



## Outdoor Play Canada July 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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## Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit Registration is Filling Up!

The Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit is a three-day Outdoor Play Summit where thought leaders, practitioners, researchers, and policy makers can connect and share best practices, in the outdoors. The theme for the 2023 summit is 'Research, policy, and practice – their intersections for the promotion of outdoor play'. The summit will feature inspiring talks, hands-on workshops, and open conversations on how research, policy, and practice may promote and shape the future of outdoor play in Canada and abroad.

Registration is filling up (90% full)! [Register here!](#)

## Nominations are Open for the Outdoor Play Canada 2023 Awards!

The Outdoor Play Canada 2023 Awards will be presented at this year's [Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit!](#) If you know of an individual or organization that has demonstrated exceptional commitment and leadership in the promotion of outdoor play, nominate them for an OPC award!

[Learn more here!](#)

## 10-Year Anniversary of the Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play

In 2025, it will be 10 years since the release of the Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play. To mark this milestone, an initial group of researchers from the [CHEO Research Institute](#), [Outdoor Play Canada](#), [Queen's University](#), [ParticipACTION](#), [the Alana Institute](#), the [National Taiwan University of Physical Education and Sport](#), [Kenyatta University](#), [Auckland University of Technology](#), [International Play Association](#), and the [Copenhagen University Hospital](#) have come together to begin developing an update to the Position Statement, to describe its impact, make it global in reach and relevance, and draw on insights gained from the past decade, including the global COVID-19 pandemic.

We are looking for insightful and energetic individuals who share our passion for outdoor play to join us in this endeavour! [Learn more about how to join, here.](#)

## Join Our Outdoor Early Childhood Education Community of Practice!

The Outdoor Early Childhood Education Community of Practice, led by the [Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play partnership](#), is geared towards early childhood educators across Canada that are interested in and/or already in support of regularly bringing children outdoors!

The overarching ethos is to promote collaboration, empower practitioners to promote outdoor play opportunities across a variety of settings, and ensure outdoor early childhood education programming is culturally appropriate and place-based. [Learn more and sign up here!](#)

## Nova Scotia Outdoor Play Network

The Nova Scotia Outdoor Play Network was formed during the development of the [Outdoor Play in Canada: 2021 State of the Sector Report](#), where it was recognized that a lot of good work has happened and is continuing to happen on outdoor play in Nova Scotia. The group continues to meet to identify where they have momentum, where work is happening, what intersections exist, and where they may have room to grow and collaborate.

[Learn more about this Network and how you may participate here.](#)

## Measuring Early Childhood Outside Survey

The Play Outside Lab at the University of British Columbia and the British Columbia Children's Hospital Research Institute is looking to understand children's outdoor play at Early Learning and Child Care (ELCCs) centres across Canada. They are

seeking to understand outdoor play provision in Canada to support future action related to outdoor play policies, programs, and research areas.

Educators, administrators, managers and/or operators who are most responsible for the day-to-day operations of a full-time, centre-based (group care) ELCC centre in Canada are encouraged to participate in this study. [Learn more here.](#)

## PhD Studentship on Outdoor Play

Dr. Mark Tremblay, president of Outdoor Play Canada, is looking for an outstanding PhD Student to work on research related to outdoor play and healthy growth and development in young children. The research will examine the relationships among outdoor play/outdoor exposure (e.g., Forest School type environment) and movement behaviours, physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development of 1–5-year-olds, their parents and care providers.

[Learn more here.](#)

## Families Canada: Why Play? This Summer!

This summer, Families Canada, encourages all educators, parents, and family support service providers to find new ways to support children’s play as they play alone, or with others. One way that Families Canada supports children and families in engaging in play is through their “Why Play?” series of pamphlets, and other resources on play.

[Learn more here.](#)

## Urban Springtime: My daughter and I

When we talk about outdoor play in our professional world we often talk about playgrounds with fixed and manufactured play equipment. In his latest blog post, Dr. Gerben Helleman discusses how his daughter has taught him to look at the bigger picture; to be concerned with well-connected walking and cycling routes, clear crossings, landscaping, and clear sightlines and get away from the focus on formal play areas (playgrounds, public sports field, skatepark).

Read the [full guest blog post by Gerben Helleman here.](#)

## The Conversation: Outdoor education has psychological, cognitive and physical health benefits for children

There is growing interest across Canada in outdoor education that is formally integrated into school. In response, a research team from the University of Sherbrooke in Québec asked the question: What are kindergarten to Grade 11 teachers’ outdoor education practices in the province of Québec?

[Read the full Conversation article here.](#)

## Ornamentum and Playgroundology: Where Do Children Play?

Park playgrounds and play spaces present a wonderful opportunity to take advantage of urban spaces as child-friendly family hubs. In this article originally written for Ornamentum, Playgroundology provides an overview of six playgrounds and play spaces in eastern Canada and discusses what gets children coming back for more.

[Read the full article here.](#)

## Outdoor Early Childhood Education Programs database

Yousif Al-Baldawi, who completed his undergraduate thesis with Outdoor Play Canada, created a comprehensive list of outdoor early childhood education (ECE) programs across Canada. This list has now been posted as a table within our Resources section to support parents, educators, and researchers in finding and connecting with programs within and across provinces!

Check out [the full list of outdoor ECE programs in Canada, here](#).

## Why Outdoor Play Matters booklet

[Recreation Nova Scotia \(RNS\)](#), in collaboration with the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage – Communities, Sport, and Recreation Division, produced an online and printed booklet on Outdoor Play for parents and caregivers. The booklet, [Why Outdoor Play Matters: A practical guide for parents and caregivers](#) includes things like: what to say instead of be careful, the adult role in outdoor play, 9 common play patterns, how to dress children for different seasons, the joy of mud kitchens, and much more!

[Check out the Why Outdoor Play Matters booklet here](#).

## Disability and Physical Activity Program Evaluation Toolkit

Organizations that provide physical activity programs for individuals with disabilities are often required to do evaluations to secure funding, show impact to board members and stakeholders, and understand their ability to grow. However, programs are often difficult to evaluate due to their complexity and competing organizational priorities. There are also often few resources to support evaluation activities and methods.

In response, a team of researchers and community partners recently developed the Disability Physical Activity Program Evaluation Toolkit to support such programs in their evaluation processes. [Learn more here!](#)

## Projet Alex – Nature-based Early Childhood Education Toolkit

The [Association Québécoise des CPE \(AQCPÉ\)](#) is proud to present “Projet Alex – Nature-based early childhood education”, now available in English! This is a practical framework, intended for professionals who work with early years children, includes eight principles to facilitate nature based ECE implementation, as well as exercises, tools, and tips.

Check out [the Projet Alex framework, here!](#)

## A Blueprint for Building Quality Participation on Playgrounds for Children with Disabilities

A team of researchers and practitioners with expertise in childhood disability, inclusive play, and community programming have produced a [Quality Participation on Playgrounds Blueprint resource](#). The resource presents 20 evidence informed strategies for building quality participation on playgrounds for children with disabilities.

Check out the [Quality Participation on Playgrounds Blueprint resource, here](#).

## Let's Talk Outdoors Podcast ft. Dr. Louise de Lannoy

[Sask Outdoors](#) hosts a regular podcast on all things environmental enjoyment and education. Episode 9 featured Outdoor Play Canada's Dr. Louise de Lannoy as she chatted with the hosts about outdoor play in Canada, the [PLaTO-Net](#) global terminology project, the new [Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play](#), and one thing she would change about the world.

Listen to Episode 9, and Sask Outdoors' other podcast episodes, [here!](#)

## Join Us!

Join the movement, become an OPC member! Show your support of our effort to promote, protect, and preserve access to play in nature and the outdoors for all people living in Canada.

Membership benefits include being highlighted in this newsletter, discounts at Outdoor Play Canada endorsed events, access to resources to support your outdoor-play related work, as well as many professional engagement & development opportunities.

[Learn more here.](#)

*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](mailto: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.*