



## Outdoor Play Canada February 2024 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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### Regional Outdoor Play Feature: Call to share a highlight from your region!

Are there outdoor play activities/events/initiatives happening in your region of Canada that you'd like to us to promote and celebrate? Starting with our next newsletter, we will celebrate the outdoor play efforts of a different region of Canada, rotating through regions with each issue.

Want your region to be next? Send us an email at: [info@outdoorplaycanada.ca](mailto:info@outdoorplaycanada.ca)

### Canadian Pediatric Society Position Statement on Outdoor Risky Play

The Canadian Pediatric Society released a new Position Statement on Outdoor Risky Play in which they discuss established definitions of risky play (with examples), the physical, mental and socio-emotional benefits of risky play, the importance of balancing the benefits of risk-taking with the possibility of injury, and recommendations for child health care providers, public health authorities and government policymakers.

[Read the Position Statement here.](#)

[Read the blog post summarizing the Position Statement here.](#)

[Listen to OPC's Dr. Louise de Lannoy talk about the Position Statement on CTV morning here.](#)

### Get Outside and Play Conference

[Get Outside & Play](#) is co-hosting their second annual Outdoor Play in the Early Years Conference from April 12-13<sup>th</sup> in Calgary! This conference will inspire educators to be outside with children in a way that honours their creativity, curiosity, and learning. There will be 20+ sessions to choose from on topics ranging from fire craft to storytelling to

loose parts. Something for everyone! This conference is for teachers, early childhood educators, and anyone who works with young children who wants to expand their confidence and inspiration to get outside!

[Learn more and register here.](#)

## Municipal guide for disability inclusion in recreation and physical activity

The Active Living Alliance is starting a project to develop a municipal guide to promising and best practices for disability inclusion in recreation and physical activity. This two-stage project is being led in partnership with Queen's University School of Kinesiology and Health Studies, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, the Federal/Provincial Government Physical Activity and Recreation Committee, and the Canadian Disability Participation Project.

[Learn more here.](#)

## "I'd rather learn outside because nature can teach you so many more things than being inside"

Outdoor and nature-based activities promote better health and academic outcomes for children, where the school context represents a critical opportunity to support increased outdoor time. However, outdoor learning is not implemented consistently across school contexts, and as such, many students do not receive the opportunity to participate. This blog post focuses on data from a study by [Donison & Halsall, 2023](#) that explored young children's perspectives of learning within an outdoor context and how aspects of nature enhance learning.

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

## Job Alert: 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. The CCOP fellow will 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 position here.](#)

## Survey Invitation: Climate Change Impacts Upon Outdoor Education and Recreation Providers

Many outdoor programs, tourism and outdoor recreation offerings have seen recent impacts from severe weather events and the changing climate. This survey, led by Dr. Jeff Jackson at Algonquin College, was developed in response to recent discussions at the annual Wilderness Risk Management Conference. Dr. Jackson's team hopes to gather sufficient information to develop a snapshot of the current state of the outdoor industry's response to the impacts of climate change and to monitor trends over time as programs implement tools for resilience. This survey is intended for any outdoor education, recreation or tourism provider that has a duty of care towards clients or groups in the outdoors. The survey should take about ten (10) minutes. Results will be publicized at the Adventure Risk Research Symposium, the Wilderness Risk Management Conference and on the Adventure Risk Report website.

Take the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/outdoorclimateimpacts>

## Environmental Kinship Webinar

In partnership with StoryPark, Outdoor Play Canada hosted a webinar on Environmental Kinship on January 30 featuring Amanda Higgins, Environmental Kinship (EK) Guide co-author and play. In the webinar, Amanda describes the EK guide as a holistic approach to children learning in, with, and about nature, and demonstrates using this guide to inspire nature-based learning.

If you missed the live stream, you can [watch the recording here!](#)

## Teacher.outsideplay.org

[Teacher.outsideplay.org](https://www.teacher.outsideplay.org) is a free online tool designed to help teachers support outdoor play and learning in elementary schools. The Outdoor Play and Learning tool was designed by teachers for teachers. It is based on Megan Zeni's (the recipient of the [2023 Outdoor Play Canada Dr. Mariana Brussoni Award](#)) PhD research with elementary school teachers across Canada, as well as her own 26-year-long experience teaching in British Columbia. The tool was developed with support from the BC Children's Hospital Foundation.

[Check out Teacher.outsideplay.org here!](https://www.teacher.outsideplay.org)

## 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!](#)

## MSc Studentship on Outdoor Play

Dr. Mark Tremblay, president of Outdoor Play Canada, is looking for an outstanding MSc 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.](#)

## 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](#), [University of Ghana](#), [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.](#)

## New OPC Membership Structure - Join Us!

We have changed the OPC membership structure in an effort to improve accessibility and inclusivity. Membership now consists of two options: general (\$0-99) and champions (\$100) members.

All members now have access to the members-only section of the website regardless of payment (but you still have to renew). Champions have the added bonus of being celebrated on our [About Us](#) page and will have a tree planted in their honour at our new [Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play](#), located at Wesley Clover Parks in Ottawa, ON!

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.

[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.*