

# healthy schools

# ALBERTA

FALL 2023 • ISSUE #17



Investing in healthy futures for every child.



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This issue focuses on amazing project work across Alberta and beyond! Read on for inspiration and ideas to bring into your own healthy school community.

Do you have a story of your own to share? Get in touch! Please reach us at [info@everactive.org](mailto:info@everactive.org) or [@everactiveab](https://www.instagram.com/everactiveab) on social media. We love feedback, questions and stories!

~ The Ever Active Schools Team

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR: POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

Welcome to the 2023/2024 school year! I am writing this in August with still a few weeks 'til the start of September, trying to be intentional with time and getting the most of family, activities and other things that make me feel happy.

Mental health is a key priority for all school jurisdictions and First Nations School Authorities across Alberta – and, I would assume, the country. The Ministry of Education has directed more than 80 million dollars towards mental health supports, and we will see new projects begin with new people being hired to lead them. It is important and essential that our collective attention goes to supporting the mental health and well-being of children and youth.

### AND.

In parallel to schools hiring counsellors, psychologists and mental health teams, we also need upstream health and well-being efforts. We are in a reaction to a crisis and providing resources to help students today, but the next urgent crisis is right around the corner if we don't focus on the promotion of health. Be forward thinking in ensuring wellness lives in all corners of your school community.

To help understand efforts and future investments, our work need to focus on both mental illness, which is affecting 1 in 5 students, and mental health, which is described by the World Health Organization as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to contribute to his or her community”.

In the coming year, Ever Active Schools will be partnering with school jurisdictions and First Nations School Authorities in planning and actioning efforts around mental health. We are excited to learn from the various initiatives happening around the province and build a collective understanding of the need to have student learning opportunities start with a foundation of wellness within school communities. Please reach out if you have new or ongoing mental health projects. We would love to listen, learn, and work together. We will also be hosting a session at the annual Shaping the Future Conference bringing together mental health projects from across the province.

It is critical that we keep talking about both mental illness and mental health, and by having the conversations we will reduce stigma and normalize support. Being comfortable with conversations of needing help, or simply sharing feelings, can help everyone's health and well-being.

Wishing everyone a fantastic 2023/2024 school year. Enjoy all the moments. ■



Brian Torrance, Executive Director, Ever Active Schools  
Email: [brian@everactive.org](mailto:brian@everactive.org)

# MEET OUR TEAM

For this edition, we felt like having a little throwback party! Check out some of our team's kindergarten photos, as well as what they wanted to be when they grew up. Interestingly enough, not one of them wanted the jobs they now have...



## JAMIE

When I grow up, I want to be...

an astronaut



## LAURA

When I grow up, I want to be...

a teacher



## KAITLYN

When I grow up, I want to be...

Barney



When I



## ERYNN

When I grow up, I want to be...

part of Barbie  
and the Rockers



## JENN

When I grow up, I want to be...

a veterinarian



## BRIAN

When I grow up, I want to be...

a Vancouver Canuck



## JODI

When I grow up, I want to be...

a family doctor



## MCKENNA

When I grow up, I want to be...

a bakery owner



## KERRI

When I grow up, I want to be...

a pilot



## KA

When I





HAYLEY

When I grow up, I want to be...

a teacher



TRACEY

When I grow up, I want to be...

an archaeologist

AMY

When I grow up, I want to be...

a ballerina



MASON

When I grow up, I want to be...

a football player



LOUISE

When I grow up, I want to be...

a teacher



EMILY

When I grow up, I want to be...

a barrel racer



KRISTA

When I grow up, I want to be...

a substitute teacher



SHAUNA

When I grow up, I want to be...

I don't know!



PAYTON

When I grow up, I want to be...

a landscaper

KATELYN

When I grow up, I want to be...

a ballerina



ADAM

When I grow up, I want to be...

a basketball player



KAYLI

When I grow up, I want to be...

a veterinarian



# PLAN YOUR YEAR

## 2023/2024 HEALTHY SCHOOL COMMUNITY EVENTS

### SHAPING THE FUTURE

January 25-27, 2024 | Jasper, AB

Join us for the 15th annual Shaping the Future conference! Learn and share all about Comprehensive School Health (CSH), with topics for beginners to experts, in the beautiful Canadian Rockies.

<https://everactive.org/stf>

### WINTER WALK DAY

February 7, 2024 | Wherever you are!

Winter Walk Day encourages people across Alberta to be active outdoors in winter. Register your school or group!

<https://shapeab.ca/winter-walk-day/>

### WINTER CYCLING CONGRESS

February 22-24, 2024 | Edmonton, AB

Winter cycling is for everyone! Join the Winter Cycling Federation as we envision a world where cycling year round is a viable transportation option for people of all ages and abilities.

<https://www.yegcyclingcongress.ca/>

### TEACHERS' CONVENTIONS

February & March 2024 | Coming to a convention near you!

Join us in-person at your local Alberta Teachers' Convention in February and March 2024 for professional learning and resources to support all things physical education and wellness!

<https://everactive.org/events/teachers-conventions>

### HPEC CONFERENCE

May 9-11, 2024 | Edmonton, AB

The annual HPEC conference is coming back in 2024! Join us and many others in Edmonton this May for health and physical education professional development.

<https://www.hpec.ab.ca/>

### WHEEL WEEK

June 3-7, 2024 | Wherever you are!

Wheel Week is an opportunity to encourage school communities to get active by using bikes, scooters, skateboards, and walking for school and local trips.

<https://shapeab.ca/wheel-week/>







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

## EVER ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

By Louise McClelland, Ever Active Schools

**When you think of Ever Active Schools, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Perhaps it's our annual Shaping the Future conference in the mountains, all of our awesome free resources for the classroom, or the games and activities we teach to educators and students. Whatever it is that you know of our work, it's likely a school-level interaction. Did you know we also do deep work at the community level?**

In 2021, Ever Active Schools formalized a new initiative: Ever Active Communities (EAC). Through this initiative, we hire staff to live and work in the community who work to support the well-being of ALL local citizens through capacity building. Our current Ever Active Communities include Medicine Hat, Alta., Enoch Cree Nation, Alta., and Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Sask. Since their formal inception, these three community initiatives have reached over 40,000 people and more than 50 schools!

To celebrate the two year anniversary of EAC and the work to date, we took some time to reflect on our local impact. This story shares the experiences of our local staff, community leaders and the citizens they've worked alongside.

### Medicine Hat, Alta.

For many years, Medicine Hat benefited greatly from the work of the local Be Fit For Life (BFFL) Network. Unfortunately, they lost their funding in 2021. This would have been a massive blow to the community, removing established health and fitness programming for citizens of all life stages. Ever Active Schools stepped up to onboard the staff, ready to continue the existing programs and further invest in community well-being.

Some of the programming in Medicine Hat includes:

- Girls and Boys on the Move programming, a no cost after-school activity program.
- Fun and Fitness programming, a regular seniors fitness class
- Resettlement through Recreation, support for newcomers to Canada, and many more.

A sense of belonging is critical to an overall feeling of well-being, so building social connections while participating in physical activity is core to both the after-school and seniors programming offered in Medicine Hat.

"It made me feel like I was included in something, and that I could be seen and people could hear my voice," said one Girls on the Move participant.

"I joined in the beginning for the fitness, but it ended up being so much more," said a Fun and Fitness >



Health and Wellness Consultant Erynn Biggar, right, jumps rope with a Girls on the Move participant.



participant. “The class is just so much fun, you make friends. Lot’s of us will go for coffee afterwards. It becomes more than fitness, it’s like a community.”

Local team lead Amy Risk Richardson feels a point of pride in the relationships they’ve built.

“We are always listening and are able to respond to those needs,” she said. “Whether it’s asked upon us or not, if we hear of a need and know of a connection, we make that connection and create an action to follow.”

These relationships are able to exist in such a way because our EAC team members live and work in these communities. As local citizens themselves, they have a vested interest in supporting the emerging needs of the community.



Resettlement through Recreation participants experience a nature walk through Police Point Park.

As an influx of refugee families landed in southeastern Alberta, our team responded with a program called Resettlement through Recreation. Alongside the City of Medicine Hat and Saamis Immigration, we identified a gap in current services: when refugee families land in Canada, the parents and caregivers are often busy attending sessions and doing paperwork, and the kids get restless. We knew we could provide some respite through play.

“The universal language is that kids like to play,” said Erynn Biggar, a Health and Wellness Consultant in Medicine Hat. “No matter where you are from, we just

inherently love to play. It’s kind of like a smile: when we smile, we understand what that means; when we play, we can all understand what that means.”

We quickly went to work offering recreation opportunities for these new Canadian families. The impact that this work has had has been felt by many!

“Building a sense of community and introducing them to some things that we hold special here in Canada are important,” said a City of Medicine Hat program partner. “The impact that I’ve seen locally here in Medicine Hat, is just we have these kids that have come up to me before... and they’re excited to be here, they’re excited to be in this community.”

### **Enoch Cree Nation, Alta. - māmawinitowin mîyowâyâwin**

The Enoch Hub for Sport and Well-being (māmawinitowin mîyowâyâwin) officially started in 2021, but grew out of a longstanding relationship with Enoch Cree Nation that started as early as 2017/2018.

“We know that wellness is a precondition for learning, but schools are complex... and very busy environments,” said Brian Torrance, Executive Director of Ever Active Schools. “Having Ever Active Schools work alongside Enoch [helped to] put more of a priority on wellness and support the kids where they were at.” >

In 2021, we hired a staff member, Chantell Widney, dedicated solely to the work happening in Enoch. She has been able to start and support many local initiatives, including high school young men's and women's groups, a wellness group for grade 4-6 girls, youth mentorship training, after-school drop-in powwow dancing and regalia making for students, parents and community members.

Supporting Indigenous girls and young women has been a key focus of *mâmwawinitowin mîyowâyâwin*. Through the *kîsikâwi-pîsim iskwêsis* (grades 4-6 girls wellness group) and *iskwêwak Circle* (high school young women's group), local teachers, Elders and our team have been able to provide a variety of opportunities for the girls: roller skating, boxing, ice skating, art projects, cultural teachings, and more.



Girls in the *iskwêwak Circle* enjoy a group bike ride on a field trip to Canmore.

“Working with the girls is important because they sometimes feel discouraged or uncomfortable in a co-ed situation, so we just wanted to offer them something that they can come to and try different things out,” said the lead teacher for the *kîsikâwi-pîsim iskwêsis* (grades 4-6 girls wellness group).

One of the most exciting things about our Ever Active Communities work is the ability to respond to locally identified needs. While we were creating opportunities for students



Regalia making in progress.

to participate in powwow dancing after-school, we quickly learned that many students did not have access to regalia to participate in powwows. To address this, our local team organized after-school regalia making classes for both students and parents to learn to sew and bead the various pieces of regalia, with the goal of providing kids the regalia to dance in and a space for students and parents to learn. Through this program, four sets of regalia were made and an additional five were purchased to stay in the school for use by the local youth.

“The biggest wins we’ve seen so far are the enjoyment from the children and youth in the community,” said Brian Torrance. “We’ve been able to see a bit of a transition at a leadership level that well-being is the pathway to learning, but also a pathway to experiencing ultimate health and happiness.”

### **Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Sask.**

In 2021, with the help of dedicated partners, Ever Active Schools embraced our status as a national charity by officially branching out to work in Saskatchewan. Two full-time employees now work in Montreal Lake Cree Nation, north of Prince Albert, supporting the well-being of all community members through the Montreal Lake Wellness Hub. Through the Hub, our staff have undertaken a variety of activities, including a partnership with the University of Saskatchewan Huskie Athletics; building two >



impressive fitness centres for the community; hosting wellness camps and experiences; and female-specific wellness opportunities.

The wellness camps are opportunities to inspire the local youth through physical activity, sport and wellness.

“We focus on sports and land-based learning and just try to get to know and talk to the students on a different level outside of school,” said Payton Hall, one half of the dynamic EAC duo in Montreal Lake. “You can connect with them totally differently than in a classroom setting when you’re just outside hanging out and being active.”



Top: Mckenna Hall (right) plays soccer with a participant at the Montreal Lake Summer Wellness Camp.

Bottom: Payton Hall (bottom) gives a double piggy back to two participants at the Montreal Lake Summer Wellness Camp.



Wellness Camps have included student tours of different universities, including opportunities to interact with the varsity athletes and learn about supports available to Indigenous students, as well as a week-long summer camp in the community.

“The Wellness Camp is just a snippet of what we do. Within the school, our role is about promoting healthy lifestyles and behaviours,” said Mckenna Hall, the other full-time staff member in Montreal Lake.

“My best day in Montreal Lake would definitely be one of the days we get to just work with the kids, taking them outside, just giving them opportunities that wouldn’t be possible without the flexibility we have in our job to make them happen,” said Payton. “Those are always the most fulfilling things that I get to do here.”

Our staff have also had the opportunity to mentor the students they work with. Sometimes this looks like answering tough life questions, creating workout plans, helping with job applications, and more.

“Often, the best part of our week is receiving a random text from some of these youth, proving that the work

we do is making a difference in their lives,” said Mckenna.

“We’re there to be a support for the students and we’ve made some great relationships with the students.” ■

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For more on Ever Active Communities, and to watch our in-depth videos for each of the three communities, visit our website: <https://everactive.org/projects/ea-communities/>



## PRIORITIZING WELLNESS BY TEACHING THE TEACHERS

By Aaron Stout, Dawn Burleigh, Greg Ogilvie and Danny Balderson

**When schooling becomes a place where administrators, teachers, and staff want all students who attend to feel welcome, wanted and well, then learning becomes the product of that environment. At the University of Lethbridge, we aim to ensure that our pre-service teachers are both benefiting from and learning to cultivate a culture of wellness.**

For several years now, our Faculty of Education has hosted a mini conference for pre-service teachers to prioritize their role in creating learning environments that support holistic well-being. Throughout last year's conference, speakers highlighted the importance of establishing meaningful student-teacher relationships. Sessions ranged from mental health awareness and support, to cultivating mind-body connections, and strategies to create inclusive environments for LGBTQ2S+, newcomer Canadians and Indigenous peoples.

"The lessons learned and stories shared continue to influence the way in which I incorporate wellness into my personal and professional lives, as well as how I model wellness for students in my classroom," said a recent program graduate.

Faculty Instructor and wellness committee member Aaron Stout emphasizes the necessity to cultivate an intentional community of wellness.

"Although the program in the Faculty of Education is directed at pre-service teachers, it demonstrates that an intentional focus on holistic wellness is needed and can change educator perspectives about learning and living well."

Hosting a mini conference for in-service teachers is an excellent opportunity to cultivate a culture of wellness while addressing the specific needs of teachers. Connecting with local wellness experts within school communities can support a sustainable approach to holistic wellness that will serve and benefit teachers and their students for the duration of their educational careers. ■



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## HOW'S THE AIR OVER THERE?

By Tracey Coutts, Ever Active Schools

**Our choices and behaviours shape how safe and healthy a school site is, from how we travel to how we behave while there. We impact school zone air quality through two key actions: our choice of transportation mode and our idling habits.**

Many Alberta school communities see high rates of vehicle use for school trips, in excess of 50%. This negatively impacts the air quality at school sites, given the sheer volume of vehicles in one space, twice a day. Add to that the growing trend of drivers arriving up to an hour prior to the dismissal bell to wait for students, idling as they sit. This unnecessary practice releases harmful gasses and particulate matter into the air, which are unhealthy for students and school staff and contribute to climate change.

Ever Active Schools works diligently to reverse these trends.

“If Canadian drivers of light-duty vehicles avoided unnecessary idling for just three minutes every day of the year,... we would prevent 1.4 million tonnes of CO2 from entering the atmosphere. That’s the equivalent of taking 320,000 cars off of the road!” (Government of Canada, 2017).

Through School Travel Planning, we are able to work with change agents in school communities to increase the use of more active and sustainable travel modes. We also rely on partners and experts in the field of air quality – such as the Calgary Regional Airshed Zone and Inside Education – to supplement our project work, so that we leave school communities with a comprehensive understanding of the true impacts of our everyday actions. ■

Want to learn more or get involved? Get in touch with us: [everactive.org/contact](https://everactive.org/contact)

Reference: <https://natural-resources.canada.ca/energy/efficiency/communities-infrastructure/transportation/idling/4463>, Government of Canada, 2017

### CALGARY ACTIVE AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL BANNER DESIGN CHALLENGE



Congratulations to Makaela Sharp, a grade 4 student, for creating the winning design in the 2023 Calgary Active and Safe Routes to School Banner Design Challenge!

Thank you to the City of Calgary for funding this program and impactful initiatives such as this.

## TRACK AND TRADITIONAL GAMES

By Kayli McClelland, Ever Active Schools

Ah, the good old track and field meet. When I was growing up, joining the track and field team meant getting a day out of school in the sunshine and running around with my friends. While I was never the fastest, nor the best at distance/throwing/jumping/ really anything related to track and field, I was fortunate not to face many barriers to participation, which meant I got to show up and try anyway.

For many students, this was not the reality then and is still not a reality now. But the tides are turning, thanks to organizations like Ever Active Schools and Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities that are working to give every student the opportunities I had.

In May 2023, this partnership hosted a non-competitive Track and Traditional Games event in Airdrie, Alta., which saw the participation of nine schools from across the province. The event, with funding from Jumpstart and help from Airdrie high school volunteers, created access for 120 students to join in on the fun and enjoy sport, community and important social connections!



The event was non-competitive in nature, meaning students had the opportunity to participate in any event they wanted, and scores were not publicly posted. Many tried out events for the very first time! Several students and staff from maskêkosak kiskinow-mâtowikamik in Enoch spent their days hosting traditional Indigenous games for all students and volunteers to play, adding in a wonderful learning opportunity and the chance to connect across cultures.

Creating healthy futures for all children and youth starts with creating opportunities. Low-barrier to entry sport and recreation events like this one are important ways that Ever Active Schools and Jumpstart are working together to achieve a common goal. ■





Photos: The Track and Traditional Games meet held in Airdrie, Alta. in May 2023. This non-competitive meet was an opportunity for students from across the province to try new activities together.





## EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH BARRIER-FREE ATHLETIC EXPERIENCES

By Nathan White, Ever Active Schools

Leagues of Play programming from Jumpstart and Ever Active Schools has emerged as a powerful initiative for youth. During the 2022/23 school year, this program successfully opened doors by offering recurring, barrier-free physical activity opportunities.



In Medicine Hat, we established accessible after-school sports programs. Youth can now participate in physical activities that they might not otherwise have been able to, thanks to the removal of financial and accessibility barriers. Participants have expressed a newfound love for sports, with one enthusiastic participant sharing, “I was not really a sports person, and now volleyball is my favourite sport.”



Collaborating with schools in Indigenous communities across Alberta, we have facilitated inclusive tournaments prioritizing accessibility. Students from diverse backgrounds had equal opportunities to showcase their athletic abilities, fostering camaraderie and empowerment. A lead teacher who attended one of these tournaments expressed amazement, stating, “Everyone here is so positive, and the teams are all lifting each other up!”



To ensure sustainability, we have invested in capacity building for coaches. By conducting basketball and volleyball clinics, we have equipped 45 coaches from across the province with valuable skills to support athletics in their school communities. Surveyed participants reported a significant increase in their ability to support athletics in their schools after the training.



Leagues of Play has provided over 1,200 children and youth with barrier-free, inclusive physical activity programming. Testimonials from participants highlight the program’s success in promoting physical well-being, nurturing a love for sports, and building a sense of community among students. Leagues of Play continues to pave the way for healthier and more inclusive school environments across the province, with exciting initiatives planned for the 2023/2024 school year. ■



## WALKING FOR WELLNESS

By Kayli McClelland, Ever Active Schools

If you've been following Ever Active Schools for a while, no doubt you've heard of the AMA Youth Run Club – a free, fun and flexible program to get kids active in a less traditional way than joining a sports team.

The Run Club is amazing, but it can still feel intimidating for kids who don't feel confident in running yet. Enter Walking Champions: a branch of the Run Club designed for an easier, more inclusive start!

From resources for coaches to finisher prizes, Walking Champions enjoy all the same benefits as AMA Youth Run Clubs! This 100% free program introduces students to the health and wellness benefits of walking while increasing skills and knowledge around physical activity, and of course, getting students excited to walk with their friends.

At Brentwood School in Strathmore, Alta., teacher Kaitrin Beddie started up a Run Club. One student who wanted to join the Run Club was Roselee, a Kindergarten student with some personal barriers to overcome. Roselee worked with her Kindergarten aid to improve her overall mobility, coordination and movement – all through walking – leading to her gaining the ability to run with her peers.

“At the beginning of the year it was a struggle for Roselee to be able to run freely and find confidence in her movements in and around the school, especially on the playground,” said Beddie.

“Fast forward through the Fall Run Club, and into our Spring Fun Run, and Roselee is no longer walking in our club but has drastically improved and is now running at least a quarter of our runs and walking the rest!

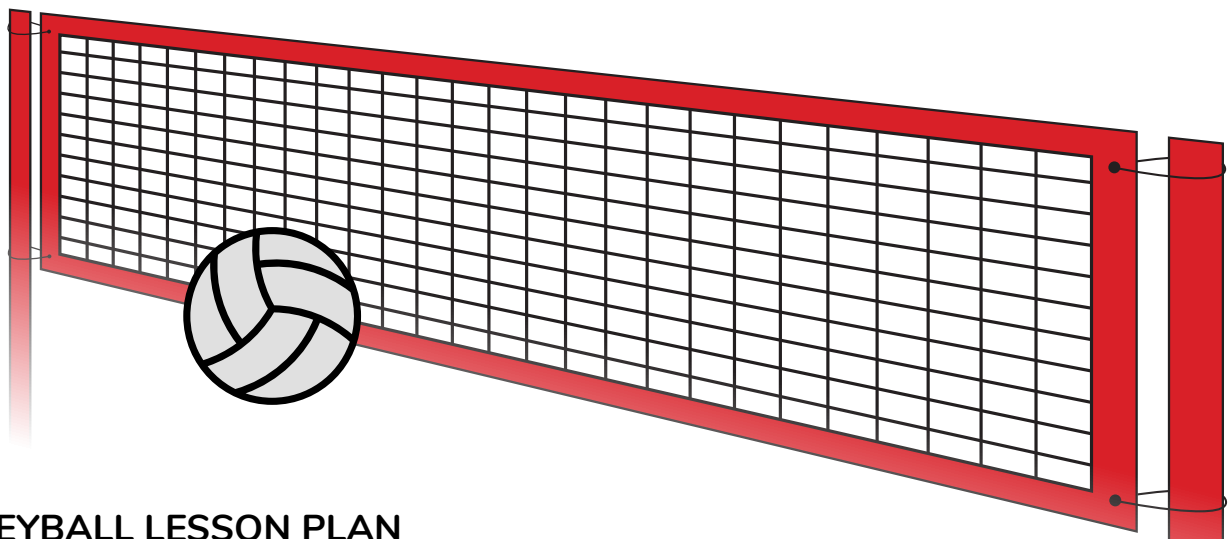
“Walking and working on technique is always the first place I start as a coach, and I encourage all my Run Club Runners to get out and walk for exercise! Walking has many benefits, and hey: that walking practice might just lead to a run, and that run could lead to a Fun Run Race!” ■



Roselee poses for a photo with her new sneakers, gifted to her by the school's Run Club for her participation.

Interested in starting a Run Club or Walking Champions Club of your own? Learn more, sign up for free and access our coaching resources: [www.amayouthrunclub.com](http://www.amayouthrunclub.com)





## **VOLLEYBALL LESSON PLAN**

By Erynn Biggar, Ever Active Schools

**Volleyball is a favourite of many students, and a common recreational activity at all life stages! Whether you're hosting a physical education class, an after-school sports team, intramurals or just some open gym time, check out this basic volleyball lesson plan to get everyone comfortable with "the bump". Help your students enjoy the game by building their confidence to participate!**

### **WARM UP: CHAOS BALL**

- Players form a circle, facing inside. One player starts with the ball and, with both hands reaching high and back, bounces the ball to another player.
- Repeat, bouncing the ball to each player until everyone has the ball passed once to them, then return it to the player who started.
- Keep the pattern going: receive from the same person and pass to the same person. See how quickly the ball can be passed around.
- Once warm, try using the "bump" or "set" to pass the ball.

### **ACTIVITY #1: KERNELS**

- Each player gets their own ball. On their own:
- Bounce the ball on the forearm of one arm only. Switch arms after 5 bounces.
- Next, try to bounce the ball back and forth between the arms, like popcorn kernels popping. Focus on the legs bending, "absorbing" the ball and stretching back up to "pop" the ball.

### **ACTIVITY #2: KNEELING BUMP**

- Divide players into groups with as many coaches or leaders as you have (ie: 3 coaches, 3 groups)
- Players line up with the first player on a bent knee.
- Coach tosses the ball to the player for them to bump it back using a shoulder shrug motion. 3 bumps per player, then switch to the next person.
- Rotate a few times through, teaching the players the motion "pushing" through the ball with their body and shrugging shoulders, NOT swinging the arms. ■





## TEAM UP WITH THE TORONTO BLUE JAYS TEAM CHARITY TO LAUNCH FREE AWARD-WINNING EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS IN YOUR SCHOOL!

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*"I think this is one of the best supported programs I have ever seen in my ten years that I have been teaching."*





EAT  
SMART





# Let's Talk About Food

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By Dairy Farmers of Canada's  
Registered Dietitians

**Most of us grew up hearing some foods described as “healthy” or “unhealthy,” but categorizing foods this way can harm our relationship with food and cause worry or stress about eating. How do we flip the script on this conversation with students?**

A great way to help shift our mindset and language around food is to remember that food plays many roles in our lives aside from providing our bodies with nutrition. Food also brings flavour and enjoyment and contributes to cultural practices and celebrations. For example:

- Ranch dip might make raw vegetables more enjoyable.
- A traditional family dessert can foster connection and celebrate culture.
- An ice pop on a hot day might make a lasting summer memory.

Rather than labelling these foods as “sometimes foods,” “unhealthy,” or “junk food,” consider calling food by its name. Doing so helps create a neutral way to talk about all food: A carrot is a carrot. A cookie is a cookie.

You can be a champion for your students by making your classroom a judgement-free zone when talking about food. For example:

- Focus on the shape, taste, and texture of foods.
- Be mindful that many factors influence what foods students bring to school, including taste, culture, traditions, cost, time, availability, and ability to prepare food.
- Encourage respectful conversations when students talk about food.
- Make space for a variety of foods in the classroom to help accommodate all children and families and to encourage enjoyment of all foods.



These ideas are just the start! If you're looking for ways to approach these conversations with students, check out the “Let's Talk About Food” resource on [TeachNutrition.ca](https://www.teachnutrition.ca). The free downloadable handout provides practical examples of inclusive and respectful conversations with your students about all foods.

If you want to explore this topic further, join our session at Shaping the Future 2024 in Jasper. We'd love to see you there! ■

## HOUSEHOLD FOOD INSECURITY: COMMON QUESTIONS FROM EDUCATORS

By Alberta Health Services Public Health Dietitians

**More than ever, families are struggling to make ends meet and put food on the table. In fact, 21.8% of Albertans experienced household food insecurity (HFI) in 2022. (PROOF, 2023)**

HFI is defined as the “inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints”. (PROOF, 2022) In other words, HFI is caused by not having enough money for food. This article explores how school communities can help address this important issue.

### HOW DOES HFI IMPACT STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH?

HFI can be a chronically stressful experience for both parents and children. The impacts of HFI extend beyond feeling hunger and the health and educational impacts associated with not having enough food. Children worry about their parents' well-being. Children often feel anxiety, frustration, and sadness about their situation. Also, they feel the impacts of social stigma and embarrassment from accessing food assistance programs.

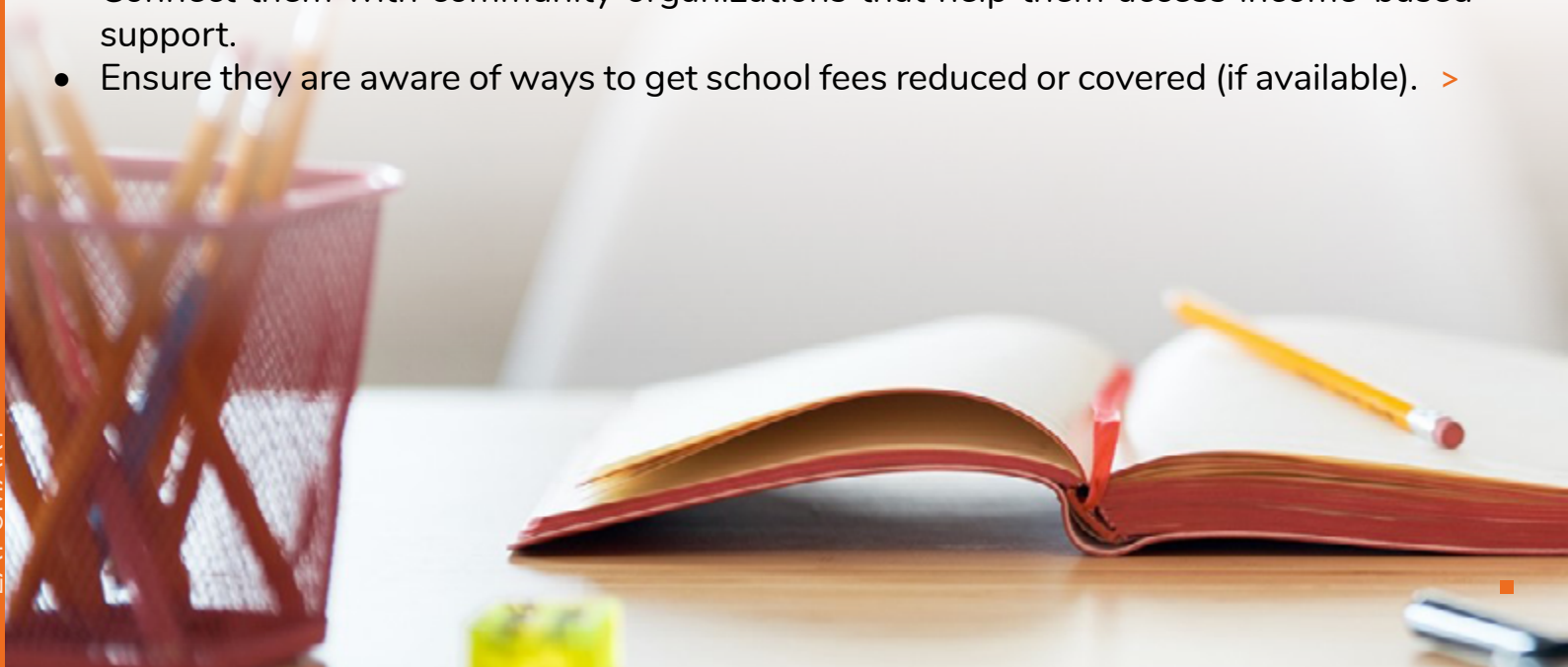
### CAN MEAL AND SNACK PROGRAMS HELP?

While school meal or snack programs do not address the root financial causes of HFI, they can help students get the nutrition they need while at school. It's important for meal and snack programs to offer high-quality food and ensure access to all students. This helps to reduce any potential for shame and stigma.

### HOW CAN WE SUPPORT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES?

Not everyone in the household experiences the same level of HFI. Parents and older siblings may skip meals or eat less to provide for younger children. Evidence shows the whole family's situation improves when they receive benefits and supports that increase access to income. Connect with your school administration to discuss ways to support families and caregivers such as:

- Refer them to Alberta income supports to help them get benefits they are entitled to.
- Connect them with community organizations that help them access income-based support.
- Ensure they are aware of ways to get school fees reduced or covered (if available). >





Families experiencing HFI can also benefit from prepaid grocery cards, which allow them to buy foods that meet their unique personal, cultural, and health needs. It also reduces stigma and shame often experienced by those accessing alternate food systems.

If your school community offers food programs or donation drives, there are many ways to help minimize unintended impacts on students and families. Below are some ideas:

### MEAL AND SNACK PROGRAMS

- Provide all students access to programs, with no questions asked.
- Use loadable meal cards so students with alternative funding aren't identifiable.
- Offer vegetables and fruit in meal programs.

### FOOD HAMPERS AND FOOD BACKPACK PROGRAMS

- Offer prepaid grocery cards or connect families with agencies that provide this type of support.
- Coordinate and distribute resources in a way that maintains anonymity.
- If possible, consider the needs of the whole family, not just the student.
- If they are able, allow parents or caregivers to pick up the hampers or backpacks after school hours.

### SCHOOL-WIDE FOOD DRIVES

- Ensure students and parents understand that it's optional to donate.
- Avoid classroom competitions.
- Suggest collecting money or prepaid grocery cards.
- Collect donations over several days in a central location. ■

### MORE INFORMATION

- Visit our website to learn more:  
<https://albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page18436.aspx>
- For a listing of supports for all Albertans, go to 211 Alberta: <https://ab.211.ca/>

#### References:

- <https://proof.utoronto.ca/2023/new-data-on-household-food-insecurity-in-2022/>, PROOF, 2023
- <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>, PROOF, 2022



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## NOURISH TO FLOURISH

By Kerri Murray, Ever Active Schools

**Holy Spirit Catholic School has been on an inspiring journey over the past year through their project “Nourish to Flourish.” This initiative was born of an idea to help staff and students build a healthy relationship with food, embracing a weight-neutral school culture and prioritizing comprehensive health and wellness.**

One of the highlights of the project was the formation of the “Tiny Tasting Team,” a group of young ambassadors who embarked on food adventures and introduced their fellow students to new tastes. Each month, the team visited classrooms with a taste sample, along with nutritional information and serving suggestions. The goal was to create a safe environment for trying new foods and encouraging open conversations about food possibilities.

Another significant achievement was the introduction of an indoor Tower Garden in the kindergarten classroom. The Tower Garden provided a hands-on experience for the children to grow their own vegetables, fostering a sense of ownership and excitement about healthy eating. The success of the garden was evident during “Friendship Soup” gatherings, where each child contributed a vegetable to the communal soup, resulting in some surprising culinary discoveries.



A rainbow of foods for a tasting day

The project also aimed to instill a holistic approach to health and wellness in the school community. The grade 4 Healthy Living Team played a pivotal role in promoting daily encouragement for healthy living through announcements and organizing activities. Additionally, the school library was enriched with a selection of literature focused on healthy relationships with food and body, leaving a lasting legacy.

Like any project, the team faced some challenges, but despite these, the “Nourish to Flourish” project achieved numerous successes and positive outcomes. A Staff Wellness Retreat at Camp Van Es provided a safe space for staff members to discuss and explore weight-neutral philosophy and its implications.

Carole Johnston, kindergarten teacher and project coordinator extraordinaire expressed her gratitude for the grant funding, which allowed her students to flourish as leaders and provided countless special experiences in their classroom. She hopes that the seeds planted during this project will continue to be nourished, promoting a healthy and supportive school culture for years to come.

The “Nourish to Flourish” project at Holy Spirit Catholic School exemplifies the power of collaboration and dedication in fostering a weight-neutral school culture and holistic health and wellness. It serves as an inspiring example for other schools to prioritize student well-being and encourage open dialogues about food, body image, and healthy living. ■



## BUILDING AN ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CHARTER TOGETHER

By Tracey Coutts, Ever Active Schools

**The municipality of Leduc, Alta., has laid much groundwork to make it an active living superstar. From its 85 km+ of multi-use pathways, to Telford Lake, to its Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails Master Plan – when it comes to active living, Leduc has some good bones.**

It is clear that this city prioritizes wellness, but how does a municipality translate a thriving recreational walking and wheeling culture into one that sees the same enthusiasm for active transportation? In short: build an active transportation charter specific to the municipality as a formal recognition of the value of active transportation.

Through funding from Canada's National Active Transportation Fund, Charting Common Ground: Aligning School Board and Municipal Priorities to Improve Active Transportation for Citizens in Leduc is a collaborative effort, involving Ever Active Schools, Leduc's Healthy Hearts Committee and the University of Alberta's Centre for Healthy Communities. Its aim is to develop an active transportation charter for the city that acknowledges the plans, resources, and infrastructure that are currently in place, while consulting with stakeholders to create a common vision that will be actioned.

Before the charter process begins, it is important to examine the current state of transportation options in the municipality. This includes identifying organizations that are responsible for providing transportation for large groups of people; such as the City, which oversees built environment planning and construction and public transit, and school jurisdictions, which organize school busing for thousands of students each day and employ planners who design school sites for many transportation modes. These >



are groups that should be at the table early in the game so that they can help shape the charter to include the needs of the people whom they serve. Of course, engagement from all community sectors is desirable.

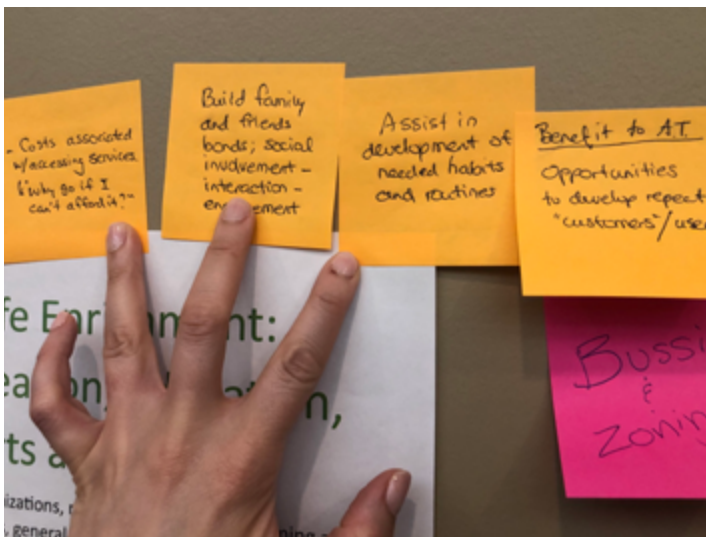
There are multiple steps involved in creating a charter and community engagement is essential:

- Host a series of information sessions to increase awareness about the project and its goals;
- Organize multiple community consultation sessions to better understand what local stakeholders would like to see included in their charter – in Leduc’s case, these sessions were based on the Walk 21 Charter framework;
- Create a consultation survey, based on the session framework, to increase reach of respondents;
- Review, analyze, and summarize session and survey feedback in preparation for drafting the charter;
- Share the draft of charter with stakeholders for consultation, validation, and alignment; and
- Once the charter is finalized, promote, implement and monitor its adoption.

Now, adoption of the charter is one thing, but seeing it in action is another. Prototyping and piloting interventions to increase active transportation is “the proof in the pudding” – proof that walking and wheeling really is feasible as a transportation option. In Leduc, this has taken the shape of one community-driven program to support active school travel and one school-driven program to support active transportation for all citizens.

Ultimately, everybody benefits from active transportation – the health, safety, environmental and community-building merits are well researched – so prioritizing it in the form of a municipal charter is wise.

The fact that this process brought so many engaged, enthusiastic stakeholders together to share ideas illustrates that, for Leduc, active transportation is common ground. ■



Photos: The making of the Leduc Active Transportation Charter included bicycle tours of the city and community consultation.

## RUNNING TO SUCCESS WITH ALBERTA BLUE CROSS

By Katelyn Seiferman, Ever Active Schools

Last year, the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) Youth Run Club and Alberta Blue Cross announced an exciting annual spring grant opportunity! The goal of this \$500 grant was to allow schools to focus on well-being while supporting participation in the Youth Run Club.

The winning schools each had similar ideas: they wanted to support their students to be able to participate fully in the AMA Youth Run Club and experience all the benefits to their physical, social and mental well-being.

“The comradery Run Club produces is really something to see,” said one coach.

St. Gianna School in Calgary used their grant to purchase merchandise to incentivize students to join, as well as equipment to promote inclusion in their club.

“Run Club is always such a wonderful friendship-builder,” said the coach at St. Gianna. “The confidence in some of the students has grown substantially; being part of the Run Club shows them they can accomplish anything they set their minds to.”

In Strathmore, Brentwood School purchased running shoes for students in need. After weeks of training, the students participated in a fun run, surrounded by their cheering peers and families, where they demonstrated sportsmanship and ambition, and they received certificates of participation for their hard work and dedication.

We can’t wait to see how these grants and others support student well-being and participation this year! Sign up FREE for the AMA Youth Run Club to be notified when opportunities like the Alberta Blue Cross grants open for applications. ■

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





Photos: A fun run at Brentwood School in Strathmore, Alta., hosted by the AMA Youth Run Club and Ever Active Schools and supported by a grant from Alberta Blue Cross.






A woman wearing a grey knit beanie, glasses, and a colorful scarf is writing in a spiral notebook. She is wearing a dark puffer jacket and dark gloves. In the background, another person in a colorful winter jacket is standing in a snowy area. The scene is outdoors in winter.

Photo: Active School Travel facilitator Krystal Lamb jots down notes during a walkabout at Scenic Acres School in Calgary, Alta. This walkabout was an opportunity for the school community to voice concerns about traffic safety in the area with local law enforcement and City of Calgary representatives.



## ALBERTA SCHOOL JURISDICTIONS LEADING CHANGE

By Tracey Coutts, Ever Active Schools

**Through the implementation of School Travel Planning at school sites across Alberta, Ever Active Schools has witnessed great successes, including shifts to more active and sustainable transportation modes and changes to built environments that improve the experience of those walking and wheeling for school trips.**

These successes, however, are multiplied when school jurisdictions get on board, as they hold the policy-making power to extend these benefits across all school sites.

Active School Travel (AST) is positioned to address many concerns that school jurisdictions share, including traffic safety and air quality in school zones, rising transportation costs, as well as student health and learning outcomes. Fortunately, some Alberta school jurisdictions are beginning to recognize the influence they have over AST and that with policy changes, some quite small, they will reap these benefits. Additionally, through the sharing of these successful policy change practices, other Alberta school jurisdictions can follow suit.

From 2018-2020, a scan of school district policies was completed by members of the AST subcommittee of the Alberta Policy Coalition for the Prevention of Chronic Disease to identify publicly available policies relevant to AST. ChangeLab's Safe Routes to School Policy Workbook was adapted to determine policy relevance to AST. Wellness and active living policies with broad relevance to AST were also included in the scan.

This scan identified a number of surprising openings for school jurisdictions to create positive change through policy adjustments. The following is a sampling of the recommendations that are explored fully in the Active School Travel Policy and Practice Recommendations for Alberta School Jurisdictions resource, available at <https://shop.everactive.org/>

1. Give weight to active and sustainable travel modes by recognizing them in school district policies and through encouraging practices to facilitate their adoption:
  - Incorporate AST policy into school Student and Parent Handbooks, include AST in Transportation sections of school board websites, promote AST on school websites.
2. Create easy ways for school boards and schools to engage with AST:
  - Encourage schools to use promotional events to build support for AST programs and activities, such as International Walk to School Day, Winter Walk Day, Earth Day, and Wheel Week
3. Modify existing or write new wellness, physical activity or transportation policies to explicitly include AST as an opportunity to promote student well-being.

Think of increasing opportunities for safe, active travel in Alberta school communities as the thesis of an essay. When all the paragraphs – school communities, school jurisdictions, and municipal transportation committees – come together to support it, the end result is an A+. ■

## A CONVERSATION ABOUT ADAPTED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

By Kayli McClelland, Ever Active Schools

**In the past few years, school-level support for students with disabilities has seen its fair share of improvements. Educational assistants are more common, classrooms and school spaces are seeing more physical accessibility, and assistive technology is more readily available.**

While this is certainly worthy of celebration, a large aspect of education for the whole-child is still often overlooked: inclusion in physical activity spaces.

“It’s a big gap within our system,” said Tara Chisholm, a disability advocate in Medicine Hat.

“We’ve primarily thought of [how to support] students with disabilities in non-physical activity spaces, but we still have lots of examples of students with disabilities not participating in spaces that are intended for physical activity.”

Chisholm is the founder of Medicine Hat Adaptive Sport and Recreation, a Health and Wellness Consultant with Ever Active Schools, the Provincial Program Director at Paralympic Sports Association, the head coach for Team Canada Women’s Para Hockey team, a professor at Medicine Hat College, and so much more. Her diverse experience working with people with disabilities at all levels, from a first introduction to sport all the way up to a national stage, and through the education system, gives her a broad perspective on the benefits of physical activity and the barriers to inclusion that exist today.



In her experiences, Chisholm has noticed many people with disabilities never knew they could participate in physical activity because the opportunities were never made available to them.

“They’ve been told that their body doesn’t fit in the boxes that society has built of what an athlete will look like, or a person who is active, strong, capable, or all the other words we use to define physically active individuals.

**“YOU DON’T HAVE TO FIT IN A BOX TO BE ABLE TO PLAY A SPORT.”**

“We know how critical physical activity is for students without disabilities and how much it can help them in other aspects [of] their education and outside of school, so we can make the assumption that it’s also helpful for students with disabilities too.”

According to Chisholm, having an adapted physical activity specialist within the school division to work with teachers is one of the >



best practices out there to support students with disabilities. However, this is not yet the standard, nor is it required in Alberta for pre-service teachers to take an adapted physical education course.

“I want teachers to give themselves grace in that space, because I know it’s not that they don’t want to provide [adapted physical activity support]. Until you get into it and start learning about different adaptations, you don’t know what you don’t know.”

She recommends the online course, “Coaching Kids of All Abilities” by Jumpstart for anyone wanting to dip their toes in and learn more about how to adapt physical activity lessons to accommodate all learners. For those looking for a deeper dive, post-secondary institutions offer some options, including the University of Alberta’s Adapted Physical Activity Graduate Certificate.

“You don’t have to fit in a box to be able to play a sport,” said Chisholm.

“There’s not one type of athlete or one type of person that can be active; anybody can be active, it just might not look like the traditional model of sport or recreation.” ■

Access the Coaching Kids of All Abilities online course here: <https://bit.ly/ckaa-js>



Photo: Tara Chisholm, centre, plays Rock Paper Scissors Split with a youth volunteer at a student wellness event in Medicine Hat, Alta in October 2022.



## INTEGRATING THE NEW CURRICULUM INTO YOUR EXISTING PRACTICE

By Adam Pratt, Ever Active Schools

The 2022/2023 school year marked the release of an updated Alberta Education Kindergarten to Grade 6 Physical Education and Wellness (PEW) curriculum. For the first time in recent history, physical education and wellness (formerly health), were formally merged.

With this merger came an opportunity for many educators to reflect upon, refine and grow their practice. While an updated curriculum certainly poses its fair share of challenges, Ever Active Schools (EAS) likes to look at this glass as one that is half full!

We got off to an early start, working hard to implement the new curriculum without breaking a sweat (jokes... we were sweating). EAS offered virtual workshops for individuals looking to learn more about the curriculum and partnered with several regional consortia, all part of the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia, to provide educators with various free professional learning opportunities.

In addition, the partnerships resulted in EAS creating exciting resources to help implement the curriculum:

- Financial Literacy
- Cross-curricular Teaching and Learning
- Games and Activities to Implement the Alberta K-6 PEW Curriculum
- PE In Alternative Environments
- Ideas for Your Healthy School Action Plan
- Action Planning Template
- Indigenous Ways of Knowing in the PEW Curriculum

All of these resources and more are available on our online store: [shop.everactive.org](https://shop.everactive.org)

Together, let's embrace this merger of physical education and wellness with open arms and remind ourselves what intentional, outcome-driven and interdisciplinary teaching looks like, as well as the authentic learning it inspires. ■

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To learn more about upcoming professional learning opportunities:

- Sign up for our newsletter: <http://eepurl.com/g-4k5D>
- Visit our website: <https://www.everactive.org>
- Follow us on social media: [@everactiveab](https://twitter.com/everactiveab)
- Send us an email: [plo@everactive.org](mailto:plo@everactive.org)





## BACK POCKET GAMES

By Adam Pratt, Ever Active Schools

**YouTube is a wonderful thing. Plenty of game ideas for class and endless cat videos. What more could a teacher want?**

Personally, I like my activities to be more intentional. While a startled cat or the 14th version of Doctor Dodgeball do provide myself and my students with moderate entertainment value, they don't always align best with my own goals, not to mention curricular outcomes. For more than a grumpy feline or a Just Dance video your students can copy in their sleep, head instead to the Ever Active Schools online store: [shop.everactive.org](http://shop.everactive.org)

### SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SHUFFLE CARDS:



Use these cards to play a game called *Find Your Spot!* Spread various emotion cards throughout the room, ask students a question, and encourage them to move to a part of the room that aligns most closely with how they feel.

- Connect with your class and observe student understanding
- Target wellness outcomes in the new Alberta curriculum
- Strengthen self-regulation and social and emotional learning

### GAMES AND ACTIVITIES TO OPTIMIZE SELF-REGULATION:



Use this free download to play one of ten small-group activities in a variety of spaces, including the classroom! Try *Sophie's Tower*, a team-building and communication game where students have to make use of spatial awareness skills and work together to recreate a block tower using various shapes.

- Build and apply self-regulation skills
- Refine communication through cooperative games and activities
- Download for free

### GAMES AND ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE ALBERTA K-6 PHYS ED AND WELLNESS CURRICULUM:



This free download is appropriately titled, featuring eight ready-made activities designed with the Alberta curriculum in mind! Try *Giants, Wizards and Elves*, a full-body twist on rock-paper-scissors where students learn how paying for services and transportation impacts earnings.

- Connect PE and Wellness outcomes in the Alberta curriculum
- Learn through cooperative games and activities
- Download for free

With so many back-pocket game ideas that directly target curricular outcomes, you're sure to have some spare time to get back to those cat videos! ■



## ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND

By Mckenna Hall, Ever Active Schools

In May 2023, Ever Active Schools hosted Still I Rise, a virtual event for youth focussed on sharing and celebrating Indigenous stories, initiatives and culture. More than 1,600 participants joined us from four different provinces and numerous Nations and Territories, each with their own unique histories and practices.

We wanted to take a moment to honor one another and all of our ancestors who have given us life and who have lived sustainably and respectfully on our land since time immemorial. We provided tins of Nation Imagination Ceremonial Tobacco as an invitation to pray in one's own way for themselves, for one's family and community; to give thanks and pray for protection and health; and for the intention of the conference: that we will indeed RISE no matter the challenges.

Classrooms, schools, and individual students, teachers, Elders and parents who chose to participate in this act were encouraged to join us in prayer in the way they have been taught or to follow along with Elders as they guided us through a tobacco offering and prayer.

This was a powerful way to open Still I Rise, and we encourage you to try something similar in your classroom! Nation Imagination Tobacco has an excellent resource on tobacco gifting protocols, and PHE Canada hosts a video of friends in Secwepemc Territory providing education around sacred tobacco. ■

<https://imaginationgroup.ca/pages/tobacco-gifting-protocols>

<https://phecanada.ca/programs/stomp/sacred-tobacco>




Photo: Elders Donna Kaquitts (left) and Alice Kaquitts deliver a land acknowledgement and lead a prayer to open the Still I Rise Spring 2023 virtual event.



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Dr. Michelle Duke, Optometrist



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Alberta  
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# HEALTHY SCHOOLS CERTIFICATION

By Adam Pratt, Ever Active Schools

As a teacher who is passionate about well-being and collaboration, I appreciate opportunities to put ideas into practice. I also recognize that oftentimes these opportunities can make more work. That's one thing I really like about the Healthy Schools Certification program: instead of creating MORE work, it becomes THE work. This process helped our school to make well-being a top priority.



In the 2022-2023 school year, the Healthy Schools Certification expanded beyond Ontario to become a national program. Supported by a powerhouse partnership, this program aims to help schools identify, prioritize, and act on healthy school plans to improve well-being. This year, we are proud to share that 35 Alberta schools completed the 4-step healthy school certification!

The certification is completed on a user-friendly and resource-wealthy online platform. It is a useful tool because it aids schools in ensuring their goals actually become a reality. I found the Healthy Schools Certification helped my school population adopt a whole-school approach, as well as align, refine, and streamline our existing healthy school initiatives.

The program highlights the importance of teaching and learning, but also indicates how the physical and social environment of the school, as well as policies and partnerships, can influence well-being. By forming a team to complete the certification, no one individual feels the burden of school-wide wellness.



For any schools or school divisions looking to make well-being a priority through research-informed and data-driven practice, register for the Healthy Schools Certification program in 2023-2024! You'll be in great company. Sign up at [healthyschools.ca](https://healthyschools.ca) before the registration deadline on November 24, 2023.

The Healthy Schools Certification program is supported by Ophea, PHE Canada and Ever Active Schools. ■



## FEATURE STORY



### MY FIRST SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

By Jenn Mireau, Ever Active Schools

**Cappy Smart School in Calgary was the first school that I worked with as a Health & Wellness Consultant for Ever Active Schools. The school wanted to build resiliency within their students.**

Teachers noticed that many students were coming to school with complex social-emotional needs that were impacting the school culture. Many educators felt overwhelmed with managing classroom behaviors and wanted to establish a sense of community and belonging at their school.

Jimmy Lam, Teacher Champion, had a genuine interest in supporting his school community. He taught physical education for the whole school and experienced firsthand how the students would benefit from learning how to manage their emotions and overcome conflicts in a positive way.

We created a four-day workshop for students that focused on leading change through resiliency, and we used the Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework to guide the experience for the students. Two classes of Grade 4/5 students, the older students in the school, were selected to participate in the program and become change-makers.

Our journey started in the east where we explored the “Spirit to Be”. The students >



discovered how to become resilient within themselves. Using the Social-Emotional Shuffle Resource, they learned that experiencing all kinds of emotions is important and that there are different ways to manage your feelings and cope with different emotions using self-regulation strategies.

Next, we spent time in the south and explored the “Heart to Belong”. The students learned about how they can help others become resilient. We learned that each person has a unique set of character strengths which help us build relationships with others and overcome challenges. The students explored their character strengths by solving team challenges from the “Games and Activities to Optimize Self-Regulation” resource.

On our third day, we explored the west in the “Body to Do” and learned what we can do to create communities that support resiliency. The students built model brains using materials earned throughout the stages of the “Brain Game”. Mood Boosters gave the students stronger materials to build their brain, like straws and pipecleaners. Mood Busters gave the students materials to weaken their brain, such as paper clips and weights. Students learned that having strong social connections can have a positive impact on your mental health and can help you overcome life’s challenges.

Finally, we spent time in the north and learned about the “Mind to Know.” The students explored ways that they could help their whole school become more resilient. Together, we learned how practicing gratitude and kindness can help improve happiness and build a sense of belonging in their school.

The students generated ideas to improve resiliency at their school. Their ideas included starting a kindness challenge, creating a space for self-regulation and hosting a school-wide event. This gave the students a chance to reflect on what they learned throughout the week and to come up with meaningful ways to share their experiences with others.

A few months later, I was invited back to Cappy Smart School to attend their annual Sport Day. I was blown away by the leadership qualities demonstrated by the Grade 4 and 5 students. The older students took it upon themselves to help younger students participate in all the activities. These students also showed kindness by making sure that everyone was taking turns and being respectful.

“Students were better able to look at situations more positively and view obstacles as learning opportunities,” said Jimmy Lam, the PE Specialist and my initial contact at the school.

“Ever Active Schools left a positive influence at our school where students continue to develop their mental resilience. The games, learning resources and sporting equipment provided from this initiative will provide students with the tools to work on their mental and physical health for many years to come.”

For me, this experience showed me the power of the Comprehensive School Health model and how it takes a community of dedicated people to inspire change. As I continue to work with schools across the province, I’ll always remember the influential experience I had with Cappy Smart School. ■

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# RESOURCES

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- Playing Cards
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- Curriculum

**GRADE LEVELS** **K-3** **4-6** **7-9** **10-12**

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