



Outdoor Play Canada March 2022 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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Outdoor Play Canada Gathering Featuring ReImagine RREC!

On **March 24th from 12-1pm ET**, OPC will be hosting our next online gathering. The theme for this gathering is based on the [State of the Sector Report priority](#): 'Leveraging the Outdoors During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic'. The gathering will feature Joe Doiron, who will discuss the [ReImagine RREC \(Renew, Retool, Engage, Contribute\)](#) initiative, on behalf of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA).

Join us! [Register for the OPC Gathering here.](#)

Opportunity to name the new building in the forest!

[Andrew Fleck Children's Services \(AFCS\)](#), in partnership with [Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group](#) and [Child and Nature Alliance of Canada](#), are building a licensed childcare program in the forest, and it's time to decide what to call this new, wonderful location! They are seeking ideas from near and far, hoping to find a name that captures the magic of the forest; reflects their commitment to child-centred, interest-led, inquiry-driven, educator-supported, learning and connecting through play on the land; resonates with children, families and the community; demonstrates they are creating opportunities to build an ongoing relationship with the land; and identifies that while every day is different, play, exploration, and connection to each other and the land threads through adventures.

Submit your idea(s) by March 25, 2022, [here](#).

Government of Saskatchewan introduces new Outdoor Play Coordinator!

SaskOutdoors has received one-year funding from the Government of Saskatchewan to continue to support Outdoor Play in the province. With these funds, SaskOutdoors has hired a Provincial - Outdoor Play Coordinator who will promote, encourage and inspire outdoor play through social media, in person and online events, presentations, research and more over the next year.

SaskOutdoors has been partnering with outdoor play experts to lead "Get Outside and...Play!!!" workshops. For example, Christina Pickles recently led an online workshop about loose parts play, which provides an easy way to transform any outdoor space into an engaging and inviting outdoor play environment. Saskatoon Search and Rescue led an AdventureSmart workshop about how to provide kids with opportunities to play outside on their own and keep safe.

Both webinars can be viewed online at: saskoutdoors.org/pages/webinars

Outdoor Play Glossary of Terms now available in French!

The Outdoor Play Glossary provides a compilation of definitions of terms and concepts integral to *outdoor play*. The purpose is to be consistent in the use of terms and build a shared understanding of language used in dialogue on outdoor play across Canada. These are working definitions developed by Outdoor Play Canada founding members, the [Lawson Foundation Outdoor Play Strategy](#) cohort, the [Play Learning and Teaching Outdoors Network \(PLaTO-Net\)](#) steering committee and broader membership, in addition to national and international advisors with expertise in play-based practice, policy and research. And it is now available in French!

Check out the Outdoor Play Glossary of Terms [in English here](#) et [en français ici](#).

OutsidePlay.ca

[OutsidePlay.ca](#), a new resource for early childhood educators, helps launch their journey towards spending more time outdoors with children – addressing common challenges and building a plan for overcoming them. Developed by the [Brussoni Lab](#) at UBC, the OutsidePlay.ca app helps educators rethink their fears and gain skills to support children's outdoor play. Based on [research](#) and consultations with educators, [evaluation](#) of the app showed it was effective in changing attitudes toward outdoor and risky play.

Stay tuned for the findings from the randomized controlled trial. In the meantime, checkout the [study protocol](#) and [findings from focus groups here!](#)

Free Outdoor Equipment Rental Resource!

While many outdoor activities can be done without equipment, there are many that require technical gear, which can quickly become expensive. Fortunately, many places across the country lend OPC has compiled a list of those places, organized by province/territory in alphabetical order from west coast to east coast. We also recognize that not everyone can use typical outdoor gear, so where available we have also listed organizations that lend adaptive outdoor recreational gear free of charge.

Check out OPC's [Free Outdoor Equipment Rental Resource here!](#)

Reconnecting elders and children through outdoor play

Peak Play Consulting is working with Indigenous communities in Alberta and British Columbia to create play spaces that are physically relevant to the origin of stories being told to children by elders. For example, they have built a wooden framed swing set patterned after Tipi poles, a child sized and a full-sized Tipi, a talking circle of stump seats around a simulated fire pit, a log jam to simulate walking in a natural forest going over deadfall trees, as well as a stump climber. When the snow clears, they will deliver a meat drying rack and hide stretching frame with toy hide scrapers. This work is motivated by a need to reconnect elders with young children, a connection which is tantamount to the establishment of values and ways of being in the community, and which was lost with the introduction of residential schools and colonialism at large.

Learn more about these efforts [via Instagram](#).

Blog Post: The relationship between nature and immigrants' integration, wellbeing, and physical activity

The [Physical Activity, Transportation and Health \(PATH\)](#) research group from the University of Lethbridge recently published a scoping review of previous research focused on the relationship between nature and immigrants' wellbeing, integration, and physical activity. The authors found that natural environments are an undervalued resource that can contribute positively to adaptation, place attachment, social integration, physical activity, and wellbeing among immigrants from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

[Click here](#) to read the full blog post written by Ulises Charles Rodriguez and Richard Larouche.

Blog Post: Why Play Isn't Just for Kids

While we don't forget how to play as we age, it becomes less of a priority because of other demands on our time. However, play is an opportunity to move our bodies, and receive the many physical, emotional, and social benefits of movement and physical activity. It is also an opportunity to view movement as something we get to do, as opposed to something we have to do. Janet Omstead, play and wellness expert, author, and coach discusses this topic in a guest blog post for OPC.

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

Blog Post: Education Outside the Classroom can contribute to better motivation at school

In January 2022, German researchers published a new study showing that Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) is associated with increased intrinsic school motivation and 'identified motivation', an indicator of teaching that is of personal importance and valued by the student. A possible explanation for this finding is that EOTC is characterized as more student-centered compared to traditional teaching. Researchers Jan Ellinger, Dr. Christoph Mall, and Dr. Mads Bolling, summarized their findings for us in a guest blog post.

[Read the full blog post 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. 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.