



Provincial Activity Guidelines for After-School Programs in Alberta: Implementation Guide

Table of Contents

Using this Guide.....	2
Conversation Kit.....	4
Letter Home.....	5
Self Assessment Tools	
Physical Activity Time, Intensity and Quality.....	6
Supportive Access, Facilities and Equipment.....	7
Collaboration, Implementation and Evaluation.....	8
Action Planning.....	9
Evaluation.....	10
Training Opportunities.....	11
References.....	12

Using this Guide

The purpose of this Implementation Guide is to assist you in incorporating the Provincial Activity Guidelines for After-School Programs in Alberta in your after-school program. This guide includes a [Conversation Kit](#) with key messages for discussing the Guidelines with a variety of stakeholders that may be involved in your after-school programming (including parents), a [Letter Home](#) that outlines why your program is going through the process of implementing the Guidelines, a set of [Self-Assessment Tools](#) to help you review your programming, a template for [Action Planning](#) that will be informed by the self-assessments, some suggestions on [Evaluating](#) your program's progress towards the implementation of the Guidelines, as well as links to potential [Training Opportunities](#) for your program staff.

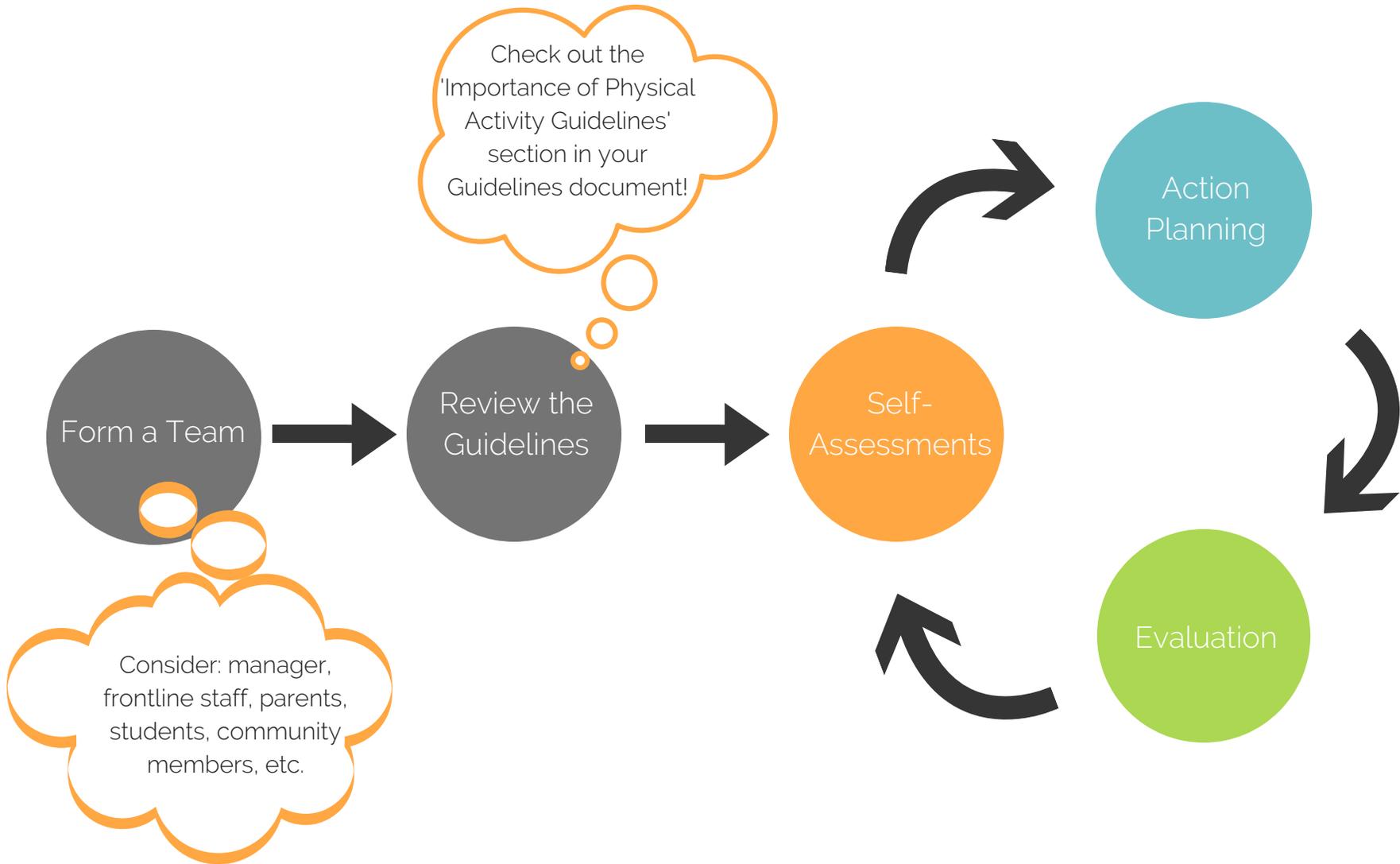
The first step to using this guide is to form a team to share the work. Consider including program managers and frontline staff as well as parents, students and other community members if applicable. Next review the Provincial Activity Guidelines for After-School Programs in Alberta and complete the [Self-Assessment Tools](#) that are included in this guide. The results from these assessment tools will highlight action areas in your specific program. Review the 'Importance of Physical Activity Guidelines' section in the Guidelines document with your entire staff to ensure that there is an understanding around why you are going through this process. Some key points from this section are included in the Conversation Kit in this guide.

Once you have completed the self-assessments turn to the [Action Planning](#) section of this guide where you will find a template for planning out your action areas that you had identified in your self-assessments. Complete this template with your staff and divide up the responsibilities.

Also included in this guide is a section around [Evaluation](#). This section provides some ideas around how you can evaluate your success/progress in implementing the Guidelines. Continually checking in on your progress is an important step in this process. These evaluations will help to inform future self-assessments and improvement planning.

This process is visually depicted on the following page.

Using this Guide



Conversation Kit



This conversation kit provides some key messages that you can use when discussing the Guidelines with the various stakeholders involved. These can be used to help discuss the importance of the Guidelines and create buy-in for your efforts towards achieving 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity in your after-school program.

Key messages from the research can also be found in the Guidelines document.

Role

Key Messages

Program Staff/
Parents

- Evidence continues to grow regarding the contribution of physical activity to academic performance (1,2).
- Over half of the after-school programs in Alberta are already offering 30 minutes or more of free indoor play per session (3).
- Spending time outdoors has numerous health, social and environmental benefits. 45% of after-school programs in Alberta are already offering 30 minutes or more of free outdoor play per day per session (3).
- The [24 hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth](#) state that children and youth should be engaging in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity, participating in a variety of structured and unstructured physical activities and accumulate no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time. After-school programs can help reach these goals (4).

Participants

- Moving is fun!
- The more we move the better we feel!
- Moving more may help with learning.

Letter Home



Consider customizing a letter like this one to notify the parents/caregivers of your participants of any proposed changes to programming due to implementation of the guidelines.

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Our after-school program will be implementing the Provincial Activity Guidelines for After-School Programs in Alberta. These Guidelines are centred around achieving a total of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity during the after-school time period. To achieve this our program will be incorporating a variety of fun physical activities throughout the time we spend with your child(ren). Achieving these 30 minutes are crucial to the health and wellbeing of our children and youth. The Canadian 24 hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth state that children and youth should be engaging in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day and a variety of structured and unstructured light physical activities. Our after-school program can help achieve these 60 minutes through these Guidelines.

This physical activity will take a variety of forms including _____ (e.g., a variety of individual and group student selected games and active breaks between our focused periods of sitting). The overall focus will be on both structured and unstructured play, rather than a competitive sports environment.

There are many benefits associated with increased physical activity, including benefits related to academic performance. We will strive in our program to ensure that there are opportunities for your child(ren) to be physically active without compromising other core components of our program.

If you have any comments, questions, or concerns please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Program Manager/Director
(XXX)-XXX-XXXX
xxxxxxx@xxxx.com

Self-Assessment Tools

Physical Activity Time, Intensity and Quality



Recommendation 1: Offer an after-school program that allows children and youth to accumulate at least 30 minutes of developmentally appropriate moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Strategy	Currently?		Plan to Improve		
	Yes	No	Right Now	This Year	Next Year
<u>For Program Managers:</u>					
✓ Have a written policy stating that children and youth will accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity during your program (5).	<input type="radio"/>				
<u>For Frontline Leaders:</u>					
✓ Schedule physical activity early in the program.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Make time for child- or youth- initiated play that is physically active.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Provide short physical activity breaks between or within your programs to reduce sedentary time.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Make instructions brief to avoid excessive sedentary time.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Offer a variety of fun physical activities during scheduled physical activity, allowing participants to choose the activity they enjoy most.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Use a variety of play spaces, including natural play areas, indoor spaces and outdoor spaces when possible.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Use visual markings (if appropriate) to encourage physical activity and help ensure participants use the entire play area (6).	<input type="radio"/>				

Self-Assessment Tools

Supportive Access, Facilities and Equipment



Recommendation 2: Offer an after-school program that serves all children and youth including those most at risk of being inactive (e.g., girls, older youth, those with a disability and individuals with greater financial need).

Strategy

For Program Managers:

- ✓ Schedule your program at a time that is convenient for participants and parents.
- ✓ Locate your program in an area that is easily reached by walking, biking or public transit.
- ✓ Provide transportation options to ensure that your program is accessible, consider active transportation.
- ✓ Work with decision makers and facility owners on new or renovated indoor or outdoor facilities to ensure they accommodate opportunities for after-school physical activity (e.g., schools and recreation facilities).
- ✓ Have a facility agreement with the school board to provide access for after-school programs after the school day ends.
- ✓ Follow safety and security protocols for staffing.

For Frontline Leaders:

- ✓ Offer activities that are adaptable, accessible and inclusive of individuals of all abilities, cultures and religious beliefs.
- ✓ Collect information from girls on what would motivate them to be active.
- ✓ Have a variety of equipment available for all participants.
- ✓ Ensure participants are bringing appropriate clothing for winter activities.

Currently?		Plan to Improve		
Yes	No	Right Now	This Year	Next Year
<input type="radio"/>				
<input type="radio"/>				
<input type="radio"/>				
<input type="radio"/>				
<input type="radio"/>				
<input type="radio"/>				
<input type="radio"/>				
<input type="radio"/>				
<input type="radio"/>				

Self-Assessment Tools

Collaboration, Implementation and Evaluation



Recommendation 3: Offer high quality programming that prioritizes collaboration and continuous improvement.

Strategy	Currently?		Plan to Improve		
	Yes	No	Right Now	This Year	Next Year
<i><u>For Program Managers:</u></i>					
✓ Communicate and cooperate with community networks of program providers and supporters to ensure access to high quality and quantity of after-school programs.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Partner with a variety of community agencies who can provide human, financial and physical resources.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Use skilled people in the school or community to assist with program delivery and training.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Meet with the school physical education staff on an annual basis to learn about the physical education curriculum, status of physical literacy skills and how your program can complement what is taught in physical education.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Integrate your after-school program into related school and community strategies such as health promoting schools, community health plans and municipal physical activity plans.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Support staff on how to increase physical activity through training, coaching, mentoring and monitoring progress.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Have front line staff participate in at least two professional development sessions per year on physical activity.	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Regularly ask participants, staff and parents about satisfaction and ideas for improvement.	<input type="radio"/>				
<i><u>For Frontline Leaders:</u></i>					
✓ Participate in at least two professional development sessions per year, supported by your Program Manager, on physical activity (e.g., workshops, orientation, web-based learning, mentors, discussion forms, etc.).	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Measure physical activity levels (e.g., using pedometers or observation) at least twice a year and make changes based on the results (7).	<input type="radio"/>				
✓ Regularly ask participants, staff and parents about satisfaction and ideas for improvement.	<input type="radio"/>				

Action Planning

Use the following table to track your areas for improvement that you identified in your self-assessments. Work with your staff to determine some action items around how you will accomplish each guideline or strategy that was identified and assign responsibility and a timeline for accomplishing the action items. Continue to revisit this table to track your progress.

Strategy	Action Item(s)	Responsibility	Timeline	Completed?	If Not, Why?
<i>E.g. Make time during each session for an accumulation of 30 minutes of developmentally appropriate MVPA (equivalent to 4600 pedometer steps)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Review program schedules</i> ● <i>Build in times for active breaks</i> ● <i>Provide staff with a selection of back pocket games they can offer</i> 	<i>John & Holly</i>	<i>0-2 months</i>		

Evaluating

Evaluating your progress on implementing the guidelines and strategies is an important step. Constantly evaluating your progress can help inform future self-assessments and improvement planning. One way to do this is to set up times (in line with the timeframes you laid out in the previous action planning table) to check in and see if the action items you laid out have been accomplished or not. If they have not been accomplished evaluate why and what else is needed to support the implementation of that particular strategy.

The Guidelines and self-assessments should be revisited each year (before the program begins and once it has ended for the year). Consider building this time into staff meetings throughout the year to check in and track progress. Incremental change is important when incorporating the Guidelines, especially if a lot of areas are identified for improvement during the first round of self-assessments.

Program evaluation is also included in the Guidelines as it is an important component to assess physical activity levels of children and youth. This can be done in a variety of ways including:

- Evaluate the levels of physical activity your participants periodically to determine if you are meeting the minimum 30-minute guideline. Some ways to do this can include:
 - **Participant observation:** have an external person observe and track the physical activity time that is occurring during the program day. Ideally this would be tracked on various days of the week and both the time spent being physically active and the type of physical activity should be recorded.
 - **Participant surveys:** have older students self-report the amount of physical activity that they are participating in during the after-school program. This is also a good opportunity to gauge the interest in the physical activity opportunities that you are currently offering and where you could improve for the future.
 - **Staff surveys:** have staff self-report the amount of physical activity that they are facilitating during the program. This is also a good opportunity to check in regarding the physical activity practices of the program.
- Consider surveying parents and teachers to determine the broader effects that your program is having on participants overall physical activity levels.

The Canadian Active After School Partnership has a page dedicated to evaluation resources and information - <http://activeafterschool.ca/collection/program-evaluation>. Visit this page for further ideas around evaluation in your program.

Consider a variety of evaluation techniques (for example see this video regarding evaluation through observation - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxFcCbXjeTw>) and remember to do some baseline evaluations early on in your program to allow for comparisons and time to make your quality improvements.

Training Opportunities

There are a variety of training opportunities for program staff in the area of physical activity, many of which are free or provided at a minimal cost. Some opportunities include:

- ★ Free Physical Literacy Leader Training from PLAY Great Edmonton - <http://activeafterschool.ca/alberta/free-alberta-afterschool-resources>
- ★ Sport for Life Education Services - <http://sportforlife.ca/services/education/>
- ★ Active for Life Activities and Resources - <http://activeforlife.com/activities/>
- ★ Be Fit for Life Workshops - <http://benefitforlife.ca/workshops/>
- ★ Ever Active Schools Professional Learning Opportunities - <https://everactive.org/professional-learning-opportunities/>

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