

healthy schools ALBERTA

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Supporting Healthy School Communities!

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Canadian Kids Need to Move More to Boost
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IN THIS ISSUE

Happy fall to everyone and another season of back to school! Within this edition of Healthy Schools Alberta we share stories of impactful work currently happening in Alberta and a new Ever Active Schools initiative in the Northwest Territories. We hope that through our communication materials we provide education but we also hope to challenge and provide clear evidence that wellbeing is foundational to learning and a positive school environment. We specifically highlight the importance of physical activity and how it relates to positive mental health. Enjoy and thank you for all your contributions to healthy school communities in Alberta... and beyond. Please reach out to us at info@everactive.org or @everactiveab. We love feedback, questions and stories!

- The Ever Active Schools Team



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FEATURE ARTICLE

The Brain + Body Equation:
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PUZZLE PIECES APPRECIATION ACTIVITY

We believe in the strength of diversity. Each member of our team is like an individual puzzle piece, unique in shape and design. We come together in our roles to work towards a complete picture, just like a puzzle. Everyone fits and is necessary to form the whole. We value the unique strengths and attributes of each individual because it makes our team more versatile and dexterous. At the annual Ever Active Schools Retreat in June, we took some time to recognize everyone and what they bring to our team. This is an easy and fast activity you can do at a staff meeting.

Here's how:

- Print one puzzle piece per team member and write their name on it
- Set out puzzle pieces around the table or room, as well as a variety of markers or pens
- Team members rotate through the room and write on every puzzle piece, with the exception of their own. On each puzzle piece, they add words or phrases that describe the strengths and unique qualities of the person named on the puzzle piece
- Assign a timekeeper who instructs the group to rotate to the next puzzle piece every 30-60 seconds
- One person collects these at the end and hands them out at a later date

The completed puzzle pieces are a great way to recognize team members for their contributions and serve as great reminder of their unique piece in the big picture!

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Forward-thinking, Logical,
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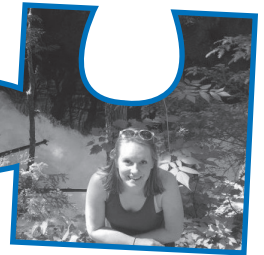
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PLAN YOUR YEAR

2018/19 Healthy School Community Events

HEALTHY ACTIVE SCHOOLS SYMPOSIA

The Healthy Active School Symposia (HASS) is a series of student leadership events that provide Alberta school communities with the knowledge, skills and resources needed to enhance student wellness. Visit www.everactive.org/hass for details on 2018–19 events

INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY/WEEK

Wednesday, October 3, 2018 marks International Walk (iWalk) to School Day. Students and families are encouraged to walk or wheel to and from school. If one day is not enough, celebrate iWalk Week from October 1 – 5! Don't forget to register your school at www.shapeab.com

LIVE ACTIVE SUMMIT

October 18 – 19, 2018, Edmonton Alberta, Treaty 6 Territory

This summit is a catalyst to educate, engage and bring to life active living, active recreation, and sport in school and community settings.

Learn more: everactive.org/liveactive

RESILIENCY SUMMIT: HONOURING YOUTH VOICE

November 28 – 29, 2018, Calgary, Alberta, Treaty 7 Territory

The Resiliency Summit is a two day gathering of Indigenous youth, educators and community members for the purposes of sharing activities, and 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.

Learn more: everactive.org/rw/

SHAPING THE FUTURE 2019

January 31 – February 2, 2019, Lake Louise, Treaty 7 Territory

Ever Active Schools is hosting the 10th annual Shaping the Future Conference with over 500 delegates in attendance. Join us in Lake Louise to discuss and learn about Comprehensive School Health from leaders in education, health, active living, research and policy. Find out more: www.everactive.org/stf

THE ALBERTA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION YOUTH RUN CLUB

Start a free, fun and flexible Alberta Medical Association Youth Run Club in your school community this fall. Find out more, get free resources and register here:

www.amayouthrunclub.com ■

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



Photo: Indigenous student facilitators guide their peers into the shoes of their ancestors with the Blanket Exercise

Honouring Our Ancestors: Unwrapping History with the Blanket Exercise

WRITTEN BY EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS AND DARLENE COX, FIRST NATION MÉTIS INUIT SUCCESS COACH FOR THE FOOTHILLS SCHOOL DIVISION. DARLENE IDENTIFIES AS MÉTIS; HER ANCESTORS DESCEND FROM THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT AREA GOING BACK TO 1793

Walking into the classroom, you notice multi-coloured blankets seemingly strewn across the floor. Yet there is a connection woven through them. The activity, called the Blanket Exercise (originally developed by KAIROS Canada), tells the story of the mistreatment of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities over hundreds of years.

Students sit in a circle surrounding the blankets: some lead the activity, some help, others wait, unsure of what they are about to experience. Scanning the faces in the room, it's difficult to predict the incoming emotions of the session: tears, laughter, pride, shame, overwhelm, acceptance. Often the activity is facilitated by adults, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. At Oilfields High School in rural Black Diamond, a team of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students facilitate the activity themselves, putting themselves and their classmates in the shoes of those experiencing the loss of land, culture, and their children.

The student oskapewis ("helpers" in Cree) co-facilitate with Darlene, providing their peers with an interactive learning experience that teaches Indigenous rights history rarely taught in schools. Developed in response to the 1996 Report of the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples – which recommended education on Canadian-Indigenous history as one of the key steps to reconciliation – the Blanket Exercise covers over 500 years of history in a one and a half hour participatory workshop.

"We first smudge with the participants, explaining the reasons why we are smudging – to clear all the energy that we bring with us, and to set the stage for a positive experience, as well as to call on the Creator, Grandmothers and Grandfathers to guide us on the journey of the Blanket Exercise," says Darlene.

"We take the participants on an emotional journey, through a harsh climate from pre-contact, colonization, treaties, the Indian Act, confederation, assimilation, cultural genocide, gender inequality, connecting the dots of how history has set the stage for our present day social issues caused from intergenerational trauma from the effects of hundreds of years of oppression. By the end of the exercise a small amount of blankets and students are left

depicting the loss of land and life over the course of 500 years."

The activity ends with a traditional talking circle, allowing students to honour their own experience, build community with their peers and look to the future. "This experiential workshop really opens the eyes and hearts of the participants, both young and old, and opens the door to more discussions about what our responsibilities are as Canadians."

Darlene attests that the experience has a powerful effect on its young facilitators: "For the oskapewis the Blanket Exercise has given them an appreciation for their ancestral history, an understanding of intergenerational trauma and how it has affected them personally, pride in their Indigeneity, public speaking skills, historical and foundational knowledge, friendships, and for many of them acceptance from others. They are developing leadership skills and have become strong role models in their communities and at school."

Darlene also notes the importance of this activity in her own cultural understanding: "I have been working with First Nation communities in Alberta since 2002, and was unable to fully understand why these communities were struggling with so many social issues: poverty, addiction, lateral violence, the list goes on. While managing a program at the Stoney Nakoda Eden Valley Reserve, my students encouraged me to research my Indigeneity and learn where I came from. In researching my family's history, the Blanket Exercise helped me understand why our identity was hidden. My mother, who is now 81, is also making this connection. We are Métis/Swampy Cree and are no longer afraid to stand with our brothers and sisters."

For more information on the Kairos Blanket Exercise and how you can use it in your school, visit kairosblanketexercise.org ■



Photo Credit: Teacher at Chief T'Selehye School
Photo: Megan McCormick leading a reaction game at Chief T'Selehye School

Ever Active Schools and Chief T'Selehye School

WRITTEN BY TRACEY GILMOUR AND MEGAN MCCORMICK, SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATORS WITH EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS
PHOTO CREDIT: MEGAN MCCORMICK - THIS TEEPEE IS PHOTOGRAPHED FROM THE SCHOOL GROUNDS AT CHIEF T'SELEHYE SCHOOL AND IS USED FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND OUTDOOR LEARNING

This past April, we had the opportunity to support professional development at Chief T'Selehye School in Ft. Good Hope, Northwest Territories. Our week long travel was in conjunction with the school's professional development that centered around infusing physical literacy into their school through classroom and alternate activities.

The community of Ft. Good Hope is home to roughly 500 people, situated on the bank of the Mackenzie River and just a thirty minute drive from the Arctic Circle. The school is naturally a hub of the community with a beautifully open gymnasium upon the entrance and welcoming school staff. We spent four days with the staff going over topics such as physical literacy, activity permissive learning environments, staff wellness, and social emotional learning. There were also opportunities to work with a variety of students through movement breaks in classrooms, sometimes incorporating the Slavey language, and bringing

classes outside to learn orienteering.

One highlight for us was hosting a community night at the school. This gave students and their parents an opportunity to come play games that can enhance their physical literacy skills while at home. Seeing parents be active with their children, ask important questions, and enjoy some of the snacks we brought was a great way to connect with the community. We valued this work and believe it to be an important piece for the next generation. ■



Staff Wellness: Walking the Talk with Ever Active Schools

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

I started as a provincial projects coordinator with Ever Active Schools just over one year ago. I remember feeling excited to join an organization whose mandate centered around health and wellness; surely the team at Ever Active Schools would walk the talk of healthy active lifestyle and I was enthusiastic to be part of that culture. >

As part of my portfolio of work, I was assigned ‘Staff Wellness,’ which existed in the form of a committee who met semi-regularly and would action initiatives in the vein of staff health and well-being. Though the spirit of the committee deeply embodied the values of Ever Active Schools, the challenge was that it was just one more meeting to schedule, attend, document and then find time to action. As I’m sure you might relate to, that proved challenging.

We decided to shake it up! How might we invest in staff wellness in such a way that it became further embedded into our day-to-day work, so as to become a living, breathing culture of wellness at Ever Active Schools? As you might expect, given the levels of gusto amongst our team, we were up to the challenge!

I thought I’d share with you some of our best practices from the year. Some of these are well ingrained within Ever Active Schools and some were newly added this year to enhance support for a culture of work wellness.

WALKING MEETINGS

We love them. If it’s not totally necessary to be at your computer to address the meeting’s purpose, why not walk around the block instead?

PLANTS

We have a few green thumbs on our team and our office spaces are slowly filling with flowers and foliage!

SWEAT DATES

Ever Active Schools encourages physical activity within our work day so whether it’s walking the stairs, lunch time cross-country skiing, running hills or meeting in the morning for a pre-work run/walk – it’s always easier with a friend!

COFFEE DATES

We are a diverse and ever-growing team with unique backgrounds. Though we connect often, we’re also on the road and in-and-out of the office all day, every day. Setting coffee dates with our teammates helps us build stronger connections.

SNACKS

Everyone loves snacks! And we have a team of expert snack makers and sharers. Sometimes, simple is best. We’ve learned that a bag of crunchy apples or fresh popcorn on the office community table is well received and leaves everyone feeling physically and mentally well.

HALF DAY FUN FRIDAYS

New to Ever Active Schools this year – Half Day Fun Fridays! Every third Friday of the month, in both Edmonton and Calgary, our team gets together and does something fun! From a walking tour of our cities to lawn bowling, these days are opportunities to embrace movement and togetherness. On our latest Half Day Fun Friday in Edmonton, we visited to the Paul First Nation School Pow Wow; it was an incredible day of cultural immersion, ceremony and celebration for our team and a wonderful opportunity to connect with the greater community.

Every organization, school, team and family functions a little bit differently. Our practices at Ever Active Schools might not all be a best fit for you, we encourage you to walk the talk! Lead by example, rally your team for support and remember to strike a balance between work and play. My grandma used to say, “everything in moderation, including moderation”.

Be well, friends! ■

Promoting Positive Mental Health in the Classroom

WRITTEN BY MEGAN MCCORMICK, SCHOOL HEALTH FACILITATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

We know that promoting positive mental health is tied to enhanced physical and emotional development in children and youth, and given that children and youth spend more than six hours per day at school, the classroom is a critical setting for this work to take place. As children move into their later teen years, schools may play an even greater role in influencing their psychological wellness given the strong influence that teacher support and peer networks have on youth. With this in mind, here are some areas to support positive mental health in your classroom and some specific strategies to try with your students.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

SEL is the process through which children and youth develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills to identify and manage their emotions, set and pursue positive goals, communicate care and concern for others, initiate and maintain positive relationships, and make decisions that demonstrate respect for themselves and others. Including skills such as identifying emotions, stress management, goal setting, empathy, and relationship building in a student’s school day can help foster individual and social awareness that can build positive relationships and communication skills. Some examples are:

- Acknowledge and discuss emotions and feelings that come up in stories or novel studies, understanding how different students perceive different emotions.
- Assign new emotion words for students to use explicitly in

writing assignments.

- Facilitate classroom discussions that help students practice communication skills, work through disagreements or differing opinions, and help build relationships within the classroom.

Resiliency

Resiliency is the positive adaptation of children and youth despite challenges, obstacles or areas of risk they may face in their social contexts or environments. Resilient individuals often have a “positive cognitive triad,” that is, a positive view toward themselves, the world, and the future because they know they possess the skills to cope and bounce back from challenges. These assets can be encouraged in the following ways: ➤

- Encourage reflection through personal essays of triumphs or obstacles the student has faced.
- Acknowledge students' individual gifts and strengths through verbal or written feedback.
- Teach appropriate coping strategies for when students encounter areas of challenge or vulnerability.
- Role play scenarios for students to practice seeking support or help when in difficult situations.

Connectedness

Connectedness is a child's perception of their close relationships in their daily activities and routines. Connectedness can be fostered within a classroom or school by supporting students feelings of acceptance, respect, inclusion and support. High levels of school connectedness have been positively correlated with student's sense of belonging and self-esteem, and negatively correlated with high-risk health behaviours such as tobacco use. Some ways to foster connectedness are to:

- Offer social supports during times of academic transition or

stress within the school.

- Create small-sized learning environments for students to build strong meaningful relationships with peers they may not normally interact with.
- Ensure that course content is relevant to students' lives, or you can make a connection to a student's life.

Fostering social emotional learning, resiliency and connectedness within a classroom can feel like a heavy task on top of everyday teaching responsibilities. But within each of these areas, there is common thread of strong relationships between teacher and student. If you're able to support positive mental health in your classroom, it truly starts with knowing your students and letting them know they can come to you in any circumstance. Once that relationship has been made, fostering social emotional learning, resilience and connectedness in your classroom becomes a whole lot easier. Ever Active School's Social Emotional Kit allows you to incorporate physical activity and SEL into your classroom.

Visit: everactive.org/online-store ■



WRITTEN BY BRANDI HEATHER, ADAPTED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SPECIALIST

I often remind my college students that in adapted physical education (and life) nothing great happens until they start to understand themselves, what they love, what they fear, where they have been and where they want to go. So many people ask about tools that will help them to work in the physical education setting with children with disability, and I have lots of ideas – thousands in fact. However, every one of these ideas came from trying and failing 4000 times in order to find what would work.

My willingness to be wrong and learn from it is what makes me good at my job. A few weeks ago I found myself trying to adapt a locomotor station for a student who uses a wheelchair,

and the safety bar of the chair got stuck every time they tried to go over my obstacle. The student insisted they could go around the obstacle in the course, but the magic doesn't come from ➤

going around – the magic comes when we find a way to help everyone get “over.”

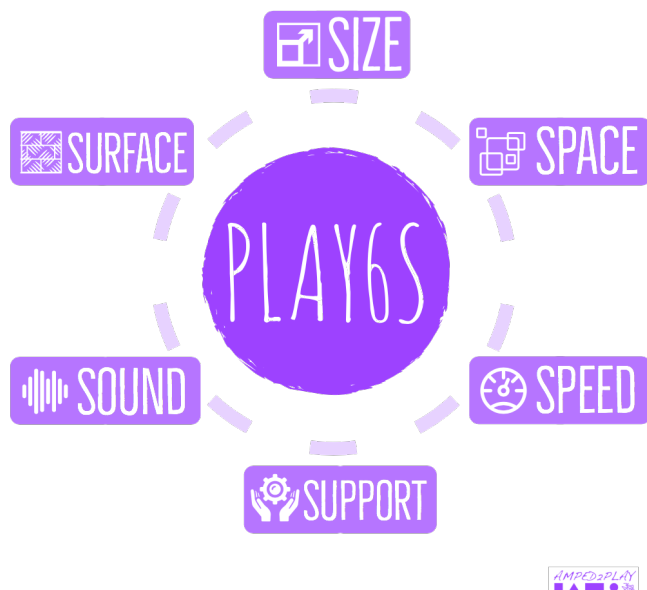
To make this happen, the whole class became designers, engineers and builders. We tried yoga mats, cardboard, pool noodles, momentum, etc., and in the end we created a bridge of cut pool noodles to make a mini ramp that the student using the chair could get over... and then the magic happened. One of the other students went and grabbed a scooter board and said, “let’s make the station so we can all go over!” Everyone was wildly engaged, using strength, locomotor skills, cooperation and principles of inclusion. If you see every “obstacle” as impossible, you will never find the magic in the opportunity.

I always love connecting with teachers and finding out how they are failing as well as finding the magic – because if you are willing to be wrong then you are going to be fine!

While the try and test method is often the best way to explore how to adapt for a student living with a disability, sometimes we need a jumping-off point, or as in the case above, a pool noodle to really get started. The PLAY6S strategies offer just that, a supportive launch pad for your exploration into how to include every child (Grenier, M., Leiberman, L., 2018).

PLAY6S provides a simple delivery design model and conveys easy to understand Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) based principles that improve accessibility to every level of sport, community, education, recreation, other physical activity programming and instruction. PLAY 6S addresses the whole student and making adaptations to physical, cognitive and social environments, tasks, instruction and collaboration. We know that positive physical and social emotional experiences and connection (Smith & Bundon, 2015) are the foundation for continued lifelong participation in movement and activity and PLAY 6S supports the creation of these experiences for all students.

Consider the following PLAY6S Tips for making adaptations to Fundamental Movement Skills:



SIZE

Modifications to the size (Grenier, M., Leiberman, L., 2018,) of the equipment increases the participants ability to:

- Manipulate an implement (i.e increasing the grip size on a racket)
- Strike a target (i.e. creating larger nets for greater success)
- Track an object (i.e. larger ball for catching)

Tips for PLAY6S:

Foam Hair Rollers can be used to increase the size of a racket or stick handle for students who have differences in strength and dexterity.

SURFACE

Modifications to the playing and equipment surface (Grenier, M., Leiberman, L., 2018) can:

- Accommodate personal assistive equipment (i.e moving from a grass surface to a hardwood floor)
- Increase participants grip strength
- Improve focus
- Improve balance

Tips for PLAY6S:

Ever thought how wonderful shelf liner can be? It is a great tool for changing the surface of implements for both grip and focus.

Shelf liners also work as a wonderful modification on the floor for creating a surface difference that allows for easy pathways to be created for students who have differences in attention and focus. Use coloured shelf liners to move students along bridges between bases, during games, and as waiting spaces for turn taking.

SPEED

Modification to the speed of instruction, equipment and task progressions increase the participants ability to:

- Coordinate movement
- Make decisions
- Strategize
- Organize their body and actions

Tips for PLAY6S:

Using a balloon for skills that require reaction time and coordination allows students with differences in mobility or cognition to get their bodies organized in order to trap, propel, strike etc.

SOUND

The addition or deletion of sound through equipment (Grenier, M., Leiberman, L., 2018), environment, and instruction increase the participants ability to:

- Attend to tasks
- Engage and motivate
- React

Tips for PLAY6S:

Staples sells wonderful “That Was Easy” buttons that speak when they are pressed. I often use them at the end of relay races, obstacle courses or the end of activities to engage motivation and connection through sound. Try pairing students together with different abilities who can tag the button together!

SPACE

By increasing the environment space and/or the space for tasks, instruction we increase the participants ability to: ➤

- Self-regulate
- Engage and motivate
- Explore independently

Tips for PLAY6S:

Using a guidewire system for students with visual differences allows them to independently negotiate space. A simple guidewire system can be set up between chairs, pylons or held by peers during relays etc. (Grenier, M., Lieberman, L., 2018)

SUPPORT

Providing physical (Grenier, M., Lieberman, L., 2018), cognitive and social /emotional support to participants increases the participants ability to:

- Connect

- Coordinate
- Discover their strengths
- Negotiate different terrain

Tips for PLAY6S:

Ever tried to put a larger ball on top of the Tee or a pylon, and spend more time trying to keep the ball there than working on the skill itself? Try this support for PLAY6S, a basic funnel changes your pylon into a supportive Tee. ■

References:

1. Grenier, M., Lieberman, L. (2018) *Physical education for children with moderate to severe disabilities. Human Kinetics. Champaign, IL.*
2. Smith, B., & Bundon, A. (2015). *Disability models: Explaining and understanding disability sport. In I. Brittain (Ed.), Palgrave handbook of Paralympic studies. Basingstoke: Palgrave.*



Supporting School Active School Travel Programs

SUBMITTED BY THE ALBERTA CENTRE FOR ACTIVE LIVING

The Alberta Centre for Active Living worked with SHAPE Alberta and Ever Active Schools to conduct a survey and interviews with school active transportation champions across Alberta. This infographic highlights some of the key findings in the report, including barriers to success and champions' recommendations to support school active transportation programs.

Common barriers to active school travel include lack of financial and volunteer support, distance students must travel, limited measurement and accountability, and policy misalignment. On the other hand, key facilitators included strong leadership, policy change at the municipal and provincial level, and making active travel part of the school budget.

“Champions across the province are working hard to support a culture of active travel in their schools. Yet, some champions are falling short of achieving their vision of success due to limited resources and supports available to them,” said Dr. Soultana Macridis, Research Associate and Knowledge Translation Specialist with the Alberta Centre for Active Living. You can download the full report at centre4activeliving.ca >

School Active Transportation Survey

A perspective from champions

Safe Healthy Active People Everywhere (SHAPE) Alberta works with school communities to encourage students to use an active mode of transportation for their school journey.

Reaching out to school active transportation champions across the province, we wanted to learn about their experiences and recommendations.

"Success is having kids change their habits and understanding the benefits they could gain."

52% OF CHAMPIONS REPORTED ACHIEVING THEIR VISION OF SUCCESS

- ✓ Increased student participation.
- ✓ Increased school and community support.
- ✓ Reduced traffic and increased road safety near schools.

"If I get just one student that usually drives to school, and they walk, then that is a success."

COMMON BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

🚧 Distance students must travel 🚧 Time 🚧 Funding 🚧 Insufficient support 🚧 Perceived safety 🚧 Environment

CHAMPIONS' RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT SCHOOL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS

- Adapt programs for students living in urban, suburban, rural, and remote regions.
- Mobilize existing resources.
- Embed strategies into current curriculum and activities.



SEEK MULTI-LEVEL SUPPORT

- Mobilize and engage school and community stakeholders.
- Develop supportive policies.
- Evaluate program success.
- Seek school funding and sponsorship opportunities.



SHIFT THE CULTURE

- Provide traffic and pedestrian education to students and families.
- Breakdown negative perceptions.
- Seek advice from other champions and experts.
- Be a role model.



PROMOTE STUDENT LEADERSHIP

- Engage students in planning activities.
- Develop student role models.
- Build enthusiasm through student champions.



RESOURCES FOR CHAMPIONS:

- SHAPE Alberta: <https://shapeab.com>
- Ontario Active School Travel - School Travel Planning Toolkit: www.ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca
- Way to Be - Living Respectfully: www.waytobe.ca
- HASTe BC - The Hub for Active School Travel: <http://hastebc.org>
- Safe Routes to School National Partnership: www.saferoutespartnership.org/

The Alberta Centre for Active Living would like to thank Alberta Culture and Tourism for funding this project and all the school active transportation champions who took time to participate.

ALBERTA CENTRE FOR
Active Living

Alberta
Government



READ THE FULL REPORT AT: WWW.CENTRE4ACTIVELIVING.CA

WRITTEN BY ADAM PRATT, PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER, HELOISE LORIMER SCHOOL

Partial funding was proudly provided by Jumpstart. ■

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#DPAEveryDay: Surveying the Daily Physical Activity (DPA) Scene in Ontario and Alberta

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

Last year, the release of Canada's new 24-Hour Movement Guidelines, recommending 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity for children and youth, prompted Ontario's Ministry of Education to refresh their province's Daily Physical Activity (DPA) policy. DPA has been a policy in Alberta since 2006 and requires every student from kindergarten through Grade 9 to receive at least 30 minutes of physical activity in their school day. These policies recognize the many benefits that physical activity and good physical health have for learning, mental well-being and creating positive relationships. Ontario and Alberta are not alone in Canada, "multiple provinces have clearly outlined policies regarding daily physical activity, while other provinces have endorsed the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines instead of creating their own."²

How does a DPA policy come to life in your school, school division, or your province? Let's look at three considerations:

Physical Activity IS Health!

The key message that a DPA policy emphasizes is that physical activity is for all students of all abilities, is flexible, personal and contributes to your overall health. Ophea and Ontario's Ministry of Education co-released the #DPAEveryDay poster and resource page to support this message.³ Andrea Häefe, an Ophea ambassador and HPE teacher in Markham, Ontario reminds us that "knowing our learners and how they learn best is a key factor to good teaching practice in all grades and subject areas. When educators are able to embed quality physical activity for students of all abilities, students and teachers will be able to enjoy the benefits of physical activity. Students are: happy, active and healthy, ready to learn, and students are able to build positive mental health and positive relationships. These are the five icons represented as success criteria in the Ophea #DPAEveryDay resources".

Move More to Learn More

Dr. John Ratey is a leading researcher in the relationship between physical activity and increased brain function. In *Spark* (2008), he summarizes numerous studies to show that physical activity and movement are like "miracle grow for the brain." Häefe asks, when you look at these five icons representing quality physical activity, "what teacher wouldn't choose to embed physical activity into their daily teaching?" Ophea has released new videos to help remind educators, administrators, students and families of the many ways DPA is an important part of the school day. Ever Active Schools supports teachers in Alberta with resources and professional learning to make DPA easier to implement.³

Moving for Health or Moving for Skills?

Quality Daily Physical Education (QDPE) counts as DPA,

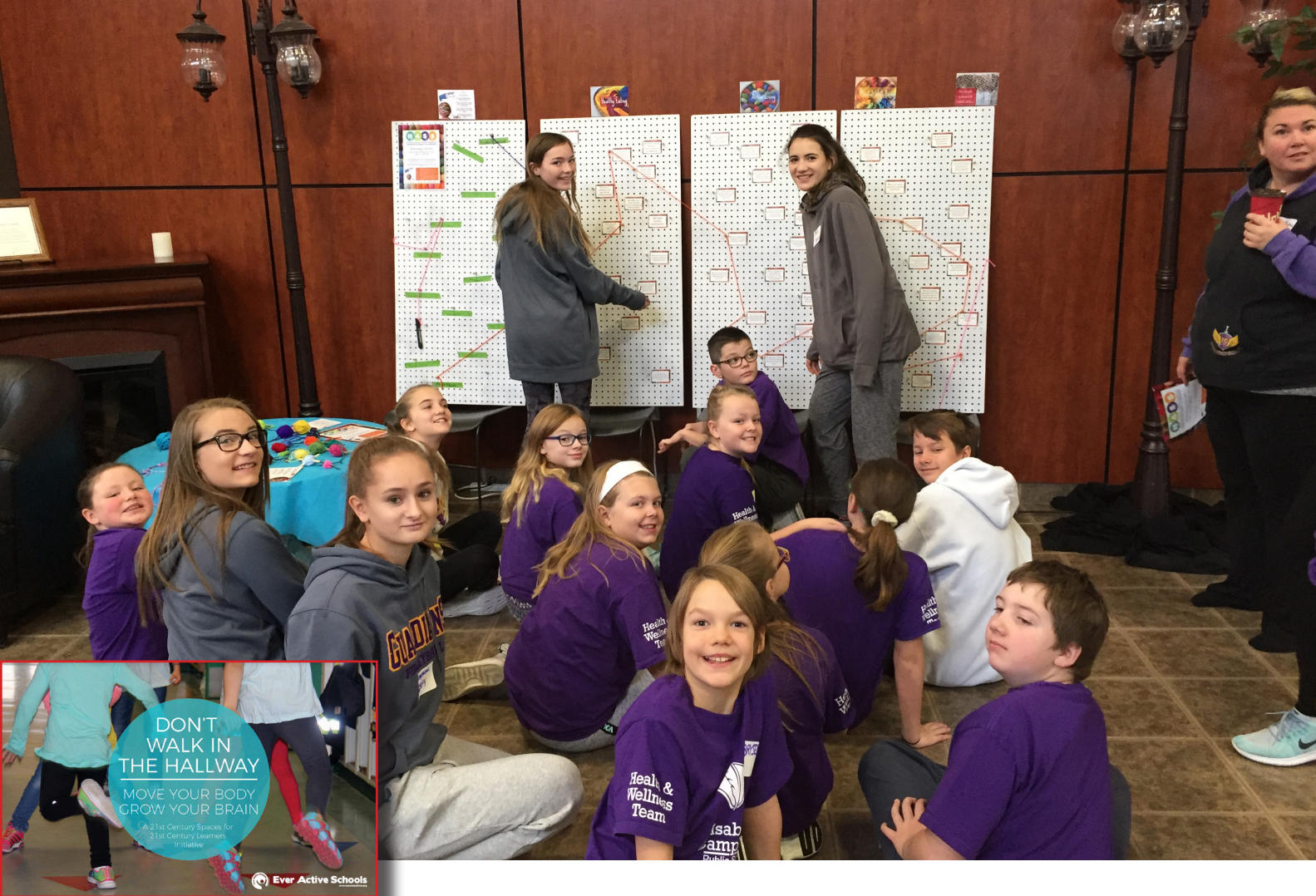
but DPA does not replace QDPE. This concern, heard from physical education specialists in Alberta, has also been raised by some Ontario educators in response to the refreshed DPA policy; specifically, the policy's flexibility (in both Alberta and Ontario) to deliver activity in small chunks of time (e.g., 5, 10 or 15 minute blocks). Indeed, when the goal is developing students' movement competence and skills, a full-time physical education program delivering the provincial curriculum is best suited for this result. DPA is about knowing when you need movement, why you need movement, and embedding purposeful and intentional movement to support student achievement and well-being.

"The big idea of the refreshed DPA policy in Ontario is to ensure that everyone in a school community has a key role in what physical activity looks, sounds and feels like. It is a collective responsibility to prioritize quality movement for all our learners," says Häefe. Her belief is that this flexibility "gives teachers permission to embed physical activity and to teach their students when and why they need it."

Many schools across Alberta deliver both physical education and DPA on a daily basis. One example is Vera M. Welsh School in Lac La Biche, Alberta where the entire school participates in weekly DPA challenges. Health Champions Nick Brown and Tina Skakun support all of their school's homeroom teachers by organizing and teaching the weekly challenge, then supporting teachers in finding ten minutes per day to have their whole class participate. In addition, Nick and Tina deliver daily physical education classes that build students' physical literacy by ensuring the curriculum is delivered through quality instruction in all of the domains of physical education. ■

References:

1. 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth: <http://www.csep.ca/view.asp?x=696>
2. Playsport: www.playsport.net
3. Ophea DPA Everyday: <https://teachingtools.ophea.net/supplements/dpa-every-day>



Encouraging Physical Movement

WRITTEN BY DARBY NELLIS, AMBER PATON AND KENNA SIEBERT, GRADE 6 STUDENTS - ISABEL CAMPBELL PUBLIC SCHOOL

Our health and wellness team at Isabel Campbell Public School wanted to be able to promote activity and healthy living, by changing the environment to encourage physical movement after attending the Healthy Active School Symposium (HASS) in the fall of 2017. The health and wellness team was introduced to the “Don’t Walk in the Hallway” (D.W.I.T.H.) decals and thought it would be a great resource to have in our school for indoor recesses. Our health and wellness team wanted the Grade 5, 6, 7 and 8 students to have a place upstairs to inspire them to move.

The health and wellness team received some seed funding following HASS from Ever Active School to purchase the D.W.I.T.H. decals. We placed the decals randomly in the common area and noticed that hopscotch brought more physical movement. After a few months our group changed the design to allow more hopscotch patterns in the common area and on both sides of the hallway.

“Sometimes I’m really hyper, so it’s good to jump and get my energy out,” said Jake, Grade 5 student.

“I think the decals are great because if kids have too much energy they can go on the decals then focus in class!” said Teagan from Grade 6.

“Our winter months are long and cold. Providing opportunities for movement during indoor recesses can be

challenging. The decals offer a quick alternative physical activity that requires no set-up or equipment,” said Mrs. Deschenes, Grade 8 teacher.

Overall, physical movement in the school has increased because of these decals. We are so glad that Ever Active Schools gave us the opportunity to rethink our school environment. The idea from the start was to make our school a more active place, and we did just that.

Looking for some pattern and game ideas to implement Don’t Walk in the Hallways Decals in your school? Check out the Supplemental Game cards which feature activities and energizers using the decals.

<https://everactive.org/product/dwith-cards/> ■



Eat Well to Play Well

WRITTEN BY ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES

Research shows that when young people participate in physical activity, they often turn to coaches, teachers and other mentors for diet advice. Proper nutrition and hydration is particularly important for active youth because their dietary behaviours need to support healthy growth and optimal performance. The dietitians at Alberta Health Services have developed a series of tools to support coaches and other role models who wish to teach accurate sports nutrition and healthy eating messages to growing, recreational athletes.

Sports Nutrition for Youth: A Handbook for Coaches is a comprehensive guide that enhances the knowledge and confidence needed to communicate sports nutrition and hydration principles based on current and high quality research. The handbook also covers special topics, including: how to create a healthier eating environment, planning for tournaments, competition and travel, vegetarian diets, body image, nutrition supplements, and alcohol.

For those coaches and teachers who just want to cover the basics, there are six brief modules that they can print to help deliver messages in the dressing room, on the bench, in class or during formal nutrition talks. These modules highlight key

nutrition concepts, require no technology, and include practical handouts to share with athletes and parents.

There are also four infographic posters that provide a visual overview of key nutrition and hydration concepts for young people who engage in physical activity. Coaches and teachers can display these colourful images in gymnasiums, recreation centres, locker rooms and fitness centres.

When the healthy choice becomes an easy choice, active youth are more likely to eat well for better growth, training and performance.

Find these resources at healthyeatingstartshere.ca under Healthy Eating at School in the Manuals and Toolkits tab. >



Fueling for Sports Nutrition

What to Eat During Activity

Most athletes **do not** need to eat during activity if properly fueled before; it may cause stomach upset.

Some athletes participating in intense continuous activity lasting more than 60 minutes may need additional fuel with 30-60 grams of carbohydrate.

Examples:

- 1 large banana = 30 g
- 1 medium orange = 12 g
- 1 box (28 g) raisins = 22 g
- 4 dried apricots = 13 g

What to Eat After Activity

- If you have **less than 24 hours** before the next activity, eat carbohydrate and protein rich foods within 30 minutes.
- If you have **longer than 24 hours**, refuel when you feel hungry.
- Pair a protein rich food with a carbohydrate rich food

Protein rich foods:

- lean meat, fish, poultry, tofu
- nuts, seeds, nut butter
- cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, cheese
- beans, lentils

Carbohydrate rich foods:

- whole grain pasta, quinoa, rice
- whole grain bread, buns, pitas, wraps, bagels, cereals
- fruit, milk

Alberta Health Services www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca Healthy Eating Starts Here

Fueling for Sports Nutrition

What to Eat Before Activity

Eat a meal, including all 4 food groups from Canada's Food Guide, 2-3 hours before activity

OR

Eat a snack, including 2 food groups from Canada's Food Guide, 1-2 hours before activity

Pre-Activity Foods

Choose foods that are high in carbohydrates, moderate in protein, and low in fat and fibre.

To prevent stomach upset, avoid deep fried and high fat foods.

Meals

- Roast beef, rice, vegetables, milk
- Toast, nut/seed butter, fruit, milk
- Poached egg on toast, shredded cheese, fruit salad
- Wrap with chicken breast or ham, fruit, milk

Snacks

- Low fat cottage cheese, fruit
- 1/2 meat sandwich
- Oatmeal, milk, fruit
- Granola bar, low fat yogurt, fruit

Test new foods and drinks during training sessions, not during competitions.

Alberta Health Services www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca Healthy Eating Starts Here

Fueling for Sports Nutrition

Planning For Tournaments, Competition and Travel

Plan, Prepare and Pack

- Plan meals, snacks and drinks ahead of time.
- Use a cooler or insulated lunch kit and ice pack to keep foods from spoiling.
- Pack extra refillable water bottles, napkins and cutlery.

Plan Ahead with Packable Food

On the Go Meal and Snack Ideas

- Leftovers
- Sub sandwiches, wraps or pitas
- Bread, buns or bagels
- Nut/seed butters
- Lower fat cheese
- Sliced lean cooked meats
- Canned tuna or salmon in water
- Instant plain oatmeal (thermos)
- Pre-cut and portioned fruit and vegetables

- Ready made at home smoothies
- Mixed dried fruit
- Granola bars
- Dry cereal
- Yogurt parfaits
- Boiled eggs
- Hummus
- Trail mix

Trial Ahead of Time

- New foods may cause stomach upset.
- It is best to try out new foods during practices rather than during games, competitions or events.
- Check out the food options at the tournament before you leave—then you will know what to pack!

Best to Avoid

- Cheeseburgers
- French fries, chips, deep fried foods
- Ice cream, chocolate, and candies
- High fat meats and cheese
- Sugar sweetened drinks (iced tea, pop)

Alberta Health Services www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca Healthy Eating Starts Here

Fueling for Sports Nutrition

Hydration Before Activity

Drink 400-600 mL (1½-2½ cups) of water 2 to 3 hours before the start of activity.

Hydration During Activity

Drink 125 mL (½ cup) of water every 15 minutes during activity.

Hydration After Activity

Drink 250-500 mL (1-2 cups) of water after activity, until urine runs clear.

What About Sports Drinks?

Athletes **only** need a sports drink when sweating a lot during **intense** activity that is **continuous** and lasts **more than 1 hour**.

Alberta Health Services www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca Healthy Eating Starts Here



GET INSPIRED

Walking, Listening and Learning Toward a Greener Tomorrow

WRITTEN BY, SISSY THIESSEN, RESILIENCY COORDINATOR AND TRACEY COUTTS, ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL COORDINATOR, EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Students at six schools in Edmonton and Calgary are working to protect the environment, one step at a time. Stepping Toward a Greener Tomorrow, an active school travel project funded by the Government of Alberta's Community Environmental Action Grant program, aims to mobilize students as climate change stewards and active school travel leaders. The project works to encourage students to engage in active transportation through walking and wheeling to school and in their neighbourhoods.

Active school travel encourages physical activity and creates opportunities to lessen gas and diesel emissions normally spent transporting students to and from school. Walking through neighbourhoods, such as Lynnwood and the Lynnwood ravine in Edmonton, encourages physical activity and fosters a love and respect for the physical environment.

Tracey Coutts is the active school travel coordinator for Ever Active Schools/SHAPE, as well as a parent. She has witnessed the powerful impact of imparting responsibility and environmental education onto our students first-hand:

"Telling students that their actions, such as choosing to walk or wheel to school, have a positive impact on their environment is one thing, but showing them what they are protecting and conserving by doing so is another thing entirely. Environmental stewards are borne of those who love nature and the world around them. They have a deep desire to protect it."

As part of this project, students benefit from the environmental learnings of the Alberta Council for Environmental Education, Planet Protector Academy's "Keep Cool" class lessons and project-based learning, and Inside Education's Clean Air Responsible Schools (CARS) program. Because of this education, students begin to understand why and how their actions, such as choosing active transportation, are so impactful. In addition to these teachings, students were introduced to Elder Isabelle Kootenay.

Wisdom from Elders deepens students' immersion into their physical surroundings. Elder, teacher and self-described "naturalist" Isabelle Kootenay visited Lynnwood School on April 11, 2018 to do just that. Isabelle shared stories, songs and facts about the ravine that runs adjacent to the school with grade four, five, six and kindergarten students. All who participated took a walk through the willows, trees and snow that line the school's soccer field.

On the walk, students learned about environmental stewardship from an Indigenous perspective. Traditionally,

Indigenous Canadians have occupied the role of caretakers of the land. The knowledge around honouring and living in harmony with the animals, plants and wildlife that have occupied these neighbourhoods has existed for years. On her walks, Isabelle encouraged students to stop, look and listen to what was happening around them. For some children, this was a learning in of itself, simply stopping everything they were doing to be a silent observer of the activity and beauty around them.

Oral knowledge-sharing has also been a traditional Indigenous way of knowing and practice for centuries. It has been the pinnacle of the survival of language, ceremony, family knowledge and other customs, such as land stewardship. Active school travel coordinators like Tracey, and projects such as Stepping Toward a Greener Tomorrow, understand the importance of including this knowledge and wisdom:

"Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Elders such as Isabelle Kootenay provide students with a historic picture of humans' relationship with the natural world. When that world is respected and nurtured, it will continue to provide. When it is not, the consequences could be dire. Just ask Isabelle. She has witnessed both outcomes in her lifetime."

Since Isabelle's first visit, the students are eager for her return. They want to learn more from her, to hear her stories and songs, to get outside and explore, to walk her path. "Isabelle is a terrific role model for everyone," continues Tracey. "She is filled with decades of knowledge and stories, is a healthy and active Elder, loves family and community, has a wonderful sense of humour, and she walks...a lot."

Active transportation is not just about walking or wheeling. It is about connecting with our natural and built environments, with our communities, and with the people around us. As we all take our own steps toward a greener tomorrow, let's follow in Isabelle's footsteps. Not only is that the wise choice but it also looks like the most fun! ■



Honouring Youth Voice: Fall Resiliency Summit

WRITTEN BY THE EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS RESILIENCY TEAM

In November 2018, we will celebrate resilient Indigenous school communities at the 4th annual Resiliency Summit. School teams from across Alberta have the chance to present how they support wellness in innovative ways, and young Indigenous role models will share inspiration from their experiences as artists, athletes, scholars, and leaders. The impact on the lives of students endures after the event. One teacher explained: “I have noticed the participation of the students I chose to go - [it has] helped them in their shyness. The students have come out of their shell and are willing participants in other field trips or events in our school. It was a great experience for them.”

The Resiliency Summit gives Indigenous students a chance to learn from, listen to, and share with other Indigenous students, role models, elders and leaders. The gathering showcases the talents, skills and efforts leaders are taking in their school communities to make them healthier and happier places. One of the 2017 Resiliency Summit Keynote Speakers, Leroy Little Bear, advocated that to help build healthy school communities: “it is of the utmost importance that communities speak for themselves. And what better way to identify needs than to ask the youth themselves? To provide opportunities for youth to share and lead.”

The November 2017 Resiliency Summit featured a number of speakers and presentations to inspire both youth and the adults that support them. Youth keynote Marika Sila performed hoop dance, sharing how dance gives her a way to pursue happiness and deal with the challenges she faces as a young Inuit woman. Calgary-based artist Tamara Cardinal demonstrated how she uses art to connect to her identity and stay grounded. Blackfoot facilitator Jason Plain Eagle had everyone laughing and running outside in his Traditional Games session, and students sat in rapt attention as elders Elsie Paul and Helmer Twoyoungmen shared stories and lessons in an elders circle.

Led by high school emcees from Siksika Nation and Paul First Nation, youth were encouraged to share what they do to help their communities. Taylor Little Mustache from Piikani Nation developed and presented on a Blackfoot version of Ever

Active Schools’ Don’t Walk in the Hallway resource. Students from across the province courageously took to the stage in front of hundreds of strangers for the Open Mic Night, where they melted hearts and inspired minds with their poetry, storytelling, rapping and singing. As one student described the event, “I felt so close to my spirit and my true self for the full two days of the Resiliency Summit, thank you! Being in the mountains and so close to nature was amazing and the workshops I attended were exceptional. Best conference I have been to...”

The impact extends into the school year, with past participants returning to create student leadership councils, coordinate events for other students, and increasing their engagement in the school community. As one teacher shared: “I strongly believe that the youth have benefitted from the knowledge that was shared by all the presenters and volunteers that week. Students still reach out to me about how much they were inspired from that week.”

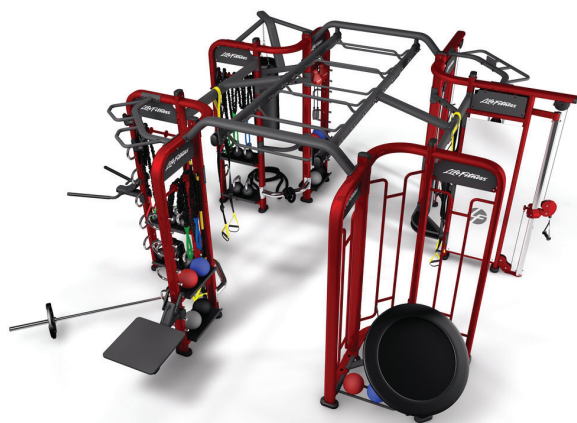
Please join us November 28 and 29 for the 2018 Resiliency Summit at Winsport Winter Sport Institute in Calgary, Alberta. The Resiliency Summit is a two-day gathering of over 400 Indigenous youth, educators and community members sharing activities, best practices and lessons around health, wellness and resilience.

For more information please visit: everactive.org/rw ■

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TOOLS FOR TEACHERS

Advocating for Quality Health and Physical Education Programs

WRITTEN BY THE HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION COUNCIL

The Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC) of the Alberta Teachers' Association, provides instruction and programs in health and physical education to promote the development of healthy active lifestyles in students. As a professional organization of teachers, we advocate for quality health and physical education programs and provide opportunities for professional growth and development of our members. Examples of these opportunities include: resource development, regional HPEC Drive-in Workshops and our annual HPEC conference which will be held in Red Deer in May 2019. To find more information, to become an HPEC member, or to contact the HPEC Regional Representative in your area, check out our website at hpec.ab.ca ■



FEATURE ARTICLE

The Brain + Body Equation: Canadian Kids Need to Move More to Boost Their Brain Health

WRITTEN BY MARK TREMBLAY, PHD, AND JOEL BARNES, MSC, HEALTHY ACTIVE LIVING AND OBESITY RESEARCH GROUP, CHEO RESEARCH INSTITUTE, LEIGH VANDERLOO, PHD, PARTICIPACTION, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EVER ACTIVE SCHOOLS, BRIAN TORRANCE, BPE MSC AND KATELYNN THEAL, BSC. K, MPH-HP

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The 2018 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth highlights the important relationship between physical activity and brain health. Achieving physical activity recommendations can translate to success in the classroom, on the field, and with friends. >

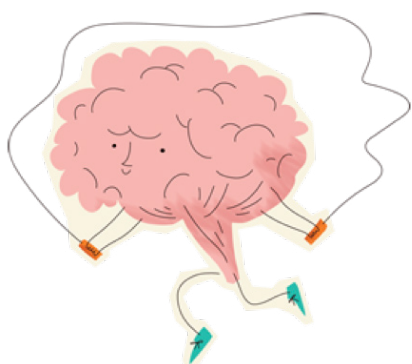
The science is in: Kids + Steps + Sweat = Healthier Brains

For decades we have known that physical activity improves heart health, helps maintain healthy body weight, and builds strong bones and muscles in children and youth across a range of skills and abilities.¹⁻⁴ Now we are taking a closer look at what physical activity does for one of their most vital and complex organs: the brain.

The data around physical activity are alarming. On average, kids are still sitting too much and moving too little to reach their full potential.

Only 35% of 5- to 17-year-olds are reaching their recommended physical activity levels as outlined in the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth.⁵ Just 62% of 3- to 4-year-olds are achieving the recommended activity levels for their age group. In addition, 51% of 5- to 17-year-olds and 76% of 3- to 4-year-olds are engaging in more screen time than is recommended by the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for recreational screen-based sedentary behaviours.^{5,6}

There are important connections between the health of the body and of the brain, connections that must be fostered in order for kids to reach their mental, emotional and intellectual potential. Kids' bodies have to move to get the wheels in their brains turning. They need to be active. Their brain health depends on it.



A growing body of evidence indicates that physical activity in childhood is essential for a healthy brain and leads to improved:

- Thinking and learning
- Emotional regulation and self-control
- Problem-solving ability
- Memory
- Stress management
- Self-esteem and self-worth
- Brain plasticity — the growth of new brain tissue
- Ability to cope with anxiety and depressive symptoms
- Attention and focus

Adding more physical activity to kids' routines could be the missing part of the equation in support of their success in the classroom, on the field, and with their friends.

Expert statement on physical activity and brain health for children and youth

For better brain health, all children and youth should be physically active on a regular basis. In addition to physical health benefits, physical activity also improves brain function, cognition and mental health.

A team of experts in paediatric neuroscience and exercise science created this Expert Statement, looking at the relationship between physical activity and brain health in children and youth. The best available scientific evidence was used to inform the development of this report.

While the physical health benefits of childhood physical activity are well known (e.g., improved heart, bone and muscle health; prevention of type 2 diabetes), a growing body of research has begun to examine the benefits of childhood physical activity in relation to brain health. Emerging evidence suggests that physical activity in childhood and adolescence is associated with better cognition (i.e., thinking and learning),⁷⁻¹¹ brain function (i.e., how the brain works)¹²⁻¹⁵ and mental health (i.e., emotional, psychological and social well-being).^{3,16-23}

Further, there is a lack of appropriate and/or modified equipment,

as well as few professionals who are prepared or trained to promote physical activity among children and youth with brain-based disabilities.

How does physical activity help the brain?

Cognition, brain function and brain structure

The current state of evidence highlights that many studies find favourable relationships between physical activity and cognition.^{7,12,27} Most studies support a positive relationship between physical activity and brain function and structure.^{28,29}

Physical activity plays an important role in helping children and youth learn better, solve problems more creatively, and develop healthier brains. Children and youth who are least active or who have brain-based disabilities may have the most to gain.

Mental health

Overall, physical activity supports and encourages mental and emotional wellness. Collectively, the research indicates that physical activity plays a key role in preventing and reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety,^{3,16,30-32} in helping with stress management,²⁰ and in improving self-esteem in children and youth.^{23,33,34} Although initial evidence is promising, additional work is needed to clarify and confirm the relationship between physical activity and mental health in children and youth with brain-based disabilities.

What Can We Do?

As teachers, school administration leaders and educational supports to the school community, we all have a critical role to play in fostering learning environments that support the optimal health and well-being of Alberta students.

Below are some ways you can prioritize and value the importance of physical education and physical activity opportunities in your school community.

- Provide and protect opportunities for free play throughout the school day, including offering additional recesses and other opportunities for students to be physically active outdoors
- Incorporate active breaks into class lesson plans on a regular basis, which provide students an opportunity to refocus on the lesson at hand
- Get creative by infusing physical activity into other subject areas beyond physical education, for example, incorporating jumping jacks or other physical movements into a math lesson
- Investigate activity-permissive learning environments, give students the option to move around during learning time, as opposed to staying sedentary
- Ensure that all key stakeholders within the school community understand the importance of physical activity to learning and mental health. Connect with school councils, school trustees and principals and collectively advance physical activity in your school community.
- Include messaging on physical activity in school publication, on the school website, and in school announcement
- Provide professional learning opportunities to make sure teachers are prepared to add physical activity to their learning environment
- Designate space and equipment (flex bands, mats, alternative seating, etc) for students to access for when students need to move

Ever Active Schools offers a variety of resources to get students moving throughout the school day, including our Don't Walk in the Hallway resource, which provides an easy and fun way to modify school spaces to encourage children to move more frequently. To learn more about this, and all the resources Ever Active Schools has available, please visit everactive.org/resources

About the 2018 Report Card

ParticipACTION relies on its strategic partner, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute's Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group (CHEO-HALO), to research, develop, and communicate the Report Card. Production of the ParticipACTION Report Card has been made possible through financial support from Days Inn. Additional support is provided by provincial and territorial governments through the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council.

Boosting kids' physical activity levels could be the missing part of the equation in supporting their mental health.

To download the 2018 ParticipACTION Report Card Highlight Report, including the Expert Statement on Physical Activity and Brain Health for Children and Youth, or the full report, please visit www.participaction.com/reportcard

You can also reach out on social media: @ParticipACTION on both Facebook or Twitter, and via email info@participaction.com ■

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