



Welcome to the Outdoor Play Canada January 2026 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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Join Us!

Learn more about Outdoor Play
Canada membership!

Learn more about our
Community of Practice!

Featured Announcements

[Launch of the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play Champions Program](#)

We're excited to announce the launch of [the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play Champions Program](#): a new initiative celebrating educators who demonstrate leadership in outdoor and land-based play and learning across Canada!

Launching for the first time this year, the program recognizes educators whose work reflects the Three Rooted Principles of Active Engagement, Holistic Development, and Meaningful Connections, based on [the Outdoor Early Childhood Education Continuous Professional Learning Framework](#), and who champion inclusive, relational approaches to outdoor play.

Selected Champions will be celebrated nationally and supported through visibility, resources, mentorship, and leadership opportunities within the CCOP network.



[Learn about the Champions Program here!](#)

[Outdoor Play Canada is now accepting nominations for its Board of Directors and Subcommittees!](#)





We are looking for individuals who bring diverse perspectives, lived experience, and expertise aligned with our mission to promote and advance outdoor play across Canada and are eager to provide leadership and strategic direction for OPC and the broader outdoor play sector.

Board of Director Roles (2-year term):

- **President:** Provides leadership to the Board of Directors, chair Board meetings, guides Board priorities and initiatives, supports committee development and member engagement and ensures effective alignment with OPC's mission.
- **Vice-President:** Supports the President in their duties and assumes the role of President when needed.
- **Secretary:** Oversees Board meeting processes and supports accountability across the Board.
- **Treasurer:** Oversees the financial matters of the Board and ensures sound financial management, control, reporting and informed decision-making.

Committee roles to be filled:

- Finance Committee
- Organizational Sustainability and Fundraising Committee
- Indigenous Liaison Committee

[Click here for more details on roles and eligibility!](#)

[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. The CCOP Fellow's 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). [Click here for more details.](#)

[Job Posting: Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play Project Coordinator](#)



We are recruiting a Project Coordinator to join our Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play research-practice-policy partnership. This role is specifically focused on managing our SPROUT-Able project, exploring how to support children with disabilities in outdoor play and learning in natural spaces! [Click here for more details.](#)

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Research

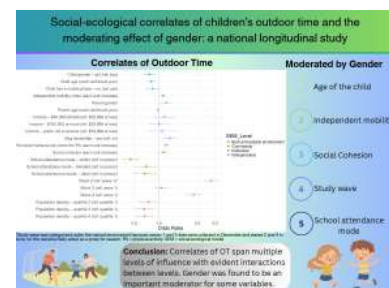
[Podcast and Infographics: Intersecting Perspectives on Nature-Based Education](#)

This project led by [UMR Petite enfance, grandeur nature](#), aimed to disseminate the results of the work carried out as part of the research project 'Alex – Nature-Based Education: An Innovative Approach to Supporting the Educational Success of Young Children', in collaboration with [the Association québécoise des CPE \(AQCPÉ\)](#). The dissemination was completed through three complementary media outlets: 1) scientific and professional articles; 2) posters combining children's illustration with research findings; and 3) a four-episode podcast. [Learn more here!](#)



[Which factors influence outdoor play for Canadian 7- to 12-year-olds?](#)

In this blog post, Dr. Richard Larouche shares findings from a national longitudinal study exploring the individual, family, community, and environmental factors that influence children's outdoor play time. The results highlight the importance of independent mobility, social cohesion, school environments, and



seasonal conditions, and reinforce the need for multi-level approaches to support equitable opportunities for outdoor play.

[Read more here.](#)

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Policy

[How Play Found Its Way Into Canadian Curriculum –And Why Systems Still Need to Catch Up](#)

This blog post by Marnie Power from Playful Mindset explores how play has gradually been recognized within Canadian curricula, while highlighting the gap between policy language and how play is supported in practice. It traces the historical and systemic factors shaping play's place in education and argues that meaningful change requires shifts not only in curriculum, but in the systems, structures, and values that surround learning. A thoughtful read for educators, policymakers and play advocates alike. [Access the full post here.](#)



[Taking Relationships into Account: Social Network Analysis of the Outdoor Play Strategy 2.0 by the Lawson Foundation and Taylor Newberry Consulting](#)

This companion report to the OPS 2.0 Final Evaluation Report explores how relationships, collaboration, and network structures shaped the impact of seven outdoor play projects across Canada.

[Access the full report here.](#)



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Practice

[Winter Outdoor Play: Will Playing Out in the Cold Make Me Catch a Cold?](#)

[Getting outdoors in winter can help boost your immune system.](#)



Spending more time indoors means being in closer contact with others, which makes it easier for disease to spread. Also, spending less time outside usually means engaging in less physical activity, where physical activity is important for maintaining a healthy immune system. Reduced outdoor time also means less exposure to sunlight and vitamin D, which can further negatively impact immune function. [Read more here!](#)



[Discover the Let Grow Play Club!](#)

Let Grow is growing the movement for childhood independence and is expanding its free school programs into Canada, working with educators, parents and communities to empower children with the confidence that comes from independence. The Let Grow Play Club encourages children to organize their own games and resolve their own conflicts, building crucial social skills and resilience.

Learn more about bringing unstructured, multi-age free play to your school through [a Let Grow Play Club](#) to support student creativity, confidence, and their ability to thrive.



[Take me Outside's Outdoor Play and Learning for Early Years Educators Course](#)

Unlock the Benefits of Outdoor Play. Research shows that outdoor play is essential for healthy child development, but taking the leap to teach outside can feel daunting. The Early Years Outdoor Learning Certification is here to support you. Created by experts in outdoor pedagogy, this course meets you where you are, whether you're a nature expert or just starting out. Learn to assess risk-benefit, create responsive environments, and embrace the magic of every season. [Learn More & Register Here!](#)

An advertisement for the "Outdoor Play and Learning Certification Course" by Take Me Outside. The ad features a colorful illustration of a woman and children playing in a park. A large yellow arrow points from the text "Outdoor Play & Learning for Early Years Educators" to a circular logo. A price tag indicates "\$95 Enough!". The ad lists course details: 30 hours of course content, 10 modules, and the ability to work through the course at your own pace. It also includes logos for Take Me Outside and the Early Years Education Council of Ontario (EYECO).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN OUTDOOR LEARNING FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATORS

OUTDOOR PLAY & LEARNING FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATORS

\$95 Enough!

Outdoor Play and Learning Certification Course

- 30 hours of course content, 10 modules
- Work through the course at your own pace
- Attend on-site, live or live with you - Teachers register only

TAKE ME OUTSIDE

take-me-outside.com/certification-early-years

[Winter Freeze Fest in Southern Victoria, NB](#)

Celebrate winter in the Village of Southern Victoria (formerly Perth-Andover) at our 2026 Winter Freeze Fest! This exciting five-day community event offers something for everyone, with activities for all ages including tubing, busker shows, a snow maze, wood-carving art, taffy on the snow, sleigh rides, fireworks, outdoor skating, musical entertainment, and fun winter games. Warm up with hot treats, enjoy family-friendly entertainment, and come

An advertisement for the "Winter Freeze Fest" in Southern Victoria, NB. The ad features a winter-themed illustration with snowflakes, a snow globe, and a small house. The text "WINTER FREEZE FEST" is prominently displayed in a stylized font. Below it, the dates "February 25th - March 1st" and the slogan "Winter Fun Starts Here!" are included.

WINTER FREEZE FEST

February 25th - March 1st

Winter Fun Starts Here!

together to embrace the season and celebrate winter in the Upper River Valley. [Learn more here!](#)

[Active for Life's Winter Play Resources](#)

Winter scavenger hunt with free printables!

[This fun winter scavenger hunt](#) is a great way for children to explore the changes in the weather and improve fundamental movement skills.



How to help kids dress for winter independently

Getting kids dressed in the winter is a big job, so we asked some experts! [Check out these strategies](#) used in schools and childcare centres across Canada.



[Watersheds Canada's 10 Days of Winter Activities](#)

Canadian winters can be cold and dark, but that just means we get to be more creative in how we enjoy the outdoors! Watersheds Canada, a national registered charity, shares its latest list of "10 Days of Winter" activities to inspire you and your family to enjoy all the winter season has to offer. [Check out the activities here!](#)



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Become an Outdoor Play Canada Member!

We believe that if all parents, neighbours, care providers, practitioners, policy makers, researchers, educators, insurance providers, schools and municipalities better understood the value of outdoor play for physical, mental, emotional, social and environmental health and development, they'd be more likely to prioritize, initiate, nurture and support efforts to get everyone, of all ages, outside.

If we want outdoor play to be an integral part of daily life in Canada, we're going to have to get our hands dirty. [Roll up your sleeves and join us!](#)

In an effort to improve accessibility and inclusivity, the OPC membership now consists of two options: general (\$0–99) and champion (\$100) members.

All members have access to the members-only section of the website regardless of payment. Champions have the added bonus of being celebrated on our [About Us](#) page and will have a tree planted in their honour at the [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.

Become a Member Now!

Join our 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 who are interested in and/or already support 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. We organize regular quarterly gatherings focused on discussion and engagement on a variety of topics related to outdoor play and learning.



Learn more and sign up 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.

Thanks for reading and have fun until our next newsletter!





Don't know what to play? Check out our Adventure Calendar!

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Our mailing address is:

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