

healthy schools

FALL 2019 ■ ISSUE #12

ALBERTA



Supporting Healthy School Communities!

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Feature Story: In Good Health

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IN THIS ISSUE

And so begins another fall and another year of supporting healthy school communities! In this edition, read stories of active school travel in unexpected places, physical activity for students who are often left behind, success in Loose Parts Play, and much more. We hope that the stories we share help to inspire you and your students to move, eat well, and support well-being within your school community.

Do you have a story to share? Email kayli@everactive.org or reach us on social media [@everactiveab](https://www.instagram.com/everactiveab)!

~ The Ever Active Schools Team



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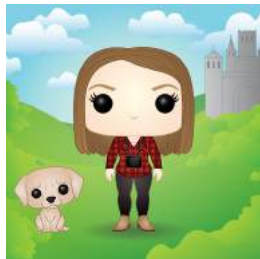


In this edition, we POP!-ed ourselves!
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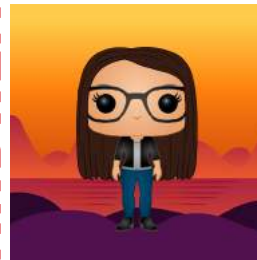
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MEET OUR TEAM

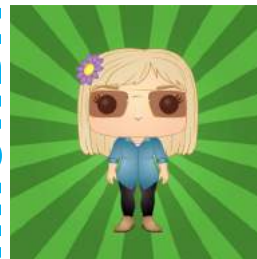
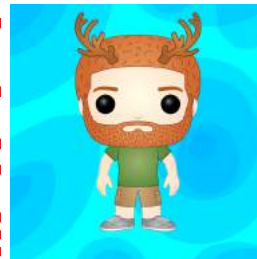
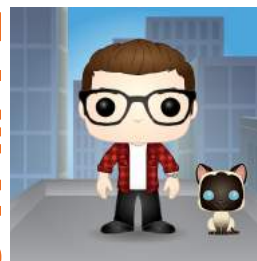
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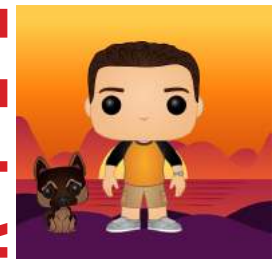
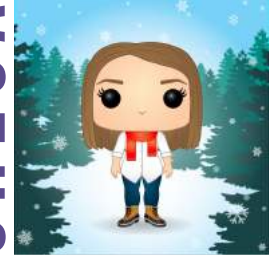
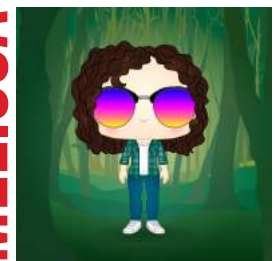
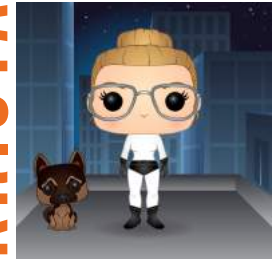
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PLAN YOUR YEAR

2019/2020 Healthy School Community Events



NATIONAL FORUM ON WELLNESS IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

October 17 - 18, 2019 | University of British Columbia

Ever Active Schools, the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, and the University of British Columbia invite you to join with faculties of education from across the country to explore wellness in post-secondary education.

www.everactive.org/events/national-forum

RESILIENCY SUMMIT: HONOURING YOUTH VOICE

November 27 - 28, 2019 | Calgary

The Resiliency Summit is a two day gathering of Indigenous youth, educators and community members for the purpose of sharing activities, celebrating stories and practices regarding health, wellness, and resilience. Students and educators will learn and share with youth mentors, Elders, community members and researchers, experiencing various traditional, active and creative activities.

www.everactive.org/rw

SHAPING THE FUTURE: BUILDING BRIDGES - STRONGER TOGETHER

January 30 - February 1, 2020 | Lake Louise

Join us for the 11th annual Shaping the Future conference! Come to Lake Louise to learn and share all about Comprehensive School Health, with topics for beginners to experts, in the beautiful Canadian Rockies.

www.everactive.org/stf

INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL WEEK

September 30 - October 4, 2019 | Everywhere!

The first week in October is International Walk to School Week! Join the movement and millions of walkers around the world as we walk to school during this week! Everyone is welcome to participate. Register your school online Shape AB.

www.shapeab.com/iwalk

Visit www.everactive.org to discover other Ever Active Schools events and projects.



IN THE COMMUNITY

ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INTERTWINED

Written by Chesa Peter, School Health Facilitator, Ever Active Schools

Ever Active Schools' (EAS) Physical Literacy Mentorship, in partnership with Jumpstart Charities, aims to normalize physical activity across the school day and increase student's physical activity opportunities through school- and community-based initiatives.

Within Lethbridge School Division 51, the focus was on the intersection between physical activity, outdoor learning environments and First Nation, Métis and Inuit ways of knowing. The EAS School Health Facilitator and the School Champions looked for unique ways to integrate physical activity into student's learning outcomes and make cultural connections to their daily lives.

At Victoria Park High School, a Coulee Clean-up and Indigenous Ways of Knowing Day was planned. The day was organized around the theme of reciprocity and included a coulee clean-up, lunch, Blackfoot games and sessions encouraging cultural connections to land.

Victoria Park principal, Ian Lowe, spoke highly of the event.

"This act of reciprocity I believe allows the students to appreciate nature and our beautiful system here in Lethbridge and to be conscious of doing our part as individuals and groups to respect the outdoors.

"In addition to the coulee clean up event, we were able to learn and appreciate some of the aspects of the Blackfoot Culture. We had a session on science and how the Blackfoot people used both plants and animals living in the Old Man River [area]. We also had a session on Blackfoot games, which our kids thoroughly enjoyed. Both sessions were led by members of the Blackfoot community, making them very authentic."

"It was amazing to see how invested and engaged all the students were and the support of the staff who made this environmental day of learning a success," said Andrea Fox, First Nation, Métis and Inuit District Principal. "Opportunities like this truly enable deeper, critical thinking and inspire and inform the youth to look at how they can continue to serve their communities and take care of the land, and connect to their culture and histories."

"To me, reciprocity means if you put in to something, it will give back to you," explained Faith Foster, a grade 12 student at Victoria Park High School.

"In our case of the coulee clean up, I would say that by cleaning up we have made the coulees a nicer place to hike, a better environment for animals, and a place to be proud of and to leave for our even younger generations. When they inherit the land, hopefully our example will be passed on to them and they will care for the land and also leave it better than they found it." ■



PHOTO: STUDENTS FROM VICTORIA PARK HIGH SCHOOL PLAY DOUBLE BALL, A TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS GAME.

PHOTO: STUDENTS FROM TOMAHAWK SCHOOL WALK FROM THE SCHOOL TO THE AGRA SOCIETY BUILDING 20 MINUTES AWAY.

TOMAHAWK WALKS: RETHINKING RURAL ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL

Written by Tracey Coutts, Active School Travel Coordinator, Ever Active Schools

Tomahawk School is everything one pictures a rural school to be. Located in the pastoral hamlet of Tomahawk, Alberta, surrounded by large, open fields, it is one of two community hubs, housing the public library, early childhood services programming, a large nature park, ...the list goes on. However, in Tomahawk, few people consider active transportation a viable option for travelling to and from this important gathering space.

All 109 students are bussed daily—even those who live in the hamlet site, just a 15 minute walk away. Why is this, and is there a way to include active transportation (walking and wheeling) in this rural community's school journey?

The health, safety, economic, and environmental benefits of active transportation are well documented, but active transportation initiatives fall flat if the desire for a walkable community is not there. In 2017, Parkland County conducted a Community Needs Assessment Survey, which identified walkability, accessibility, and beautification as priorities for this community. In addition to that, student and family travel surveys conducted by Tomahawk School's Leadership students in May 2019 indicated a 70% interest in adding more active transportation into the school journey. Obviously, the desire for more active school travel is alive and well in Tomahawk, so what is stopping people?

Simply put: safety. There is no route specifically designated for pedestrian and cycle traffic along Township Road 512 leading to the school. Yet this situation is not unique to Tomahawk School. Rather than allowing this barrier to reduce travel mode options, this school chose to address it.

On April 18, 2019, school administrator Christa Nicholson, with the support of Parkland School Division 70, Parkland County, and Ever Active Schools, coordinated Tomahawk School's very first Walk and Roll event. The day began in a great way: the school parking lot was blocked off and remained vehicle free for the entire day, and arrangements were made with bussing services to have students dropped off at the intersection of Township Road 512 and 51 Street,

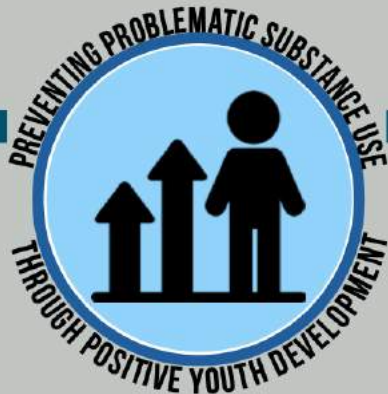
where they were met by staff who escorted them to the school. But it didn't end there! The entire school - administrators, staff, students, and guests - then walked and wheeled from the school to the Agra Society building, the community's second hub and a space that is used regularly by Tomahawk students for activities such as archery. Due to the same safety concerns, students are bussed here too, a short 20 minute walk away. Tomahawk students are missing so many opportunities to add physical activity into their day, and the school is on track to change this.



PHOTO: STUDENTS FROM TOMAHAWK SCHOOL FILL THE PARKING LOT WITH BIKES INSTEAD OF CARS.

Moving forward, the student leadership team and school administration is working with Parkland County to make Township Road 512 safer, starting with added signage. Students are also being educated about travelling safely and actively in rural areas thanks to the Bike Safe Walk Smart resource. This work will continue into the fall of 2019 with special plans for a wayfinding project that, when combined with the safety initiatives, will make the school journey not only safer but more enjoyable as well.

Tomahawk Walks, indeed. ■



BEYOND HEALTH EDUCATION...

PREVENTING PROBLEMATIC SUBSTANCE
USE BY ENHANCING STUDENTS'
WELL-BEING

Reprinted with permission from Canadian Association of Principals Journal, Winter 2019 Edition.

Written by Courtney Cadieux, Western University; Katelyn Godin, Public Health Agency of Canada; Alicia Lapointe, Western University; and Claire Crooks, Western University

For further information on this project and to access the resources, please visit the Government of Canada's website: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/beyond-health-education-preventing-substance-use-enhancing-students-well-being.html

School administrators and educators have long had concerns about their students' substance use. The recent legalization of non-medical cannabis, ongoing opioid crisis, and growing attention to the costly social and health harms associated with alcohol use have intensified discussions within the education system on the role of schools in addressing problematic substance use.¹

Since youth are at a greater risk of experiencing certain social and health consequences associated with problematic substance use, school administrators, educators and other members of school communities have a vested interest in supporting students through school-based prevention efforts.

Traditional approaches to achieving this goal have centred on increasing youths' understanding of the health risks associated with substance use. While having open, nonjudgmental conversations about substance use and sharing balanced, evidence-based information on its potential risks are critically important, there is evidence that these efforts are largely ineffective in isolation.¹

Problematic substance use is complex and shaped by numerous factors that can make youth more likely to use substances in ways that are harmful, including having poor mental health, limited social support, and experiences of adversity, trauma, violence and abuse. Interventions focused solely on communicating risks do not reflect this complexity or the diversity of youths' experiences. School-based efforts to enhance youths' well-being and promote positive youth development are an important complement to traditional health education. The role of school administrators and educators in ensuring students are safe, supported and ready to learn has long been appreciated. There is a growing awareness of how healthy school communities that support positive youth development can also have a major protective influence against problematic substance use, poor mental health, bullying and violence.

The Centre for School Mental Health at Western University and the Public Health Agency of Canada have partnered to develop a series of resources for school communities to promote positive youth development through school-based initiatives. Following an extensive literature review and consultations from diverse stakeholders (i.e., representing educators, principals, mental health organizations, researchers, and government organizations), three key themes emerged to guide the development of these resources: promoting well-being, creating welcoming environments, and effective programming. ➤

PROMOTING WELL-BEING

There are many known protective factors that increase youths' overall health and well-being and counterbalance risk factors that can lead to problematic substance use.ⁱⁱ Key protective factors that are critical to positive youth development include: stable and caring relationships with adults; a sense of belonging and social support;^v self-efficacy, strong communication and decision-making skills;^v engaging in positive social behaviours;^v a healthy lifestyle;ⁱⁱⁱ a high degree of school engagement;^v and a sense of faith, hope, and cultural identity.^{iv}

School administrators, educators and others within the school community can bolster these protective factors by:

- **Building authentic, positive relationships with youth;**
- **Providing opportunities for youth to engage in positive social behaviours (e.g., sharing, helping, volunteering, etc.);**
- **Acknowledging their achievements and acts of kindness (no matter how small);**
- **Providing diverse opportunities for students to develop their physical and emotional skills; and,**
- **Encouraging students' sense of hope.**

Through these efforts, students are supported to develop healthy relationships with others, discover their strengths, and effectively manage the challenges and stress in their lives, which, in turn, lowers their risk of problematic substance use.

CREATING WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS

Student well-being is enhanced when school staff cultivate positive social and learning environments. Positive school communities are places where youth are included, connected, supported, accepted, and represented. Administrators can foster positive school communities by applying a whole-school model that incorporates well-being as a vital aspect of student success (see Comprehensive School Health Framework, 2018).^v A whole-school, comprehensive approach recognizes the importance of reinforcing messages and actions that promote health and well-being through numerous channels. It also acknowledges the well-established link between health and learning outcomes (Comprehensive School health Framework, 2018).^v

School administrators are uniquely positioned to champion comprehensive school-based approaches to supporting positive youth development by:

- Adopting policies that discourage negative behaviours and actions (e.g., bullying, discrimination, etc.) and facilitate appropriate support for students' struggling with poor mental health, problematic substance use and other challenges;
- Working closely with other adults within the school community, students, families and community organizations to create and/or strengthen partnerships and services that reflect and respond to the school community's diversity and needs;
- Creating a positive social and physical environment in the school by funding, promoting and participating in regular, inclusive community-building school events and activities (e.g., diverse interest groups and recreation activities, gay-straight alliances, etc.) that facilitate relationship building between students, and between students and adults in the school community; and,
- Supporting school staff to adopt teaching and learning practices that are culturally-responsive and enhance social-emotional learning. School administrators are encouraged to consider these approaches when seeking learning opportunities for staff and coaching and supporting staff through annual >

learning plans and formal performance appraisals.

EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING

There are evidence-based positive youth development programs that align with existing curricula expectations versus adding on to school staffs' existing responsibilities. Effective programs address topics such as healthy relationships, resisting peer pressure, communication skills, self-awareness, and empathy. Program activities are typically interactive in nature, incorporate engaging and relevant material, allow for personal reflection, and encourage peer-to-peer sharing. Conversely, initiatives that rely on one-time events, scared-straight tactics or "just say no" messaging are largely ineffective, and in some cases, even increase the likelihood of problematic substance use.^{vii} Administrators can support positive youth development in their schools by encouraging school staff to implement evidence-based practices and by providing resources for carrying these out in the classroom.

The Fourth R (Relationships) and the Fourth R Healthy Relationships Plus (HRP) programs were developed for Canadian school systems and have shown promising results in promoting social-emotional skills and reducing violence and related risk behaviours. (see www.youthrelationships.org).⁸ All Fourth R programs are based on the contention that relationship skills can be taught the same way as other academic or athletic skills. There are different Fourth R curricula to match different grade levels and education systems. The Fourth R has also developed specific programming for LGBTQ2+ youth and Indigenous youth because these populations have unique protective factors that can be bolstered by emphasizing identity and connectedness, but are also at higher risk for experiencing negative outcomes, such as problematic substance use.^{vii, viii} As leaders within school communities, administrators play a critical role in preventing problematic substance use among their students by promoting positive youth development through comprehensive school approaches.

All youth have the capacity for wellbeing and resilience, even in the context of academic, social, or health challenges. Administrators that recognize this potential and are committed to leveraging these capacities through supportive environments and relationships are critical for fostering positive school communities and equipping students with the resources they need to support their healthy development, both today and tomorrow. ■

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- **Claire Crooks**, Ph.D., C.Psych. is the Director of the Centre for School Mental Health at Western University and a professor in the Faculty of Education. Her team develops, implements and evaluates violence prevention and mental health promotion programs for youth.

A SNAPSHOT OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION

Submitted by Dana Fulwiler, BEd, MEd, MAPP

“We have to recognize that human flourishing is not a mechanical process; it’s an organic process. And you cannot predict the outcome of human development. All you can do, like a farmer, is create the conditions under which they will begin to flourish.”

—Sir Ken Robinson

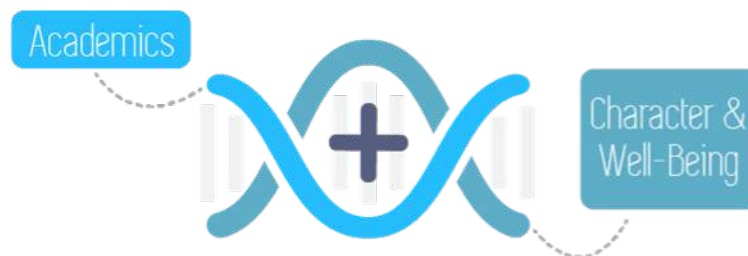
How would you describe the conditions of flourishing in your life, classroom, school or community? Positive psychology builds those conditions using a proactive, strength-based approach to mental health and well-being.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY - A STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH

We are wired to focus on the negative.^{i,ii} While we owe part of our human survival to this negativity bias, it can get in the way of our well-being. Founder of positive psychology, Dr. Martin Seligman, believed psychology could do more than address human suffering - it could also harness strengths and build flourishing. Research shows how identifying and cultivating strengths and resilience can lead to greater meaning, mental health, academic achievement, engagement, etc. Since 1998, positive psychology has expanded to include several subfields, including positive education (Pos Ed).

POSITIVE EDUCATION

Pos Ed, Comprehensive School Health (CSH), and social emotional learning (SEL) are teammates in building healthy school communities.ⁱⁱⁱ The plethora of models can be overwhelming, but the more really is the merrier. There is no one-size-fits-all. Whole-school approaches benefit from a variety of tools that can be adapted and combined to context, culture, and need.



Pos Ed focuses on well-being and academics. It uses data to drive the what, why, and how of school well-being, applying research-based tools and tracking overall impact.

PERMA-V^{iv} is one of many well-being models that can be taught and tracked, and is the foundation of Pos Ed programs worldwide. Grounded in years of research, these elements strengthen the conditions of flourishing: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement, and Vitality.^v Pos Ed also builds and measures the impact of character strengths (check out the VIA Institute and Angela Duckworth’s nonprofit, Character Lab - websites below).

IMPACT WORLDWIDE AND AT HOME

Whole-school approaches are more impactful than isolated ones. Global research supports this, including large-scale, long-term studies in Bhutan, Peru, and Mexico.^{vi} In all three, teaching a co-constructed, cul- ➤

turally relevant well-being curriculum based on positive psychology resulted in significant and sustainable improvements to academics and well-being (including reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression). Perseverance, engagement, and connectedness were the strongest predictors. Investment in teacher well-being through training and professional development was a key factor. All staff were invited to learn and live this well-being science for themselves. Research supports what we know intuitively: teachers are the most important in-school contributor to student achievement, engagement, belonging, and flourishing.^{vii}

Learn it - Live it - Teach it - Embed it. These are essential processes for sustainable whole-school well-being.^{viii} If the “live it” condition is missing, common issues include perceived hypocrisy, frustration, resentment, and resistance. Skipping this component reduces the conditions of flourishing for ourselves and our students. In what ways are we cultivating the “live it” puzzle piece, and how can we boost these conditions in a sustainable way for Alberta teachers? I’m excited to explore this question further and welcome your insight! ■

Additional Info & Tools

- Positive Psychology Center: <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/>
- PP Research and Free Metrics: <https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/>
- International Positive Education Network: <http://ipen-network.com/>
- Character Lab: www.characterlab.org
- VIA Institute on Character: www.viacharacter.org
- UN Global Well-being Report (Pos Ed Chapter 4): <http://www.happinesscouncil.org/>



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In the Beginning...

The AMA Youth Run Club did the same, wonderful thing it continues to do; providing a school-based, inclusive environment of physical activity and fun for children and youth in communities across Alberta.

In its first year in 2013, 233 schools and 17,000 students participated in the AMA Youth Run Club. As the AMA's partner in the Youth Run Club (YRC), Ever Active Schools "facilitates the development of healthy children and youth by fostering social and physical environments that support healthy, active school communities."

The AMA's member physicians, residents and medical students support the valuable role the AMA Youth Run Club plays in comprehensive school health. Some physician members have introduced and helped manage Youth Run Clubs in their children's and other schools; some have attended and spoken at YRC-hosted runs; and many AMA members have chosen to support the YRC through charitable donations.

AMA Youth Run Club Goals

- To increase levels of physical activity among all school-aged children and youth, with increasing attention to junior and senior high school students
- To recognize the challenges and barriers that may prevent some students from participating and to ensure that the YRC is flexible and adaptive in its exercise and activity offerings
- To assist and support students in developing life-long healthy lifestyle habits

Alberta Medical Association



Now...New Directions

The AMA Youth Run Club has grown tremendously in the past five years, not just in the number of schools (over 500 in 2017–18) or participants (24,000 in 2017–18), but also in the diversity of the participating student populations.

The Youth Run Club advocates for and encourages inclusivity and the sharing of the benefits of physical activity with as many children and youth as possible. The supports with resources offer opportunities for physical activity beyond running, such as "Fun and Games" for K-6 students; partner strength training; yoga and relaxation; physical literacy development through games; and workouts that appeal to older students.



GO! Run Club and Indigenous Communities

In the 2017-18 season, the YRC launched the GO (Girls Only)! Run Club, providing young girls with organized, judgment-free opportunities for physical activity with their peers and friends. The concept was enthusiastically received, resulting in the development of 32 GO! Run Clubs coached and managed by female teachers.

Goals for the GO! Run Club include promoting the program to junior and senior high school students and continuing to facilitate physical activity opportunities in support of gender equity.

As the AMA Youth Run Club has been growing and developing over the past five years, Ever Active Schools has cultivated long-lasting, positive relationships with Indigenous schools and students, introducing them to the many rewards – physical and mental health and wellbeing; benefits to academic achievements – of the AMA Youth Run Club. In 2018, there were AMA Youth Run Clubs in 20 Indigenous school communities.

At Your Fingertips: Coach's Corner and Other Club Resources

The only thing easier than getting eager, energetic students outside for some physical activity and fun is the start-up and management of an AMA Youth Run Club.

In addition to the friendly, informed and professional guidance of Ever Active Schools' Project Coordinators, the AMA Youth Run Club website (amayouthrunclub.com) features Coach's Corner.

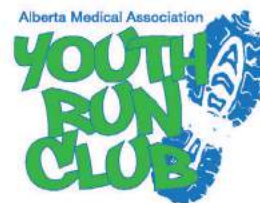
Here, YRC coaches and leaders will find the Coach's Handbook, a comprehensive guide to running a YRC. The Coach's Handbook offers tips on the best way to dress for running; running technique and warm-up exercises; stretches and strength activities; injury prevention and treatment; training programs and games; advice for adapting activities to suit different needs; tips for developing healthy lifestyles; and more.

Also in Coach's Corner is the Runner's Handbook (English and French); the GO! Run Handbook; club promotion and warm-up posters; a running log and warm-up tip sheet; a Practice Plan Builder and video library; a how-to-host a Fun Run event guide; access to "Finisher Prizes"; and more.

With their YRC Coach's Workshops and online webinars, Ever Active Schools is on-hand to support new coaches and help experienced coaches take their clubs in new directions.

Survey Says...

- 100% of coaches report the YRC program as being easy to implement.
- 98% of coaches report that the YRC leads to feelings of positivity among students.
- 89% of coaches report that the YRC engages students who are not traditionally active.
- 88% of coaches report that the YRC increases physical activity levels at their school.



Join the Club!

Visit amayouthrunclub.com (#JoinTheClub) to register your school. An Ever Active Schools representative will soon be in touch.

For more information, email Hayley@everactive.org.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY 101 FOR AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Written by Kayli McClelland, Creative Media Specialist and Louise McClelland, Provincial Projects Coordinator, Ever Active Schools

After-school programs are a common way for parents to ensure their kids are supervised and entertained in the hours between when school ends and parents get home from work. With 979 licensed school-age care centres across the province, plus those that are unlicensed and daycares, that adds up to a lot of children in after-school programs.

But how many of them are getting any physical activity during that time?

According to Stats Canada, only 1 in 3 Canadian children and youth are meeting Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines. By providing an opportunity for children and youth to engage in physically active and supportive after-school programs, there is a great opportunity to positively impact their health, well-being and safety.

In 2018, the Provincial Activity Guidelines for After-School Programs in Alberta were released. The guidelines recommend that children receive 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) during each day of the program - taking into account that students in grades 1 through 9 are already mandated to receive 30 minutes of daily physical activity during school hours. This would bring students to the national recommendation of 60 minutes of quality physical activity per day Monday to Friday.

"But we don't offer a physically active program!"

"We don't have a gym to use, just a small classroom with tables and chairs!"

"We don't have an extra 30 minutes to carve out of our programming!"

These are common reasons that many after-school programs don't offer physical activity during their programming. A committee, chaired by Ever Active Schools, does the work of Alberta Active After School. This committee consists of leaders across



the province in the after-school time period, including: Ever Active Schools, Be Fit For Life, Alberta Recreation & Parks Association, Centre for Active Living, Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area, Calgary After School and the University of Alberta. Alberta Active After School is here to change the "we can't" mindset with the new Physical Activity 101 online certification module. This free training aims to educate and build the capacity of after-school programs in Alberta so that all children and youth in the province meet the recommended physical activity guidelines. Alberta Active After School also offers customized supports for programs that complete the training.

Maya Bautista and Irene Valle, Assistant Directors in the Greenfield School Age Day Care Association, found the program to be helpful. Greenfield programs are generally considered to be physically active.

"[It's relevant in] how we approach physical activity in our program with the children we work with," said Bautista. "[The] conversation starter on our commitment to it, our indoor/outdoor space and how we set up provocations in the room regarding physical development [has been helpful]."

"I found it very beneficial for my work and for myself as well," continued Valle. "We got some ideas that we know the children will enjoy... I for sure ➤"

recommend the module because I found new things... that I didn't encounter before."

The 45-minute online module includes definitions for physical activity; tips and insights specific to after-school staff, from frontline to policy makers; ideas for activity in any space; talking points for colleagues and parents; links to instructional videos and additional resources; an overview of the 2018 Provincial Activity Guidelines for After-School Programs in Alberta; and much more. Programs that complete the module receive completion certificates and are listed on the Alberta Active After School website.

"It's relevant and helpful," said Jemina Manuel, assistant director of the Shauna May Seneca location of Greenfield School Age Day Care association. "It is useful as it gives sample activities as well as materials that we can use to help children be physically active inside and outside of our room. There are also instructional videos and links provided."

Over 250 after-school program staff from more than 175 programs across the province have completed the certification module since February 2019. At three months post-completion of the module, 75% of programs are reporting that they either agree or strongly agree that there has been an increase in physical activity in their program since completing the module. Over 75% of programs have indicated that they are meeting, or exceeding, the Provincial Activity Guideline of 30 minutes of MVPA per day in their program. ■

For more information about the certification module and the Provincial Activity Guidelines for After School Programs in Alberta, visit abactiveafterschool.ca or contact Louise McClelland at louise@everactive.org.

GAME IDEA: FIRE AND ICE

EQUIPMENT: 3 blue and 3 red sponge balls.

ORGANIZATION: Three students are given blue sponge balls, and three are given red sponge balls. The students with blue sponge balls attempt to "freeze" other students by hitting them with the ball below the waist. Students with red sponge balls can pass their ball and give it to any frozen student who can then re-enter the game!

VARIATION: Use more than 6 balls. Have students play the game while hopping, jumping, skipping or other locomotor patterns.

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ENGAGING IN ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AS A FAMILY

Submitted by Lindsay Blik, Active School Travel Facilitator and blogger, ThisMomBikes.net

In North America, once children are on scene, many of us seem to choose an automobile-centric lifestyle because we see it as our only choice. I am passionate about dispelling this myth, and I look to other families and countries for inspiration on how to keep rolling with kids.

Why choose active transportation as a family? It can be convenient; you might save time; you will definitely save money; and you are modelling valuable life skills. Plus, your mind and body will thank you; not to mention quality time with your kids and environmental benefits.

Active transportation can be surprisingly convenient with kids: there are no car seats to wrangle with and, if you're cycling, the parking is superb. For many people, trip distances required with children are quite short. When compared to driving and parking, active modes are often a similar time commitment. Since you are also getting exercise at the same time, it is multitasking at its finest and your physical self will thank you. Benefits to your mental health and emotional well-being are highly likely.

One of the most important reasons that we walk and bike as a family is to foster independence in our children and model that there are possibilities beyond the car. That, and it's just plain fun!

With the tools available today, like electric-assisted cargo bikes, and cities demonstrating commitment to active modes, a car-lite lifestyle as a family is more possible than ever. ■



GIRLS FIT

Submitted by Dayna Landry, Wildrose School Division

Where do Girls FIT? I mean ALL the girls. That is the question that has plagued me for too long. Finally, this year, I decided to answer it. What came next was the creation and implementation of **Girls FIT: Fitness | Inspiration | Teamwork**.

The target was all girls, grades 5-8: the tipping point ages. This is where I see girls lose the confidence, opportunity and ability to see themselves as active and athletic. This is the age where I feel we lose girls in sport, gym class, and extra-curricular opportunities.

I wanted to make positive change for girls, in all aspects of wellness: physical, mental and social. This weekly, 50 minute group would be about getting together, being active, learning about themselves, making friends and having fun, regardless of social status, academic achievement or athleticism.

Before I knew it, the info session was here. I wasn't sure if there would be 2 girls, or 20. Imagine my surprise, when more than 50 girls showed up to find out more about this new idea.

The 8 week pilot project began, with 35 girls committed. Each session began with a topic focus and journal writing activity: goal setting, connection, positive self-talk, mindfulness, teamwork, perseverance, risk-taking and self-reflection.

The physical activities were just as broad: running, partner fitness, belly-breathing, bootcamp, Zumba, games and yoga. Girls were forced out of their comfort zones, but cheered on every step of the way.

Every session ended with a debrief and high five. As the weeks went on, girls seemed more relaxed, >

enthusiastic and confident. There was more laughter, participation, and cohesiveness.

When asked what could be better next time, the number one answer: make it longer and more often. I now know the answer to my initial question: where do Girls FIT? **Right here.** ■

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM GIRLS FIT?

- “Nice to be able to exercise with just girls, without being judged.”
- “Don’t give up.”
- “Getting active is making my days better.”
- “Everyone deserves a chance.”
- “You can do it.”
- “Be yourself.”
- “Try.”
- “Everyone can be active, and enjoy it.”

HOW DID GIRLS FIT HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON YOU?

- “Met new people.”
- “Made me feel awesome.”
- “I found a love for exercise.”
- “Made my mental state better.”
- “A place to go every Wednesday.”
- “Made me do more things.”



PHOTOS OF THE GIRLS FIT PROGRAM PROVIDED BY
DAYNA LANDRY, WILDROSE SCHOOL DIVISION



EVERYONE CAN PLAY!

Written by Katie Mahon, Provincial Projects Coordinator and Candice Fouchard, BPe, BEd

The Adapted Physical Activity Mentorship Project is a collaborative effort between Ever Active Schools and Paralympic Sports Association. The pilot project was designed to address the importance of inclusion for students with disabilities in physical activity opportunities at school and in their communities.

Participating school communities received mentorship in adapted physical activity through whole school professional learning and dedicated one-on-one mentorship for the school champion. Girls with disabilities were connected to community physical activity programming either with support for registration and travel or through unique opportunities to experience adapted physical activity at their school.

Christine Meikle School in Calgary, Alta. was one of seven participating schools in the mentorship project. Christine Meikle School serves students with cognitive and developmental disabilities. Candice Fouchard of Ever Active Schools spent four months mentoring the school champions around creative ways to provide students of all abilities with quality



physical education and physical activity experiences.

The Adapted Physical Activity Mentorship Project coincided with the grand opening

of the Jumpstart Inclusive Playground in Calgary. On a bright and sunny day, 47 students from Christine Meikle School were supported to play on the Jumpstart Inclusive Playground. Students were able to wheel their chairs onto the accessible structure alongside children from the community, who were also wheeling along the structure in strollers and on bicycles. Students felt the breeze as they played on the swings, made music on the outdoor chimes, rolled their chairs onto a teeter totter wide enough for them and a few of their friends, while others raced down the slides. All the while, students were wholly immersed and included in the wider community on a

warm and busy day at the playground.

"The Jumpstart Inclusive Playground is more than just a play space," said Marco DiBuono, Associate Vice President of Programs and Operations at Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities.

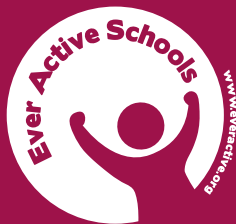
"We are encouraging communities to use them as an advocacy/education platform around inclusive play and to intentionally use the



play space to offer a broader variety of inclusive recreation programs. We're convening all of our municipal partners regularly to share new learnings, best practices and new ideas. So in that context it is imperative that we reach every province and territory with one of these innovative play spaces in order to create a national network and sustain a national movement around inclusive play.

"The playgrounds themselves are part of a broader movement that aims to make inclusive sport and play the new norm. We've been fortunate to work with the Canadian Disability Participation Project to identify the key barriers to participation in sport and play for children with disabilities, and to design a series of programs that could help overcome these barriers. The playgrounds are a key part of Jumpstart's Play Finds A Way movement, and we hope they will demonstrate how inclusive play spaces provide added value for participants of all abilities and all ages." ■

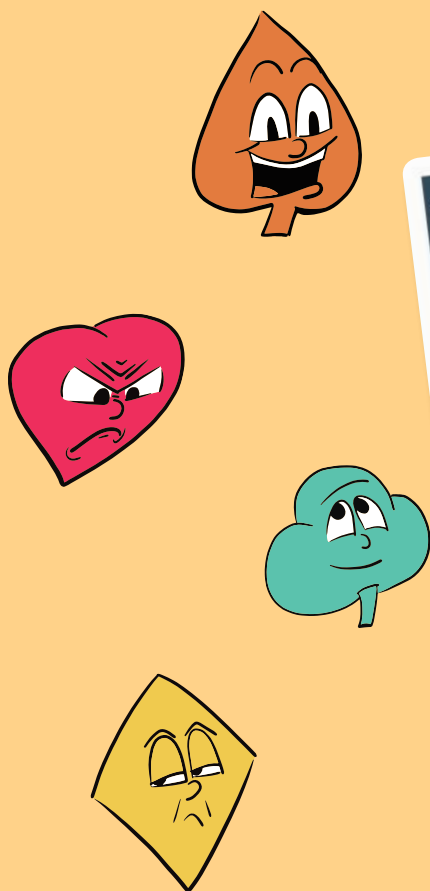
PHOTOS: STUDENTS FROM CHRISTINE MIEKLE SCHOOL EXPLORE THE JUMPSTART PLAYGROUND IN CALGARY.



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EAT SMART



PHOTO: A HEALTHY EATING LESSON TAUGHT TO STUDENTS BY REGISTERED DIETICIANS WITH ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES

CANADA'S NEW FOOD GUIDE: WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW

Written by Alberta Health Services Registered Dietitians

Canada's Food Guide is now an online suite of resources that support Canadians in making healthy food choices, available at Canada.ca/FoodGuide. The messages in the new Canada's Food Guide align in general with existing Alberta Health Services healthy eating information.

WHAT HAS CHANGED WITH THE NEW FOOD GUIDE?

Overall healthy eating messages haven't changed; however the way messages are presented has changed. The new Canada's Food Guide:

- no longer has food groups
- presents healthy food choices: vegetables and fruits, whole grains and protein foods
- combines the former "Milk and Alternatives" and "Meat and Alternatives" food groups as protein foods
- encourages choosing plant-based proteins more often
- focuses on proportions of healthy foods using the **Eat Well Plate** rather than number of servings
- encourages replacing saturated fat with foods that contain mostly unsaturated fat, rather than placing a limit on total fats
- places more emphasis on how you eat, not just what you eat. >



WHAT ABOUT MILK, YOGURT AND CHEESE?

Milk, yogurt and cheese have not been removed from the new food guide. They are included as protein foods and continue to be recommended as a practical way to help build strong bones.

WHAT ABOUT JUICE?

On the new food guide, 100% juice is identified as a sugary drink, not to be consumed regularly. Vegetables and fruit are recommended most often to provide fibre, vitamins, and minerals for good health.

HOW CAN THIS INFORMATION BE APPLIED TO MY CLASSROOM?

1. You can teach nutrition in your classroom by using the Alberta Health Services **Curriculum Based Lesson Plans**. These lesson plans have been recently updated to align with the new food guide. Additional school nutrition resources can be found at the Alberta Health Services **School Nutrition** page. Alberta Health Services is working towards updating all nutrition resources to align with the new food guide.
2. Follow the recommendations in the new **Healthy Eating at School** section of the food guide.
 - Offer non-food items for classroom rewards or prizes such as: pencils, stickers, certificates, or extra time for physical activity.
 - Plan school fundraisers that don't involve food. This includes: book fairs, theme days, or dance-a-thons.
 - If offering food at classroom celebrations, offer healthy food choices such as: fruit kebabs, vegetables and dip, make-your-own yogurt parfaits, or whole grain crackers and dip. Consider providing a list of healthy options to parents as well.
 - Encourage students to bring a reusable water bottle that they can have access to throughout the day.
 - Sharing cultural and traditional foods is a great way to foster an inclusive learning environment. Invite the students to discuss and share their traditions (E.g. Ask the students what foods they eat on the holidays that they celebrate).
3. Provide students with a copy of the new **Food Guide Snapshot** or hang up the **Educational Poster**. Copies of the Food Guide Snapshot and the Educational Poster can be ordered in English and French from the **Health Canada Ordering System**.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN WITH REGARDS TO MENU PLANNING AND FOODS OFFERED IN SCHOOLS?

Health Canada will be releasing Phase II; Canada's Healthy Eating Pattern for Health Professionals and Policy Makers later in 2019, which will provide more guidance on amounts and types of foods, as well as life stage guidance. For now, continue to use the previous (2007) food guide and the **Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (ANGCY)** for guidance on serving sizes and the number of servings. ■

Any more questions? We are here to help. Contact your local dietitian or email
PublicHealth.Nutrition@albertahealthservices.ca

Links

- Eat Well Plate: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/tips-for-healthy-eating/make-healthy-meals-with-the-eat-well-plate/>
- Curriculum Based Lesson Plans: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page2918.aspx>
- School Nutrition: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page2925.aspx>
- Healthy Eating at School: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/tips-for-healthy-eating/school/>
- Food Guide Snapshot: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/food-guide-snapshot/>
- Educational Poster: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/publications/food-nutrition/educational-poster/26-18-2158-Poster-ENG-web-final.pdf>
- Health Canada Ordering System: <http://www.hc-publication-sc.hc-sc.gc.ca/paccb-dgapcc/cmcd-dcmc/webpubs.ns-f/7?ReadForm&cat=00030&lang=eng&>
- Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/5906406>



HEALTHIER HABITS MAKE HAPPIER KIDS

Submitted by Magdalena Pawlowski, APPLE Schools

The healthier the childhood habits, the less likely that children seek help for their mental health in adolescence. In other words, healthier habits make happier kids, according to new pediatric research *Lifestyle Behavior and Mental Health in Early Adolescence*. This research supports the impact of APPLE Schools, an Alberta-based health promotion program, on students.

APPLE Schools aims to get students eating better, moving more, sleeping longer, getting outside, and turning off those screens. It works with school communities to integrate healthy initiatives into day-to-day life, making the healthy choice the easy choice for students. Evidence shows that students reap the benefits in terms of better health.

"There are a few things that are innovative about this study," said Kara Loewen, research coordinator and lead author of *Lifestyle Behavior and Mental Health in Early Adolescence*. "[One] is that it's actually the first perspective study examining recommendations for children's diet, physical activity, screen time, and sleep with their mental health diagnosis in adolescence."

Loewen looked at nine health habits based on official Canadian expert recommendations in association with mental health status, including:

6+ servings of fruits and vegetables each day

60 MINS of activity every day

Reduced sugar intake by 10% of overall daily energy intake

The findings were clear: lifestyle impacts mental health. Children who met four to six lifestyle recommendations made 39 per cent fewer mental health visits to their doctor than those who met only one to three recommendations. Those who had seven to nine habits resulted in 56 per cent fewer visits. For each additional recommendation met, there was an additional 15 per cent reduction in the number of mental health visits.

Claudette Fidler, principal at École St. Paul School in Fort McMurray—an APPLE School—recognizes the clear link between healthy habits and mental health at her school.

"APPLE Schools is definitely incorporated into all that we do. If kids are eating healthy, getting enough >

sleep, [and] very active, they are going to be happier kids. And that's what we see in our building – happy kids ready to learn.”

THE BIG PICTURE

The implications highlight the importance for doctors to focus on prevention. When parents bring their children for annual checkups, regular reinforcement of healthy lifestyle habits can get both children and parents on board to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Lewis First, MD, MS noted, “As a primary care pediatrician, I find this information critical to providing appropriate guidance and counseling, especially for those “pre-teens,” whose future psyche may benefit the most from healthy habits earlier rather than later.” (First, 2019)

He added, “Convincing my 10-year-old patient and his or her parents that the adoption of even a single healthy lifestyle behavior - like reduced screen time or increased physical activity - may come easier by explaining that such a suggestion has been shown to be associated with a reduction in the risk of future mental illness by 15%.”

Children spend nearly one third of their day in school, so school communities also have a responsibility to create environments that are conducive to healthy lifestyles. Students’ access to physical activity, healthy food, and mental health supports impacts their long-term health.

APPLE SCHOOLS TEACHES HEALTHY HABITS FOR LIFE

Jenn Flynn, executive director of APPLE Schools, said she’s excited about Loewen’s study.

“It’s exciting to me, because often schools are looking at a variety of needs for wellness. We now know that healthy eating, physical activity, screen time, and sleep have a strong effect on mental health as well. It is impactful to see that wellness programming goes beyond physical health and into mental health.”

Bailey Kwiatkowski, a school health facilitator at Glendon School in Glendon, Alta., said that APPLE Schools’ initiatives have created a culture of awareness among Glendon’s students.

Walking through Glendon School, you will witness healthy messages donning the hallways on bulletins that students helped create; students enjoying taste tests; and students choosing healthy snacks and describing how they make them feel better and more energetic. Fresh fruit and veggies are delivered to each class every Tuesday. Students also have regular physical activity throughout the day and Bailey walks from class to class to lead physical activity breaks.

She shared that students understand the link between healthy habits and their mental health.

“Students are equipped with the vocabulary to explain when they are feeling anxious or overwhelmed and need a physical break as well as describe the positive aspects they feel during and after physical activity. The APPLE Schools initiatives have provided our students with a voice to advocate for their own health.”

APPLE Schools represents a commitment to health promotion and disease prevention that targets children at a critical stage of development when life-long habits are being formed. By promoting habits that encompass all areas of wellness, parents, doctors, teachers, and caretakers can drastically improve children’s quality of life, including mental health, for the long term. ■

To learn more, visit appleschools.ca and connect with them on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

References:

- First, L. (2019). The (Other) Added Benefits of Healthy Lifestyle Interventions. AAP Journals and Periodicals. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2MN57p5>
- Loewen, K. O. et. al. (2019) Lifestyle Behavior and Mental Health in Early Adolescence. Pediatrics. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2X7zt9v>

“Students are equipped with the vocabulary to explain when they are feeling anxious or overwhelmed and need a physical break as well as describe the positive aspects they feel during and after physical activity. The APPLE Schools initiatives have provided our students with a voice to advocate for their own health.”

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Submitted by Sarah Lusthas, Equitas

Equitas would like to invite you to mark the 30th anniversary of National Child Day on November 20, 2019 by leading an activity about children's rights, with children. The activity is a great way to give children a chance to learn and reflect about their rights and responsibilities. It invites their community to promote their rights and the values of children's rights, such as respect and inclusion. It also shows kids that their views are important!

The activity involves learning about children's rights and doing an art project, which can then be shared with the larger community. The activity requires minimal preparation and no training. We provide the materials you need and ideas for Play it Fair! activities to get children thinking about their rights.

Every year, more than 10,000 children all across Canada participate in our activities around National Child Day to raise awareness and take action for their rights – help have your children's voices heard!

Are you interested in joining this national initiative? Let us know by email (playitfair@equitas.org) and we'll make sure to send you the materials by postal service—at no cost. ■



#GETKIDSOUT

Submitted by Van Colden, Rolling with Van

#GetKidsOut is an initiative by Rolling with Van with the help of Sophie (12), Ben (10), and Ellie (8) to promote getting kids outside, with the use of social media platforms.

Through pictures, soundbites, and mini-videos, they advocate for active living by playing outside, encouraging free play, fostering creativity, and nurturing imagination. Last summer, they hid 10 #GetKidsOut treasure bags across Canada, for kids to stumble upon outdoors.

Sophie's video titled "You don't need to be sporty to be active" took first place in the Take Me Outside video contest. They worked collaboratively with Ever Active Schools and Shape Alberta on a series of soundbites to encourage and promote active school travel. And, Ellie released a "Fairy Challenge" in May 2019, via the **#GetKidsOut** vlog and YouTube channel.

In our youngest ambassador Ellie's words, "It's time to get our outdoor vitamins!" To see what they're up to, follow **@GetKidsOut** on Instagram, **@RollingWithVan** on Facebook, or visit the website: getkidsout.com ■



**PHOTOS: THE SUNCHILD SCHOOL CHEERLEADING TEAM.
PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY SUNCHILD SCHOOL.**

THE POWER OF CHEER

Submitted by Elise Smith, Teacher and Cheer Coach, Sunchild School

Since the fall of 2013, Sunchild School near Rocky Mountain House, Alta. has had an active cheerleading team. The team was founded by Elise Smith and Jennifer Essex, elementary teachers at the school, and Petitjean continues to coach the team. Sunchild School is full of talented and athletic youth.

Our co-ed team consists of athletes from grade 1 through 4 and can have up to 30 athletes. Our team has been awarded Champion of the Elementary Division 1, nine times.

A cheerleading routine consists of a cheer, dance, jumps, stunts, tumbling and a pyramid. We practice twice a week after school, and sometimes during lunch hour. Attendance to practice is mandatory to be part of the routine. If a member of a stunt group is absent, the entire group is unable to practice the stunt. As a result, school attendance has been positively impacted.

The team has had other positive influences on Sunchild Bison members. Athletes' self-esteem increases as they learn new tumbling and stunting skills; they build meaningful relationships with teammates; and they learn about the power of perseverance. Health benefits include increased flexibility, coordination, balance and endurance.

The students look forward to the competitions all season. They absolutely love getting in their uniforms, having their hair and makeup done, and

performing in front of the crowd. They cheer for the other teams and are inspired by the incredible routines performed. The Alberta Cheerleading Association has been very encouraging and helpful over the years.

Each fall, the coaches look forward to the upcoming cheer season. Creating a new routine, finding music for it and planning what competitions to attend are all exciting. Just thinking about the new members, their progress, and the friendships that will be made, make all the extra hours required to coach a team well worth the effort. We are already excited about the 2019-2020 cheer team! ■





TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

A RECESS SUCCESS STORY

Written by Megan Nuspl, Practicum Student, Ever Active Schools

School recess is a topic that is getting a lot of attention from the media, public health agencies, and concerned parents. Most stories are in defense of continuing recess, and share worries about recess time decreasing or being eliminated. The province does not regulate how much recess schools must have, and some are taking advantage of this to reduce or remove recess in favour of instructional time or to help ease tension with transportation schedules. However, some schools, like Bruderheim School just northeast of Edmonton, have used this freedom to add a recess.

At the start of the 2018-2019 school year, Bruderheim students were greeted with a modified school day that included four recesses, and required students to sit in class for a maximum of one hour at a time before their next break. The change came into being as principal Paul McKay considered student behaviour and the overall feeling of the school in the latter portion of the 2017-2018 school year. Students were restless in the afternoon, and teachers were struggling to keep them on task. He began to research other school systems, including the Finnish school system, which has frequent breaks and emphasizes outdoor recess throughout the year. With teachers on board, but somewhat nervous in some cases, they embarked on a trial of four recess blocks per day, with the promise of regular check-ins to make sure the staff felt that it was beneficial to student's academic performance, behaviour, wellness and overall school environment.

Fast forward to spring 2019: after a full year of four recess blocks, principal McKay can call the experiment a big success. Attendance is up, and specifically, chronic absenteeism is down. Reading scores measured throughout the school year are

trending up compared to previous years. Teachers report improved behaviour and on-task time as well as an improvement in the overall atmosphere in the school.

Deciding to add extra recess was neither a quick nor an easy decision for Bruderheim School. Principal McKay had to discuss how extra recess time could be balanced with a continued emphasis on academic success and meeting instructional time requirements. The staff also wanted to make sure that students were getting the maximum physical, social and emotional, and academic benefits from their additional time outside. This resulted in the development of an instructional recess during the first break of the day, followed by three more traditional recesses. The instructional recess formed part of the daily physical activity curriculum and had students and all staff outside together, with the expectation that all students are participating in a physical activity. Teachers lead activities and encouraged participation for any students who were not engaged. Through the year they found that less intervention was required, and that students were picking up games on their own and getting active during the instructional >

recess. Activities were also carrying over to the traditional recesses later in the day. Cross-grade interaction has been high, with whole school games spanning kindergarten to grade 6 happening regularly.

For schools debating a schedule shift and the addition of more recess time, consider these points that could help make a four-recess day a success like it is at Bruderheim School:

- Have a recess plan that outlines activities, supervision and options for indoor recess, so that teachers and staff are prepared when recess-related situations arise;
- Consider professional development and activity training for teachers and Educational Assistants to gain comfort leading recess and working on conflict management;
- Consider an instructional recess - meeting instructional time requirements as daily physical activity, while still adding outside recess time. An expectation of activity during one recess can increase the physical activity of students through all recesses;
- Place responsibility on students - Bruderheim students were given the responsibility of getting ready for recess and returning to class in a quick manner, and understood that the morning recess was intended to be an active break for everyone. Older students can help younger students get ready for recess and class to speed the transitions and build leadership among older students;
- Address conflict management during class time, so that skills discussed can be practiced during recess breaks with the supervision of adults; and
- Provide adequate equipment and activity options to keep students active and engaged. Recess bins with skipping ropes and balls can go a long way to getting students playing and preventing the excuse of boredom.

With student and staff support of a four-recess day, and academic, social, and physical markers looking positive, Bruderheim School is a success story for building more recess and activity into the school day. They intend to carry this schedule forward to next year. Given the success of a four-recess day, and no downsides in terms of school performance or curriculum coverage, this is something more schools should consider! ■



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PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY ANNETTE BRUISED HEAD

TEACHING AND LEARNING: KEEPING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ALIVE

Submitted by Annette Bruised Head, Division Principal of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education, Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 4

All students in Alberta should know at least a few words in Indigenous languages. It has to start somewhere. In order for the languages to be seen with equal value to any other language, they need to be heard. In learning and understanding the words, they come to learn the values; the other way of seeing. We need school systems outside of First Nations to be partners if we're going to be successful.

We are coming to a time where we are having our last speakers of our Indigenous languages, especially for those communities that are closer to urban settings.

Blackfoot is considered an endangered language; where most fluent speakers are over the age of 60. I recall a time that my grandfather spoke to our grade eight (8) class and told us, "What makes us who we are is our language. We will eat what everyone else eats, dress how they dress, but our language is what makes us unique." It is a very personal and very real scenario that our spoken language may be lost forever. However, with the understanding and support of the greater population of Canada, our language can thrive for future generations.

To help our students and those across Alberta learn our Blackfoot language, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Staff brainstormed ways to incorporate the Blackfoot language into existing resources that are used in Alberta schools, starting with the Animal Alphabet and Animoves cards from Ever Active Schools and Be Fit For Life. We couldn't just duplicate it, because English uses different symbols/letters than Blackfoot. We found that only 9 of our 13 Blackfoot linguistic symbols could be used for letters/symbols that animal and activity words begin with. We used those 9 letters to create an Animal Alpha-

bet set in Blackfoot. The team created movements connected to those animals, being as authentic as we could to the nature of each animal, and making it as fun as we could for students of all ages!

Having students using movement early on in school is important for our young people to have a healthy lifestyle and avoid the risk of diabetes and other health concerns. Physical activity also encourages learning, so it was a natural choice to link movement with language to promote better understanding. Our hope is that these resources, and those we plan to create in the future, will encourage not only our own First Nations students, but all students across the province to learn, respect and value Indigenous languages.

When the first settlers came to our homeland, many of the teachings and understandings that Blackfoot people had were not respected nor valued. Today, some of those teachings could be helpful in so many aspects: economy, child-rearing, relationship building, education and learning, and the environment. These values are shared in the learning of Indigenous languages.

We will start piloting these resources in schools in September - anyone interested in partnering can contact melissa@everactive.org to learn more. ■

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH LOOSE PARTS PLAY

Written by Adrian Xavier, School Health Facilitator, Ever Active Schools

The 2018-2019 school year unofficially became the year of Loose Parts Play!

Hot on the heels of a launch at the conclusion of the 2017-2018 school year at Dr. Donald Massey School in Edmonton, four additional schools with the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) and four with the Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD) embarked on their own Loose Parts Play journeys. The program roll-out at each school site has been a success thanks to the mentorship and coordination provided by Ever Active Schools; wellness consultants Stacey Hannay, Karla Tritten and Heather Rootsart; and the school communities and their respective health champions.

SO, WHAT IS LOOSE PARTS PLAY AND HOW CAN YOU HOP ON THE BANDWAGON?

Basically, Loose Parts Play is letting kids loose with simple, inexpensive, everyday objects – including natural materials like rocks, sticks and leaves; and recycled materials like cardboard, ropes and milk crates – to engage in unstructured play.

Each of the four key components of a Comprehensive School Health framework are essential for the successful implementation of a Loose Parts Play program. Ever Active Schools offers mentorship to walk you through it, but a good place to start on your own is to focus on the impact and necessity of **partnerships and services**.

While the thought and act of coordinating and accessing storage and loose parts can be costly and time-consuming, it doesn't have to be! Relationships within the school community (such as school council, parent advisory council, friends and relatives of school staff) are a strategic place to start. Individuals might be able to donate materials, their time, or both!

Consider broadening your reach to local community organizations and businesses. Local organizations and businesses are often seeking different ways to contribute to positive experiences for children and youth. When discussing Loose Parts Play and its benefits with others, it can be challenging to capture its lived experience through words alone. Be sure to provide a strong visual aid to add context.

What are you waiting for? Let's play! ■



IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR WHO TO CONTACT FOR SOURCING SPECIFIC LOOSE PARTS MATERIALS:

Automotive & Mechanics:

Tires, seats

Carpet & Flooring:

Carpet, vinyl, flooring samples, cardboard tubes

Upholstery & Fabric Stores:

Fabric offcuts, cardboard tubes

Supermarkets:

Cardboard, shopping carts, point-of-sale stands

Lumber Yards:

Wood offcuts/buckets

Hardware Stores:

Buckets, paint brushes, rope

Climbing Centres:

Old rope

Builders/Joiners:

Old scaffolding boards, wooden offcuts

Plastics Manufacturers:

Crates

Dairy, Beverage & Bread Companies:

Plastic crates, trays

Sign Manufacturers:

PVC tubing, lumber, plastics, unique and one-of-a-kind samples

Kijiji:

Storage Sheds/Structures

MIYOMAHCHIHOWIN: IN GOOD HEALTH

Written by Katie Mahon, Provincial Projects Coordinator and Jamie Anderson, In Good Health Coordinator, Ever Active Schools

In Good Health (IGH) launched in the City of Calgary in February of 2019. On a frosty Monday afternoon, 22 Calgary Board of Education (CBE) students, made their way to the New Central Library.

For those of you who have been to this library, you might already begin to conceive as to why this space would be incredibly supportive to students from diverse backgrounds, many of whom face barriers in their experiences with formal education. Both its majesty and the inclusivity of the environment are difficult to put into words. The impressive space is filled with bright, natural light... and also with people! Every single day, the library is filled with people of all walks of life: all ages, ethnicities, abilities and purpose. The feeling that everyone is welcome pervades the entire space; the children's section is loud, playful and filled with snacks and strollers, the quiet area invokes a feeling of calmness, community spaces and services dot the campus, and, well, the coffee is excellent.

On the third floor you'll find the Teen Centre - for teens only; the library is truly strict on this policy. I myself have been kicked out (gently, and with respect, of course). This teens-only space is off-limits to adults and children (unless they're being looked after by their teenage sibling) and this has created a safe, incubated space that is always bustling with teens. It is here that IGH YYC, called Recreation Leadership, holds class.



IGH is a project designed to support students who experience barriers and challenges to graduating high school, and, as a result, finding employment. The project aims to work with underrepresented youth and employers to create pathways to employment while earning credits towards high school graduation. By design, the work of IGH stewards partnerships with school boards and municipalities to offer either on or off-campus learning opportunities for youth, followed by paid employment opportunities in the field of health and recreation leadership or, alternatively, bridges to post-secondary education as an alternate career pathway.

IGH has evolved from an original pilot in 2017 called Miyomahchihowin, which means 'in good health' in the Cree language. The project centered around supporting Indigenous youth in Edmonton Public Schools. The pilot was aimed at providing pathways for Edmonton Indigenous youth to develop personal skills and gain employment or volunteer opportunities in the areas of sport, recreation, health promotion, and active living. It took the shape of a spring break camp. Students participated in trainings to earn certifications in such disciplines as volleyball and soccer officiating, soccer coaching FUNdamentals and Standard First Aid, all while earning high school credits for their efforts. >

In the subsequent years, Miyomahchihowin has evolved to include multiple pathways for delivery. With funding support from RBC Future Launch, IGH supported immigrant and refugee students through a Spring Break Camp, in partnership with Edmonton Public School Board. The project also continues to fulfill its original mandate of supporting Indigenous students through both the spring break camp format, and an evolved iteration, One-Credit Weekends. In 2018, Indigenous students from Paul First Nation were immersed, over a weekend, in culturally based trainings while earning one-credit for their work and participation. The students participated in One-Credit Weekends focused on learning outdoor survival skills, moose hide tanning weekends and bow hunting.

Flash forward to February 2019 when IGH again took on a new shape: full semester, half-day programming. IGH YYC was born of an incredibly harmonious partnership group made up of The City of Calgary, Calgary Board of Education, Calgary Public Libraries and Ever Active Schools, with funding support from Jumpstart. 22 students climbed the stairs of the New Central Library and made their way to the Teen Centre.

Over the course of the Winter 2019 term, this dynamic and enthusiastic group of teenagers participated in foundational training in leadership and recreational programming, which culminated in the opportunity to apply for paid employment. Students had the chance to earn up to 13 high school credits in Career and Technology Studies (CTS) and Work Experience. Collectively, the Winter cohort earned 115 CTS credits, 99 work experience credits, and 14 students achieved paid employment through the City of Calgary. Students were connected with resources in their own communities, like the Youth Employment Centre, and had the chance to enjoy off-campus field trips to The Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary and to attend The City of Calgary's Youth Hiring Fair.

On any given day at the New Central Library, you might have stumbled upon a group of students developing team-building strategies in the Teen Centre, learning about childhood development by observing different library spaces during High Five training, or leading sidewalk games and seed-bomb workshops for elementary students during spring break. As students practiced teaching fundamental movement skills, library staff would join in and play too and the sound of drums were heard beyond the Teen Centre when community members facilitated Dene and Blackfoot traditional games.

The Centre for Sexuality provided training about how to create a culture of respect in recreation and leisure programming.

"I learned about sexuality and respecting pronouns and will remember that for the rest of my life," said William, 20. Ever Active Schools offered Adapted Physical Activity training, which was a highlight for another recreation leader who shared that she was excited to learn tools to help her facilitate inclusive games and activities. In their final program reflections, students remarked on the friendships, fond memories, and sense of belonging that came from the program that many hadn't experienced before in school.

"It is a great opportunity for people like me who didn't think that they can get into a career like this to prove to themselves that they can," reflected Genna, 16. Although students like Genna experience barriers to employment, this project has offered Genna a different experience and has carved out an understanding that she, too, can pursue career pathways in the field of health and wellness.

Ever Active Schools is excited for the work of In Good Health to continue to grow, refine and evolve for the needs of each participating community. We look forward to sustained work in Calgary, and through our partnership with Jumpstart Charities, emerging project work in Morley, Maskwacis, High River and the Leithbridge area. This project work deeply aligns with the values of Ever Active Schools and those of our project partners across the province, that **all students live and learn in good health.** ■



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