find some fun in Alberta's winter! Join us for the 12th annual Winter Walk Day on Wednesday, February 7, 2018. Details and registration information are available at [www.winterwalkday.ca](http://www.winterwalkday.ca)

### LIVE ACTIVE SUMMIT

The Live Active Summit returns Fall 2018, making the connection between physical activity and overall well-being. The event will be hosted alongside the City of Edmonton and will offer professional learning opportunities, resource sharing and will build key partnerships for a more active Alberta. More details to come: [www.everactive.org/liveactive](http://www.everactive.org/liveactive)

### RESILIENCY SUMMIT: HONOURING YOUTH VOICE

November 2018. The Resiliency Summit is an annual gathering for Indigenous youth, educators and recreation professionals to share and learn best practices in developing holistic wellness and resiliency in their communities. [www.everactive.org/rw](http://www.everactive.org/rw)

### THE ALBERTA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION YOUTH RUN CLUB

Sign-up throughout the school year and join our free, flexible and fun program to get children and youth up and running. [www.amayouthrunclub.com](http://www.amayouthrunclub.com)

### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & MENTORSHIP

Look for the 'Ever Active Schools Health & Wellness Symposium' in your upcoming Teachers' Convention schedule. Ever Active Schools has partnered with many exceptional organizations, including featured speakers, to bring you rapid-fire sessions on important topics influencing school wellness.

Learn more at: [www.everactive.org/eas-at-teachers-conventions/](http://www.everactive.org/eas-at-teachers-conventions/)

Visit [www.everactive.org](http://www.everactive.org) to discover other Ever Active Schools events and projects.





Photo: Chief Old Sun Elementary School, Chief and Council

## A Program to Empower Students

WRITTEN BY SHIRLEY FULTON AND NATASHA CALF ROBE-AYOUNGMAN

**Chief Old Sun School is located on Siksika Nation with a student population of approximately 324 from Nursery to Grade 6. In 2007, staff of Chief Old Sun School were looking for a way to improve student involvement and ownership of the school community. This year marks the 10th anniversary of our Chief and Council program, which was established to educate and engage students in learning about governance, election skills, public relations, leadership skills and most importantly to empower our Siksika children.**

We have a Chief and Vice Chief who are elected each September from among the grade six students. They have about two weeks to run their campaign and during an assembly they give their final speech. Every student from grades 1 to 6 and all staff members of the school have the opportunity to vote. Once the new Chief and Council are established they partake in an inauguration, where they sign an oath. From there, each of the grades 4 and 5 classes choose a class representative to sit on as a councillor for the school year.

Chief and Council are responsible for doing the morning announcements, take turns saying the Siksika prayer, help MC school events, hold monthly planning meetings and represent our

school at community events. They help with special events such as Remembrance Day assembly, carrying the flags and the laying of the wreaths. The results have been incredible for the students as they have their voices heard and communicate the things they want to see changed. They are the ones that come up with ideas to improve the school environment. For example, this year's Chief and Council initiative they choose to implement positive shout out post-its that looped around the entire school. Chief Old Sun School strongly believes investing in this program is key to creating strong future leaders for Siksika Nation. ■



# Outdoor Appreciation & Active Travel

WRITTEN BY TRACEY COUTTS, ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**Most Sundays when I was a child, my Dad would pile all seven of us into the family car and off we'd go to find a little piece of nature to explore. He was particularly fond of abandoned, overgrown dirt roads and rail tracks, so beside them we'd stop and on our winding, wondrous adventure begin. No one knew where we'd end up; however, what we did know was that we were assured a kaleidoscope of fun: a dance with a monarch butterfly through the long grass, a cool soak of our feet in a rippling brook, a crisp, juicy bite of a Macintosh apple, grown from the seeds of an apple core tossed aside by an unaware adventurer some 25 years before.**

I know these experiences are not exclusive to my family and me. So many of us partook and still partake in such glorious outings. What is more, when my family and I, sun-kissed and exhausted, returned to the car to drive back to our house in the suburbs, those memories of the day did not disappear. Just like a metabolism that stays charged hours after a good hike, happy feelings and a connection with nature last indefinitely.

Those feelings can be recharged again simply by going outside, playing in a park, and walking to and from school, because nature and beauty exist here too. Is the experience different? It can be, but for those who choose to commit to living both indoors and out, we find the connections we seek. During one of our walks to school in early September, my daughter and I were greeted by the "oh sweet Canada, Canada, Canada" song of a white-throated sparrow, which called to us from the undergrowth of a cedar hedge and my love of butter was tested with the brilliant yellow blossom of a wild growing buttercup, randomly picked from a roadside boulevard. It was then that I was reminded of a quotation from Vincent Van Gogh, "If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere." And you do. It's as simple as that.

Now, I know what you may be thinking: this lady is out to lunch; this is not real life. To be honest, some days it is not. Some days we sleep through the alarm, some days the toilet overflows, some days we just move slower than others. All of these happenings leave us short on time and, in turn, impact our regular walk to school. On those mornings when we have to drive, we all feel it. We feel rushed. Our minds have not had the chance to ease into the day. We have not had the opportunity to take in the sights, smells, and sounds of nature – instead, they race by our car windows. We miss our morning chats about upcoming school projects and friend issues, and I miss the latest Grade 4 riddle that is making its way around the class. Because of this, because of what we all miss, we try very hard to make active travel (walking, cycling or wheeling) our number one choice in school transportation. When we do this, we set up ourselves for success. We allow ourselves the time to "find (the) beauty (that is) everywhere," the beauty that exists in our meaningful connections with nature and our built environment, with meeting our physical and emotional needs, and with our indispensable interactions with each other. ■





# The Importance of Connecting to Nature

WRITTEN BY TRACEY GILMOUR, SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**“IMAGINE A WORLD... in which all children grow up with a deep understanding of the world around them. Where [health concerns] are reduced through nature play. Where anti-depressants and pharmaceuticals are prescribed less and nature prescribed more. Where children experience the joy of being in nature before they learn of its loss. Where they can lie in the grass on a hillside for hours and watch clouds become the faces of the future. Where every child and every adult has the human right to a connection with the natural world, and shares the responsibility to care for it.” -Richard Louv**

Instinctively, we know time spent in the outdoors is good for us. We know our fragile planet Earth provides many health and wellness benefits. After a long walk on a winter day, we can feel the positive influence fresh air has on our mood. We can see the flush on our cheeks and the smiles on our faces. This is time well spent with mother nature. But what's really happening? How does connecting with nature impact our mind and body? And why should we be encouraging our children to become the future stewards of our natural world? Here are just a few of the "side effects" from a regular connection with nature:

- Promotes physical healing and strengthens immune system
- Is linked to enhanced activity of cancer fighting cells
- Lowers blood pressure and helps mitigate heart disease
- Encourages people to be physically active
- Increases life expectancy and linked to faster recovery times
- Reduces feelings of anger, aggression, anxiety and depression
- Reduces stress and mental fatigue in the workplace
- Helps improve mood and stimulate coping skills
- Stimulates critical thinking and risk taking skills in children, leading to a more innovative workforce
- Is linked to the development of positive aspirations
- Encourages the development of responsible adults
- Is linked to better student academic achievement, leading to a better educated workforce
- Reduces negative symptoms of ADHD in children
- Stimulates cognitive and emotional development in children
- Unstructured play outdoors influences brain development

With so many benefits attained through regular outdoor time in childhood, it makes sense that we would ask our younger generations to support the protection and

conservation of our natural environments.

Building a positive relationship with nature is crucial in creating a foundation for environmental stewardship. “Children need to develop a relationship with nature before they can be expected to heal its wounds . . . Without that deep, abiding sense of comfort in and love for the natural world, no amount of chastising about turning off the lights or biking to school is going to make a bit of difference” (Sobel, 2008, p. 148)

Young people are the future. How they learn and develop their attitudes, characters and core beliefs will determine how they act and make decisions throughout their lives. The ability of young people to make informed decisions about their relationship with nature has profound implications for both the local and global environment and our collective well-being. Contact is key: if kids learn, play and interact with nature, they will value and cherish it.

Providing opportunities for time outdoors, whether for play or for learning, is not only essential for our current generation of children but also for those yet to come. While benefiting directly from nature play and learning, our children will also share in the responsibility to care for it.

For further information on fostering environmental stewardship in a school setting, check out the University of Toronto's handbook 'Natural Curiosity: A Resource for Teachers.'

<http://www.naturalcuriosity.ca/pdf/NaturalCuriosityManual.pdf> ■

## References:

1. Parks Canada Agency on behalf of the Canadian Parks Council  
Parks Canada. (2014.) "Connecting Canadians with Nature — An Investment in the Well-Being of our Citizens." Ottawa, ON: Parks Canada.
2. Sobel, D. (2008). *Childhood and Nature: Design Principles for Educators*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers
3. World Future Council. (2016, May). "Fostering the next generation of environmental stewards: Learning the Maryland way." <https://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/fostering-next-generation-environmental-stewards-learning-maryland-way/>



GET  
ACTIVE



Photos: Scott Bailey in action teaching students how to ski

# ‘Free Time’ can be Quality Time: Make the Most of Outdoor Activity in the Winter!

WRITTEN BY SCOTT BAILEY, SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**The school ski trip: a classic part of winter in Canada and a great opportunity for students to experience new movement skills in a fun environment with their friends. Downhill and cross-country ski areas across Canada have welcomed school groups for years and will continue to do so this winter.**

Lessons provided by snow schools and ski clubs are an essential part of the experience for students who are complete novices, all the way up to those students who are seasoned veterans who compete in programs or get out on the snow each weekend with their families. The thrill of seeing students experience new sensations such as gliding and turning, the looks of satisfaction they wear after mastering a new piece of terrain or feeling the skis carve for the first time are great rewards.

As part of the physical education program of studies, all students should have the chance to develop and apply skills in alternative environments, including the snow and ice. Furthermore, the latest Statistics Canada report on physical activity in youth reveals 60 minutes outdoors adds extra minutes to a child’s average daily physical activity. Costs and risk management policies are realities that definitely have an impact on what these experiences look like in schools and the length of time that teachers are able to offer. So, the question becomes, how do we maximize our time and make the snow and ice more accessible for all students, all the while developing their physical literacy in winter? Starting with a lesson from a qualified professional is a great step, especially for students (and teachers) who are new to the activity. This is the best way to build confidence, but what happens when the lesson ends?

Ever Active Schools is launching a new initiative to support physical literacy in the winter environment: Ski, Skate, and Slide is a collaborative effort with contributions from the Canadian Ski Instructors’ Alliance (downhill skiing), Spirit North (cross-country skiing), Skate Canada, Curling Canada and the Be Fit for Life Network. Like our Dip, Dive and Glide resource for the

aquatic environment, Ski, Skate and Slide will be published as a series of activities teachers can use in the school yard, or on winter trips to build on instruction from a ski school or coach. With the right environment and a few activities that are adaptable to all abilities and confidence levels, teachers can keep their students moving, growing their skills, and falling in love with the best season of them all.

Join Ever Active Schools and our winter sport partners at Shaping the Future in Lake Louise where Ski, Skate and Slide will be offered as a pre-conference session. You can participate in alpine skiing, cross-country, snowshoeing, skating, and curling and experience a series of learning environments hands-on. You can also join our main conference workshop that will feature cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

## *Remember Alternative Environments!*

Physical Education curriculum includes developing and applying skills in alternative environments, such as snow, ice, and water. Ever Active Schools supports teachers in developing physical literacy across a spectrum of environments so that more students can develop skills and confidence, as well as experiencing a variety of physical activities they can be active in for life.

Dip, Dive and Glide is a resource you can use with your students in swimming and aquatic activities. Turn “free time” at the pool into quality time with fun games and challenges that appeal to all ability and confidence levels. Coming soon... Ski, Skate and Slide for physical literacy activities in snow and ice environments! ■





# GO! Run

WRITTEN BY KATIE MAHON, PROVINCIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Photo: Hailey Degaust leading a GO! Run club launch

**GO! Run is a free, fun and flexible Girls Only running program, developed to increase girls' participation in physical activity. GO! Run was designed to work in tandem with our longstanding project, AMA Youth Run Club (YRC), of which there are already more than 455 participating schools across Alberta, engaging students from Kindergarten through Grade 12. YRC is an endeavour of a partnership between the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) and Ever Active Schools, with ongoing support from Jumpstart.**

The inception of GO! Run was born of desire by both Ever Active Schools and the AMA to address the current and staggering statistics highlighting a lack of participation by girls in sport and physical activity.

"If a girl doesn't participate by age 10, there is only a 10% chance she'll be physically active at age 25" (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport, 2015).

GO! Run attempts to address the challenges and barriers faced by girls that are currently resulting in far less participation in sport and physical activity by girls than boys.

"According to research by the University of Manitoba, by age seven, girls report feeling lower levels of movement competence and confidence than boys" (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport, 2015).

The aim of GO! Run is to support closing the gender gap in girls' participation in sport and physical activity. Creating a girls only experience allows girls to engage in physical activity in a safe space, where they can build confidence and self-esteem while focusing on age-appropriate skill development. Giving girls the opportunities to be active without the influence and

presence of boys can help enrich the experience of participating in physical activity, especially for girls who perceive themselves as less active or who are not confident in their abilities.

By providing girls only opportunities, especially for girls in junior and senior high, we hope to contribute to an increase in participation and provide an experience that results in a sustained increase in physical activity rates.

All of the resources and supports available to YRC teams and coaches are also available to GO! Run coaches and athletes also. In addition, Ever Active Schools has created a GO! Run handbook, free to download on our website. Here you will find a number of resources, including a section on GO! Run games that could be used as warm-ups before or a cool-downs after your girls' run. The games are designed to keep girls moving, motivated and confident all practice long. Try the Volcanoes and Ice Cream Cones activity below with your students, and check out [www.amayouthrunclub.com](http://www.amayouthrunclub.com) to see the full handbook and more great resources! ■

## VOLCANOS & ICE CREAM CONES



**Equipment:** 15+ Pylons  
**Time Required:** 5+ min  
**Recommended For:** 7-12

### How to Play:

- Spread out lots of cones around the playing area and put some upright (volcanoes) and upside down (ice-cream cones)
- Divide players into 2 groups (one volcanoes and one ice-creams)
- On "GO," players run around and turn over as many cones as possible, as assigned to their team cone type
- Keep going, turning over as many as you can and after 2-3 minutes, when the coach blows the whistle, all players must stop and put their hands on their head. The team with the most cones in the correct position wins.
- Play multiple rounds, switching sides:
  - volcanoes <> ice creams
- Players are NOT allowed to block others from getting to a cone



# Shifting Behaviour Toward a Healthier Lifestyle

WRITTEN BY TRACEY COUTTS, ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**Mark February 7, 2018 on your calendars! We are looking forward to the 2018 Winter Walk Day, a one day event to remind Albertans that we do, in fact, live in a province that experiences winter and that enjoying the outdoors during the winter can be done... and done well.**

Along with many community events across the province, two events are scheduled in Edmonton on this day, one at the Edmonton City Hall Plaza (south steps) and the other at the Provincial Legislature Grounds, both starting at 12:00 p.m. Those interested in participating in either event are asked to register at [www.shapeab.com/winter-walk-day-2018-register/](http://www.shapeab.com/winter-walk-day-2018-register/). If you're not able to attend either of these events, how about hosting your own?

**Winter Walk Day suggestions:**

**Work places:** Organize a lunch hour walk in the neighbourhood around your office. Is no one else available at that time? How about a walking meeting where you take the boardroom outside?

**Schools:** Encourage students to walk to and from school on this day. You could also schedule a walk during school hours, at lunch or at another time.

**Families:** Are you keen on getting outdoors with your children, parents, pets, and/or other relatives? Organize a family walk after dinner. This event has no time limits!

**For those at home:** Gather some friends and neighbours and step outside for a walk around your community.

**For those with accessibility barriers:** If slippery, snow-covered walkways limit your ability to get out of doors, organize an event at a mall or indoor track. In a wheelchair or use a scooter? We need you. This event is about getting out, getting together and getting mobile.

**For all others:** Surprise us! If you prefer walking in nature, organize

an event at a local trail. If walking in winter makes you cold and hungry, organize an after-event get-together where you can serve hot drinks and snacks. The sky's the limit!

While you're planning your wonderful Winter Walk Day events, there are a few things to remember:

- Register yourself and/or your event at [www.shapeab.com/winter-walk-day-2018-register/](http://www.shapeab.com/winter-walk-day-2018-register/)
- Dress appropriately for the weather: coats, hats, mittens, scarves, boots, snow pants, and whatever else will make your walk enjoyable. We want everyone to stay warm and safe
- Plan your route ahead of time and share this information with your group. Inform participants about meeting times and locations
- Share your experiences with @SHAPE\_Alberta and @WinterWalkDay, and use the hashtag, #WinterWalkDay. We encourage you to take pictures (action shots are the best!) and share them with us as well

Now, you're probably wondering, why put all of this focus and work into a one day event? Think of Wednesday, February 7, Winter Walk Day 2018, as a day to encourage ourselves and those around us to shift our behavior to be more active. If you're already active, that's great. If you wish to be more active, this could be the start of something beautiful. ■





# Loose Parts Play

WRITTEN BY TRACEY GILMOUR, SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**“In any environment, both the degree of inventiveness and creativity, and the possibility of discovery, are directly proportional to the number and kind of variables in it.” -Simon Nicholson, Architect**

North Star Elementary School in Cold Lake, Alberta is embarking on an exciting new recess adventure! Staff at this Northern Lights School Division No. 69 elementary school has committed to supporting children's play with 'loose parts'. Throughout Fall, the team at North Star has been busy collecting recycled materials - taking in donations of unused household items and hoarding as many cardboard boxes as they can get their hands on. Teachers and support staff have been learning about Playwork from Scrapstore PlayPod and how supporting children in self-directed play opens up a wealth of creative play opportunities that support cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. Principal Maureen Miller is a passionate advocate for physical activity as a key component of Comprehensive School Health:

“At North Star Elementary, our staff and students are fortunate to have daily physical education, three outside recesses per day and an Apple Schools facilitator working in our building. We are very excited about adding another component to our programming, that of a loose parts play environment. Our students will now have an opportunity to create, invent, move, problem solve and explore in the great outdoors; an experience that many young children do not get these days.”

## But what are these loose parts?

Loose Parts Play was first proposed back in the 1970s by architect Simon Nicholson, who believed that it is the loose parts in our environment that empower our creativity. Loose parts are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. The more materials and individuals involved, the more ingenuity takes place.

## Loose parts should:

- Have no defined use and play facilitators must support the children when they decide to change the shape or use of them.
- Be accessible physically and stored where they can

be reached by children without having to ask for them. The children should know that they can use them whenever and however they wish.

- Be regularly replenished, changed, and added to.

When children pick up 'loose parts' it can be anything they imagine it to be. This allows them to have fun, experiment, discover and invent new things.

Previous generations would have engaged in this type of play quite naturally. Toys were limited and children were able to wander and play within their environments comparatively free from adult restrictions and interruptions. Children today spend a lot more time indoors and are not able to roam as freely in fields, woods and parks. Adults, therefore, need to provide equivalent play opportunities for young children of all ages. Many toys have a fixed outcome and limited flexibility, but to a child playing with loose parts, an object can become anything they want it to be.

## Manufactured items could include the following:

Boxes, buckets, blocks, trucks, cloth, baskets, tools, dramatic play props, balls

## Natural items could include such items as:

Bark, sand, seeds, mud, stones, vines, leaves, tree stumps, twigs straw bales

## Recycled items could include:

Cardboard boxes, building materials, packing pellets, old pots and pans, tires, milk crates, ribbon, rope, string, polystyrene plastic bottles, felt containers

Stay tuned to hear more about North Star Elementary School's journey into loose parts play as we follow their progress. We look forward to attending their big community launch in January 2018. ■





EAT  
SMART

## Unique Health Issues: How One School Recognizes Indigenous-Specific Diet as the Key to Student Success

WRITTEN BY: SISSY THIESSEN, RESILIENCY COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**It's not news that First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and youth face unique health issues. In a north eastern Métis settlement school, a principal is working hard to identify and address these issues. Laurie Thompson is the principal of Kikino School, and understands these needs first-hand. She works to educate and serve 105 students in Kindergarten to Grade 8. Thompson explained that all Kikino students identify as Métis and/or First Nations, and every student knows or has a close family member with a diagnosis of diabetes, obesity and/or mental health issues.**

Kikino School partnered with the University of Alberta to conduct a Mobile Diabetes Screening Initiative, which indicated that the Indigenous community has: "High indicator risks for diabetes, obesity and hypertension."

For many communities, these issues can be attributed to socio-economic factors such as historical segregation and

physical lack of access to healthy food sources. Additionally, students are spending more time being sedentary. According to Laurie, the student survey component of the Diabetes Screening Initiative indicated that "children are being raised as digital Natives and screen time is taking over play time."

Laurie believes healthy eating is the key to addressing the >



high rate of diabetes, other major health issues and student learning. “Healthy bodies are a component of healthy minds, and we continue to strive to make gains in literacy and numeracy,” she said.

She also identifies barriers to physical activity in her community: “While we recognize that we have pockets of excellence and great role models who do yoga and/or work out on a daily basis, our large families who live close to each other just seems to magnify or bring to the forefront health challenges.”

To address these issues, Health Canada has created a specific food guide for First Nations, Inuit and Métis populations. According to the Health Canada website, “For the first time, a national food guide has been created which reflects the values, traditions and food choices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.”

This tailored food guide includes both traditional foods and store-bought foods that are generally available, affordable and accessible across Canada, and provides unique images and content. As an educator and Indigenous woman living and working in these communities every day, Laurie attests to the importance of having a food guide specific to Indigenous Peoples.

“I believe that our Indigenous people have nutrition needs that our bodies are genetically designed for.” She speaks of traditional diets being primarily fruit and vegetables, and a lifestyle of being physically active, due to nomadic behaviour. She explains that this diet and lifestyle are still important today.

“We are still connected to our land. As Métis Settlements of Alberta, our land is our culture, and our future. There is wellness to be found in natural foods if the environment is clean and healthy; this includes fish, duck, moose, deer and plants.”

In terms of catering to these specific dietary needs of Indigenous students, Laurie says the serving recommendations in Canada’s Food Guide - First Nations, Métis and Inuit may not reflect what is available within communities. “I remember some winters where we ate a lot of meat because that is what was there. We work hard to teach our students that if you cannot get fresh, then canned is ok too. And sometimes you need to eat more of something depending on the time of year and season of availability before something spoils.”

Laurie said Kikino School supplies healthy eating options through daily breakfast and lunch programs that focus on portion size, moderation and inclusion of vegetables. “We cannot change how families need to shop or cook but we can teach knowledge, and understanding about moderation.”

She shares these meal and snack ideas for other schools wanting to improve the nutritional content in their meal programs:

- Breakfast: apples and cheese, yogurt, breakfast muffins
- Lunch: Fruit, barbecue chicken breast, whole wheat pasta bakes, beef tacos and wraps
- Replacing as many white flour options with whole wheat options as possible
- School Treat Days: Encouraging moderation by allowing junk food options, while offering more nutritious options like fruit and vegetable trays

Laurie also shares that providing drinking water to her staff and students has been highly beneficial for overall school health.

“Our school does not have vending machines of any type. Students who do not come with snacks are encouraged to pick up two snacks from the kitchen before they leave the community cafeteria space in the morning.”

In terms of advice for Indigenous schools looking to implement healthier food choices and eating habits for their students, Laurie shares the key is in shifting perspective.

“When we move away from silo thinking like literacy, numeracy, social studies, science, physical education and seeing children as holistic human beings, we see education is more than academics... it’s a partnership.”

Laurie has also found assistance in promoting healthy eating through bringing in mentors who promote making positive wellness choices. Mentors such as Beckie Scott, Olympic Medalist and Mike Neary, director of Cross Country Alberta, both of whom have acted as advocates of physical literacy and holistic wellness for her school community.

She also mentions the importance of having students take the lead in their own health advocacy. “We have student leadership clubs that invite all students to develop knowledge, skills, and self confidence and now we are looking at school policy.” As a base for implementing these Indigenous-specialized diet needs and education into schools, Laurie shares her belief in asking critical questions at a policy level.

What policy do we need in place to ensure that this thinking around holistic education and physical literacy is a way of doing business no matter who walks into this building next?

#### *What can you do: **Make a Plan!***

Identify the opportunities the school council has to promote healthy eating throughout the year. Consider all the occasions where food is provided or served, and brainstorm options and alternatives. Improving nutritional quality can be as simple as substituting whole grains for white breads at the back to school barbeque, or as unconventional as deciding on an alternate celebration that doesn’t involve food.

The bottom line is school councils have an important role in a healthy school community. Much like healthy eating itself, promoting healthy eating environments in schools is all about balance. Getting the message right and focusing on healthy growth and development (rather than body weight, for example), can ensure a supportive social environment, body positivity and healthy students who are better learners. ■

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## Art Supports Health and Learning: Let HASS Inspire You!

*Photos: Red Deer #HASSreel art board; Students and staff of École Barrie Wilson contributing to the artboard*

WRITTEN BY KATELYNN THEAL, COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**Healthy Active Schools Symposia (HASS) are events hosted across the province by Ever Active Schools in partnership with Alberta Health Services, the Be Fit For Life Network and the Alberta Healthy School Communities Wellness Fund. HASS events are all about supporting healthy school communities through student leadership. They are designed to provide Alberta students with knowledge, skills and resources to return to their school and be active agents of change in building a community that enhances their learning and fosters their well-being.**

On February 7, Ever Active Schools will be hosting the 13th and final event for the 2017/18 school year. The theme for this year's HASS events is, 'Finding the Leader Within Through the Arts, Creative Expression, and a Growth Mindset.' A growth mindset is a belief that, with hard work, improvements will occur. It is the recognition that struggling with something doesn't equal failure, but is rather a challenge, and presents an opportunity to grow.

Engaging in the arts supports a growth mindset. It can inspire and motivate, opening up new possibilities for creative expression and imagination. Having a growth mindset is recognizing that you're always growing and developing, and this includes your brain. Creative expression through the arts, like music and fine arts, supports brain development.

In addition to supporting brain development and overall student learning, art can also support personal and whole school health and wellness. Art can be a protective factor, promoting mental well-being. It supports the development of self-esteem, can lower heart rate and blood pressure, release endorphins, and increase feelings of hope and optimism.

Arts also help create safe, caring, and welcoming environments for all students, as well as fosters relationship building and connections within a school community. Students' involvement in the process of creating their environment can empower, develop community and increase motivation.

Having a growth mindset is trusting that learning is a journey. At the HASS events, we encouraged students to enjoy the ride. Throughout the day, students reflected on the amazing healthy activities already happening at their schools. They were encouraged to celebrate these, and connect and share with other schools. Additionally, each symposium featured unique breakout sessions related to healthy eating, active living and mental well-being. These sessions were presented by provincial and local partners to inspire students with new ideas.

To link to the art theme, and support school reflections this year, HASS events featured a #HASSreel, or rather an identity tapestry. The #HASSreel consisted of three boards full of pegs with labels featuring health actions related to healthy eating, active living and mental well-being. School teams worked their way through the boards wrapping ➤



yarn around the pegs they identified with. Schools were encouraged to celebrate these actions, get inspired, and collect ideas to support their action planning.

As more and more school teams interacted with the board, a beautiful tapestry began to develop. With 12 HASS events down, these tapestries are a visual representation of all the amazing health actions happening across our province, and each and every one of our amazing student leaders had a hand in creating it. What's more inspiring than that?

Want to create your own Health Actions Identity Tapestry? Check out this link: <http://bit.ly/HASS-REEL-L>

Use the Joint Consortium for School Health:Healthy School Planner to support assessment: <http://hsp.uwaterloo.ca/>

Use the online action plan tool to support planning following some assessment and reflection: <http://bit.ly/EAS-AP>

Ever Active Schools would like to thank Britt Petracek, curriculum and resource support consultant for Arts Education with Edmonton Public Schools for sharing ideas, and inspiration that led to using the Identity Tapestry, and Mrs. Witherspoon, teacher at Michael Phair Junior High School in Edmonton for inviting Ever Active Schools into her class to trial the #HASSreel. ■

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**HEALTHY  
ACTIVE  
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SYMPOSIA**

# The Leader Within: Illustrating Growth



**SAVE THE DATE - FORT MCMURRAY**  
**February 7th, 2018**  
**Keyano College; 8115 Franklin Ave**  
**Grades 4-12**

Join us for the Provincial Tour  
Supporting Healthy School communities  
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This year's theme focuses on finding the  
leader within through the arts, creative  
expression and a growth mindset







#EASHASS  
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# Why Teaching Kids How to Move Has Become Essential

SUBMITTED BY ACTIVE FOR LIFE

**Although it may seem a bit counterintuitive, we must teach kids how to move. Humans are born with the capacity to move, but not the skills to do so. Think about swimming the front crawl as an example. Most of us are born with the ability to stroke the water with our arms, kick our legs and turn our heads to the side, but we have to be taught these skills in order to be able to swim. The same is true for all “movement skills” that we believe are innate, such as running, jumping and throwing.**

Most of us have experienced this learning process through the games we played as kids. It was simple: go outside, join whatever game was going on, watch the older kids and do what they did. If the game was kick the can, you learned to kick. If it was hide and seek or tag, you learned to twist, turn and zigzag as you ran. Scrub baseball taught us how to pitch, catch, and strike a ball with a stick.

Without knowing it, as our skills grew, so did our confidence and our enjoyment. And that was magical, because when kids learn to love moving early in life they tend to remain active for the rest of their lives.

For centuries, the system worked perfectly: children's search for pleasure led them to play games and through play they learned the movement skills needed to survive. But today the system is backfiring.

One reason is kids' inherent desire to seek fun and pleasure, not movement skills, per se. Like past generations, kids are born programmed to play, but the games they play have changed.

My childhood was filled with active games that helped me become an active person. Today's kids learn sedentary games. They learn to handle a joystick, a keyboard, and smartphones. The village still teaches kids to play, but today's games have little to do with moving well.

Furthermore, a perfect storm of factors has combined to create an environment in which most parents are fearful for the safety of their children, so they drive them everywhere and more or less encourage them to spend more time indoors than out. Consequently, we have ended up with the most inactive generation in history.

What are we to do? How can we help our kids learn and enjoy moving instead of becoming sedentary for life? One thing is clear: we have to adopt a different perspective than our own parents.

## **We have to come to terms with a few things:**

### **1. Acknowledge that inactivity is the new norm and it's making kids sick**

The level of physical activity has dropped dramatically over just a few generations. A growing number of kids suffer what used to be “adult diseases” such as high cholesterol, Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. As experts warn us, sitting is the new smoking.

### **2. Accept that we need to help our kids develop movement skills**

This is called physical literacy and it's about developing the fundamental movement skills that all children need, such as running, hopping, throwing, catching and jumping. These skills give kids the confidence to participate in different physical activities, sports and games for a lifetime.

### **3. Physical literacy depends on awareness from parents**

Like learning a language, physical literacy is best developed from a young age. Parents who want to help their kids develop physical literacy don't have to do anything more than what most parents want to do anyway: spend a bit of time with their children doing activities they enjoy. Like reading, kids who develop their skills early will most likely keep going. The reward for helping your kids develop physical literacy is that you don't need to send them outside to play; they will go on their own.

### **4. Physical literacy is essential for all kids, not just athletes in the making**

I like the term “physical literacy” because it emphasizes that it's not just about developing athletes. Physical literacy leads to kids being more skilled, confident and motivated to move. Children who are physically competent are also better off cognitively, emotionally and socially. Learning to be comfortable in your body is essential for the athlete, but also the rocket scientist or budding writer.

### **5. Engage the village**

Parents can't do it alone. If kids are to move more, not less, then going forward the entire village has to step up. Communities need to activate. Governments have to make physical literacy a priority and schools have to increase physical education, not cut it. These institutions will change their ways if we — the parents — speak up.

It is hard to believe that we have arrived at a point where we need to help children learn to move, but here we are. It is time to take on the task and help our kids. It takes a village to teach the right skills essential to a better life. ■

**ACTIVE FOR LIFE**® Raising physically literate kids





**Photos:** Students began by peeling the bark off of the logs; Photo above - Knowledge Keeper Jerry Saddleback demonstrates taking aim and shooting a bow.

# One-Credit Weekend: Traditional Bowhunting Education with Edmonton Public Schools

WRITTEN BY MAC WALTON, RESILIENCY COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**On October 20 and 21, 2017, Ever Active Schools, in partnership with Edmonton Public School Board's First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education department hosted the first one-credit weekend opportunity for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students from high schools across Edmonton.**

With the goal of providing training for active, outdoor and traditional activities, students were able to get one step closer to graduation by earning one credit in two days. This holistic and experiential learning opportunity sought to build resiliency in students by creating something from the ground up. As a student noted, "It was awesome creating something from scratch and knowing how it was built and how to build it." The students, led by bow making Knowledge Keeper, Jerry Saddleback, began with raw logs and were able to experience the challenges, learn the patience, and practice the skills needed to build bows in the traditional way. The opportunity also included wilderness safety, the basics of using a bow, target practice, and both traditional and contemporary hunting ethics.

Students really appreciated the opportunity to work with a knowledge keeper who embodied the wisdom and patience to build traditional bows. As one student said after the program, "I really liked the teachings about the outdoors when hunting,

and the great knowledge that was said from Elder Jerry... it's fun learning especially when the expert is right beside you, [guiding] you step by step."

The program, building off of the Miyomahchihowin Spring Break Camp that provided training and credits to First Nations; Métis and Inuit students in Edmonton Public Schools last March, will continue with two more one-credit weekends in the new year. Last year's spring break camp was so successful, similar projects will be held this spring in two other school jurisdictions.

Ever Active Schools and Edmonton Public Schools will partner to host two more one-credit weekend courses in 2018, continuing to focus on outdoor skills, active living and traditional knowledge. The opportunity for students is supported by Edmonton Public School Board First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education and the Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund. ■



## TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

# Making Every Day National Aboriginal Day: How to Honour Indigenous Students and Culture in Your School

SUBMITTED BY SISSY THIESSEN, RESILIENCY COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**Sissy Thiessen, resiliency coordinator with Ever Active Schools, weighs in on how to integrate and honour Indigenous culture within your school. Sissy is a Nakota Sioux and Cree Jingle Dress dancer, crafter and facilitator, and has gained valuable insight working with Indigenous communities and schools across the province. She has delivered leadership, wellness, cultural and historical education to various groups, as well as acted as a First Nations, Métis and Inuit grad coach in a high school.**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has opened the door for a new era, where stories of survival and historical injustices against Indigenous people are coming to the forefront. As a result, the voices advocating for the integration and celebration of Indigenous culture, history and issues into school curriculums are becoming louder.

According to a report on First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Success released by Laurentian University in 2013, there is “an awareness that is greatly needed in a time where Indigenous Nations are calling for action, and allies to these many Nations are responding. Indigenous content and preferred strategies need to be developed and monitored in partnership with educators. The responsibility for Indigenous student success is a shared and collaborative one.”

With this education and awareness comes a visible desire to honour this culture once it is learned. It has also been reported that honouring Indigenous people, history, practices and culture has a profound impact upon Indigenous students and their peers. According to a report released by the Vancouver Board of Education in 2008

titled “It’s All About Learning: What We Know About Learning and What We Are Doing About It,” sharing traditional teachings has a positive impact on student learning. “Sharing our gifts in the spirit of truth; whilst embracing humour and positive interactions are vital to moving forward in Indigenous student success. We need to share the teachings of our people, establish meaningful relations, proceed with respect and reciprocity, and advocate for human rights as essential to schooling.”

The next step is determining how to put these advisories into practice. Here are some ideas and actions Sissy has found useful when working within Indigenous schools and communities. All actions should be discussed with an Elder or Knowledge Keeper, upon presenting an offering of tobacco.

- **Find An Elder:** Through consultation with your local Friendship Centre, Universities, Indigenous-serving organizations and programs, as well as district cultural liaison or learning services, connect with an elder who is willing to ➤





**Photos:** Indigenous students participating in the 2017 Resiliency Summit, learning tradition games, dance and more!

come to your community

- **Be Inclusive:** Consult this Elder and cultural specialists on how to integrate traditional language, history, dance, stories, and arts and crafts into the curriculum
- **Celebrate Indigenous Success:** Invite Indigenous role models such as Elders, authors, artists, athletes and performers to speak at your school
- **Acknowledge the Land:** Include Treaty and Territorial Land Acknowledgements before school events and gatherings
- **Create Space:** Have medicine available on site for \*smudging
  - Have an Elder or Knowledge Keeper on site or invite one to visit weekly
  - Have space available for traditional dance practice, crafting and art-making
- **Make it Equitable:** Take students on a field trip to a neighbouring reserve to participate in a circle teaching with an Elder or Knowledge Keeper
  - Arrange classroom desks and chairs in a circular format
- **Create Community:** Formulate a cross-cultural Indigenous and non-Indigenous student group to exercise their voices and autonomy to plan school events, initiatives and intercultural exchanges
- **Spread Awareness:** Have a bulletin board to advertise Indigenous events, movements and awareness initiatives such as Orange Shirt Day, The Red Dress Project, gatherings, Round Dances, Feasts and Pow Wows
- **Become a Good Host:** Plan and invite families to school-hosted Round Dances and feasts

On an administrative level, Verna St. Denis, PhD, provides the following suggestions in her report titled "A Study of Aboriginal Teachers' Professional Knowledge and Experience in Canadian Schools," which contains suggestions from the 'Beyond Shadows: First

Nation, Métis and Inuit Student Success Report' released by Laurentian University in 2013:

1. **Select, train, hire** and actively seek to retain more Aboriginal teachers
2. **Teach Aboriginal content** throughout the school, in all subjects, every day
3. **Offer mentoring** to Aboriginal teachers, helping them learn how to negotiate the system and how to maintain a reasonable workload
4. **Require training** and/or course work in Aboriginal education [all staff]
5. **Acknowledge** and utilize local resources
6. **Provide** opportunities for Aboriginal teachers to network with each other ■

*\*Smudging: A prayer ceremony involving the burning of sage, sweetgrass, fungi, cedar or other medicine and using to smoke to cleanse one's mind, body and spirit*

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# Teachers of Tomorrow

WRITTEN BY KERRI MURRAY, DIRECTOR OF PROJECTS, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**Very few teachers, it seems, reflect on their first year of teaching and feel like they knew what they were getting into, and that they were well prepared to handle it. What would this first year be like if teachers received training on what they are required to do in the field; how to practice self-care, create positive social environments and support students in mental and physical well-being? How would the education experience differ for all stakeholders if educators were taught to teach health not through personal bias, but to model it through an internationally recognized and empirically-supported framework?**

Students attending the Werklund School of Education (WSE) at the University of Calgary are about to find out. This month, the Faculty launched the first course in Canada to teach pre-service teachers about Comprehensive School Health (CSH) as part of their Bachelor of Education degree. The course is designed as a three day block-week intensive – an immersive, conference-style introduction – followed by a five week series of lectures and labs. All tolled, these emerging professionals will receive about 40 hours of instruction on wellness education and health promotion to better prepare them for their roles

when they enter the field.

Over 28 stakeholders, including superintendents, teachers, recent graduates and provincial school health partners, contributed to the development of the course under the leadership of Dr. Shelly Russell-Mayhew. Congratulations on a collaborative effort and a significant achievement toward better preparing the teachers of tomorrow to be wellness champions for healthy school communities. Stay tuned for updates and progress with the program. ■



## Join the Movement in 2018!

Want to get kids physically active and artistically engaged? Want to have your students explore themes linked to the environment and caring for our planet? Then join thousands of others who participated in the Sharing Dance Day events across Canada in 2017. Online videos and toolkits to learn the 2018 choreography will be available in February.

You DO NOT need any dance experience. It is 100% free to access and participate. See what Sharing Dance will do to ignite the artist in all of your students.

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## FEATURE STORY

# Let the Children Play!

WRITTEN BY MARGAUX MCWATT, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

**In most situations, we're absolutely convinced that we're helping solve a very simple problem: remove the risk, save the child. Although we have good intentions, where is this well-intentioned road leading us, and more importantly, where is it leading our youth? Banning behaviours surrounding play that are considered risky, unsafe and adverse to the welfare of children is a risk in and of itself. The insidious removal of playful behaviours can be very detrimental, and is symptomatic of a culture and system that is unable to assess risk meaningfully.**

Back in September 2017, a school in Ontario distributed a draft handbook of playground rules stating that cartwheels were banned on school property. Although there were no reported injuries from cartwheels, the gymnastic activity is believed to cause concussions, along with neck and wrist injuries. Several parents and groups spoke out, resulting in petitions, articles and editorials opposing the ban, and leaving many wondering if these behaviours were, in fact, dangerous. (7) The main question that arose: What will they ban next?

Brian Storey, president and CEO of Physical and Health Education Canada, explained in a CBC Radio interview that schools are trying to solve an education problem with policy.

"If children are hurting themselves doing cartwheels, it's a physical literacy issue. They're missing a physical competence component to their movement repertoire that just hasn't been developed yet," Brian said during the interview.

"Physical literacy is a fundamental and valuable human capability that can be described as a disposition acquired by human individuals encompassing the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding that establishes purposeful physical pursuits as an integral part of their lifestyle." (1)

Education surrounding movement itself is necessary for children to acquire spatial awareness and to move safely and intentionally through the spaces they occupy. Not only will children be more mindful of their surroundings, they will be more competent and confident when participating in physical activities if they are taught how to move. Along

with confident and intentional movement, risk assessment will also help adults and youth make informed decisions in regards to play.

"There are lots of things to be learned from taking a risk, and doing a risk benefit assessment helps us squeamish adults see everything on paper and how the paper can leave a trail when discussing children and movement in the future," said Suzanna Law, co-founder of Pop-Up Adventure Playgrounds and qualified play worker for over 12 years. Suzanna's organization focuses on supporting children's play simply by educating adults around the idea that children have a right to play and that they have to meet their own needs through self-directed and intrinsically-motivated play. Banning certain behaviours, Suzanna explained, is a knee-jerk reaction to perceiving risks and expecting danger and broken bones. People tend to assume the worst will happen and their fears can be fueled by past experience and a group-think mentality, but Pop-Up Adventure Playgrounds aims to encourage parents, teachers and care workers to do more risk-benefit assessments. Play workers perform these assessments constantly to help put risk into perspective. By filling out a simple online form, it helps by identifying the risk, looking at what possible injuries could arise from each situation and action, and how probable every outcome is.

"Assessments help you work through the risk and then the benefit of said risk. A child now knows that climbing the tree that high on a branch that slim is not a good idea. They will know for the future," she said.

The Pop-Up Adventure Playgrounds model was developed in order to start an important conversation and for people to see play in action, >

Suzanna explained. Essentially, it's a temporary playground space with loose parts, which appears for two or three hours in a community that is open to the idea of play. In that short time, the newly created space gathers parents, children and play workers to talk about why play is important and to see it in action as children are encouraged to explore.

"It is really important that folks everywhere understand that play is not just a way of blowing off steam, it's beneficial for the whole child in that it's not just about learning, it is about developing skills, understanding the world, exploring, discovering how things feel and sound, being able to work out how people react to things, and so much more," Suzanna said.

President of the International Play Association, Pierre Harrison, shares a similar view about what play means to the child: "Play can be described as what children engage in when they choose the what, who, where and why. The child's control is key. Through their self-directed play, children, armed with curiosity and a spirit of inquiry, explore their environment and build knowledge about the world around them. In doing so they prepare the foundation on which they will build a life of resilience, creativity, self-confidence and life-long learning" (3)

Bob Hughes, author of "A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types," identified and outlined 16 different play types meant to be examined and explored by adults who study and facilitate play. From exploratory play to expanding the imagination and developing social skills, these play types are meant to enrich the childhood experience.

#### **16 different play types: (5)**

1. *Symbolic Play*
2. *Rough and Tumble Play*
3. *Socio-dramatic Play*
4. *Social Play*
5. *Creative Play*

6. *Communication Play*
7. *Dramatic Play*
8. *Deep Play*
9. *Exploratory Play*
10. *Fantasy Play*
11. *Imaginative Play*
12. *Locomotor Play*
13. *Mastery Play*
14. *Object Play*
15. *Role Play*
16. *Recapitulative Play*

Interested to learn more about play? Check out this free e-course:

[www.morganleichtersaxby.com](http://www.morganleichtersaxby.com)

With an extensive play vocabulary from these 16 play types, the benefits of play start to become more and more clear. As adults, Suzanna explained, we all might have a hard time grasping that play is for its own sake. We tend to focus on the destination rather than the journey, the product rather than the process.

During her 12 years of play work, she has come across a number of adults who don't see the value of play, and because of that, most people think it's a waste of time. Suzanna emphasizes that childhoods rich in play yield well-adjusted adults - play helps children explore the world, develop an understanding of why they exist and what significance that realization brings to their lives.

"Play is for its own sake, and on its own it doesn't need justification; However, adults need justification for everything, so here are some reasons: it is important for executive function - meaning skills like planning ahead, forming a team, teamwork itself, things that you really don't generally learn in school. Children develop these things through play. Play is biologically, psychologically and socially necessary for

“

Play is biologically, psychologically and socially necessary for both the individual and the community. Not only is play important for children, it's important for every single adult out there, and the wider society. It's so very important that people recognize its importance and allow for it to happen.”

– Suzanna Law, Pop-Up Adventure Playgrounds





both the individual and the community. Not only is play important for children, it's important for every single adult out there, and the wider society. It's so very important that people recognize it's importance and allow for it to happen."

Banning play and playful behaviour has the potential to impede crucial development and growth that children need. As more movement is taken away, this gives way to sedentary behaviour and doesn't provide the opportunity for children to explore, make mistakes and learn from their bruises.

"In schools and everywhere, we're limiting movement for children, even though people are dying from not moving! For some reason we are coming down hard on schools and on play centres that allow children to run around more, and it's very sad that school [administration] can't look beyond the immediate tiny problem and see the future benefits for the school if they continue to let that child play."

So where do we go from here? Apart from thoughtfully developing opportunities to play, while keeping in mind that children need to be taught how to move and how to assess 'risky' behaviour, Suzanna has advice for teachers, parents and adults in general: "The pressures that other people give those who have or care for children is immense and what I want to say to comfort all these people is... you're doing a great job. There's only so much we can do. We're not superheroes, contrary to what people believe. Do what you know, and what you instinctively know what to do best, and let them play. I see the fear that they have around play, because who knows what might happen. This is the key - play is inherently fluid, and it's free. In this fluidity, nobody knows what's going to happen. It is really scary, but incremental movements in a positive direction are what you want. Anybody can do it and it is possible and we want people to know that they're doing a great job."

Looking beyond the need for thoughtfully assessing risk, and beyond the need for education surrounding movement, Suzanna shared a mentality that can help adults get past personal biases towards the

capabilities of youth and ultimately granting permission to play:

"Play work is viewing children as human beings in this world who are just as nice as me and you and who have a say in their own lives. We should treat them respectfully and as upstanding members of society because that's what they are and that's who they will be in the future. We should respect their current needs to play because that's all they want to do right now and it doesn't make any sense to us but it's important to them and we should absolutely let them do it."

To learn more about Pop-Up Adventure Playgrounds and risk assessment, please visit: [www.popupadventureplaygrounds.wordpress.com/welcome/pop-up-adventure-playgrounds/](http://www.popupadventureplaygrounds.wordpress.com/welcome/pop-up-adventure-playgrounds/) ■

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