



Outdoor Play Canada January 2023 Newsletter

OPC projects and activities encompass all traditional territories of the Indigenous Nations of Turtle Island, within the land we now call Canada.

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Renew your OPC membership today and congrats to our survey draw winner!

All Outdoor Play Canada memberships are up for renewal as of January 1st, 2023! Please consider renewing your membership! We are actively working to update and provide new member benefits, including discounts to outdoor play workshops and conferences!

And congratulations to Margot Corbin, from Hamilton Public Health, on winning a one-year Contributor-level membership with Outdoor Play Canada! We invited all OPC members to complete the annual OPC Membership Survey, for a chance to win a one-year membership, and Margot won the draw! Thank you to all those that completed the survey and provided important feedback on how we may continue to support our membership.

You can renew your membership here: <https://www.outdoorplaycanada.ca/#join-us>

Seeking input on the French translation of ‘the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play’!

[Outdoor Play Canada](#), the [Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group](#) at the [CHEO Research Institute](#), [Andrew Fleck Children’s Services](#) and [Algonquin College](#) sought input on how best to translate ‘the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play’ and received the following recommended translation: **Centre canadien du jeu à l’extérieur**.

We are now seeking input from you! Provide your input [here](#)!

Save the Date for the 2023 Breath of Fresh Air Summit!

Save the date! The 2023 Breath of Fresh Air Summit will be held from September 27-29th, 2023 in Wesley Clover Parks, Ottawa, ON! Just under one year away! Led by Outdoor Play Canada, [Breath of Fresh Air](#) is a two-day Outdoor Play Summit where thought leaders, practitioners, researchers, policy-makers and trainees can connect, learn and share best practices. The theme for the 2023 Summit is ‘Research, policy, and practice – their intersections for the promotion of outdoor play’. The Summit will feature inspiring speakers, hands-on activities, outdoor adventures and open conversations on how these three elements may promote and shape the future of outdoor play in Canada and abroad.

Learn more about the [2023 Breath of Fresh Air Summit here](#).

Job posting – Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play Fellow

Outdoor Play Canada is looking to hire a **full-time Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play (CCOP) Fellow for one year** to build capacity and thought-leadership for outdoor play stakeholders. As the CCOP Fellow, your role will be to lead advocacy and thought-leadership initiatives for the promotion of outdoor play in the early years, in collaboration with the CCOP partnership, consisting of the Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group (HALO) at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) Research Institute, Andrew Fleck Children’s Services, Algonquin College, and Outdoor Play Canada (OPC).

Learn more about the [CCOP Fellow job posting here](#).

Survey – Data collection on injury statistics in early childhood education programs across Canada

Researchers from the Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute invite early childhood educators and those working in early childhood education settings with access to information on injury statistics to complete a survey about outdoor early childhood education programs across Canada.

The aim of this survey is to learn whether the number and severity of injuries that occur in early childhood education programs differ between traditional and outdoor-focused early childhood education programs. [Learn more about the survey here.](#)

Recruiting teachers for a study on outdoor play and learning in schools

The Play Outside Lab at the University of British Columbia is now recruiting elementary school teachers who are willing to share photos, videos and learning materials that demonstrate outdoor play and learning in elementary (K-8) schools.

If you know an elementary (K-8) school teacher who has experience teaching outdoors, invite them to visit the Play Outside webpage to learn more about the study, ethics requirements, and [how to participate here.](#)

Canada's first ever comprehensive summary of physical activity data for children and adolescents with disabilities

An interdisciplinary team of researchers from the [Canadian Disability Participation Project](#) (with expertise in childhood disability, physical activity, health behaviour change, surveillance and inclusive physical education programming), representatives from disability and physical activity organizations, and parents of children and adolescents with disabilities have created Canada's first-ever comprehensive summary of physical activity data for children and adolescents with disabilities.

A Disability Report Card resource suite that is an accompaniment to the peer-reviewed report includes several knowledge products that describe the grading and evaluation process and highlight data gaps and recommendations to improve the quality of physical activity experiences for children and youth with disabilities.

[View the Disability Report Card resource suite here.](#)

Scoping review of children's and youth's outdoor play publication in Canada

The 2015 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play highlighted the unequivocal benefits of outdoor play for children's physical, mental, emotional, social and environmental health, well-being and development. This momentous document was informed by 49 articles, not exclusive to Canadian authors. So, when OPC Research Manager Dr Louise de Lannoy decided to conduct a scoping review of outdoor play publications from 2015-2022, exclusively by Canadian authors or on Canadian populations, she thought, how many could there be? Turns out A LOT.

Read the full blog post summarizing the findings of that scoping review, and how researchers, policy makers, educators, students, and other outdoor play stakeholders may use it to inform their work, [here!](#)

Why do some children and youth spend more time outdoors than others?

The Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play states that "Access to active play in nature and outdoors-with its risks-is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children's opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings-at home, at school, in childcare, the community and nature". To guide interventions aiming to increase such opportunities, it is essential to understand what leads to higher or lower time spent outdoors.

This is the question that Dr. Larouche and colleagues sought to answer in their recent systematic review. Read the full blog post about what they found, [here.](#)

What are “microcultures” and what can they tell us about children’s play outdoors?

Children typically play with other peers they feel comfortable and safe around and those who bring the most excitement and joy to them during their activities. There is something else that often occurs, however, that resonates with children on a much deeper level than simply “being around others” during play: developing smaller peer communities with rules and roles operating outside of the traditional day-to-day societies to which they belong – the development of microcultures.

Read the guest blog post by Dr. Michelle Bauer on her new study of children’s microcultures, where they occur and who they create them with (spoiler: typically away from meddling adults!).

[Read the full blog post here.](#)

What factors are associated with outdoor time among children speaking a non-official language at home?

In another guest blog post for Outdoor Play Canada, Ransi Nayakarantha discusses her new study, in which she examined factors associated with physical activity and outdoor time among the 478 children who spoke a non-official language at home. Study results show that that factors associated with outdoor time varied markedly between boys and girls, suggesting that interventions aiming to increase outdoor time among children speaking non-official languages at home should consider gender differences. In other words, different strategies may be needed to encourage boys and girls to spend more time outdoors.

[Read the full blog post here.](#)

Evergreen unveils Canada’s first Climate Ready School Ground

Towards the end of 2022, [Evergreen](#) marked the completion of its Climate Ready Schools Pilot at a Milton, ON public school, as part of a school- and community-wide celebration. The first-of-its-kind in Canada, the Climate Ready Schools project has transformed the school ground at Irma Coulson Public School into a healthy environment that helps nurture child development through outdoor play and learning and mitigate the effects of a changing climate. A partnership between Evergreen and the Halton District School Board (HDSB), the pilot sets a new standard of how school boards across Canada can extend the use of school grounds beyond school hours and into the surrounding community.

[Learn more about Canada’s first Climate Ready School Ground here!](#)

Every Child Matters – 4 Seasons of Reconciliation

The [Every Child Matters - 4 Seasons of Reconciliation](#) learning initiative seeks to better acknowledge that Indigenous Knowledge and Perspectives are foundational to outdoor learning, and that non-Indigenous educators need to undertake further steps towards Truth and Reconciliation in order to engage appropriately and authentically and build respectful and reciprocal relationships. It also acknowledges that a key step non-Indigenous educators can take in engaging with Indigenous learning is by going outside and learning from the land.

This learning opportunity is open to everyone! While content is mostly in the context of Canada, this learning is relevant across Turtle Island (North America). [Learn more about the Every Child Matters learning initiative here.](#)

Families Canada – Let's Play!

Families Canada is the national association of Family Support Centres focused on delivering education, training, and tools for their network of organizations to help build stronger families and communities. Families Canada's series called "Why Play?" includes a number of expert-approved resources (e.g., activity cards, books, pamphlets) on the latest best practices and science related to children's play.

Check out Families Canada's "Why Play?" series [here!](#)

Hey what about us? Calling for content on outdoor play among adults and older adults

After putting this newsletter together, we noticed that all content was focused on children and youth. But adults and older adults like to play outdoors too! If you or a colleague have content related to outdoor play for grown-up kids, [share it with us](#) so we can add it to our next issue!

We welcome blog posts and summaries of relevant research studies for publication on the [OPC website](#). If you have any items that you think would be of interest to fellow OPC members, please contact info@outdoorplaycanada.ca. We respect the amount of unnecessary emails you receive so the plan is for a maximum of one OPC newsletter every other month. Your feedback and comments are always welcome.