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## Outdoor Play Canada September 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: Outside Play Lab: An Initiative by the University of British Columbia and the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute](#)

Explore children's outdoor risky play and injury prevention with the Outside Play Lab, a research team led by Dr. Mariana Brussoni. Based at the University of British Columbia and the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, the lab's mission is to inspire and promote outdoor risky play for children. Outside Play Lab's recent research includes the MECO study, surveying outdoor play in Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) centres across Canada, and the PRO-ECO study, collaborating with ELCC centres throughout British Columbia. For more information, please visit the lab's website at <https://www.outsideplay.org/research>. In 2023, the lab proudly introduced the Outdoor Play Teacher Tool, providing practical guidance to help elementary school teachers take their classrooms outside.

This valuable resource, along with other free tools for parents and early childhood educators, is available online: <https://www.outsideplay.org/#tool-kit>

## [Educators Teaching Educators: Canada's Outdoor ECE Continuous Professional Learning Framework is Now Available!](#)

The Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play (CCOP) is thrilled to announce the launch of its nationally-agreed upon Outdoor Early Childhood Education Continuous Professional Learning Framework, which aims to uphold quality and consistency in outdoor ECE continuous professional learning. This framework came to fruition with the help of many colleagues across the country who contributed their expertise, time, and passion for outdoor early childhood education, making this a truly collaborative and inclusive effort.

Please click here to access the framework: [Canada's Outdoor ECE Continuous Professional Learning Framework](#)

## [Save the Date: 2025 Breath of Fresh Air \(BoFA\) Summit!](#)

Mark your calendars! The 2025 Breath of Fresh Air (BoFA) Summit is set to take place in exactly one year, from September 25-27, 2025. BoFA is a dynamic three-day Outdoor Play Summit where thought leaders, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers come together to share best practices and insights.

This year's summit will feature inspiring talks, hands-on workshops, and open conversations that explore how research, policy, and practice can shape and promote the future of outdoor play, both in Canada and internationally. Stay tuned for more details on this must-attend event!

To find out more about BoFA, visit: <https://outdoorplaysummit.ca/>

## [Government of Canada Announces \\$3M Funding to](#)

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## Support School Streets Nationwide

Green Communities Canada is thrilled to announce that Université de Montréal, the University of British Columbia, Queen's University, and Toronto Metropolitan University are leading the National Active School Streets Initiative! This project, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada's Healthy Canadians and Communities Fund, is a collaboration between Green Communities Canada, the aforementioned universities, and additional partners such as 880 Cities and the Centre d'écologie urbaine.

Over the next four years, these partners will work closely with community collaborators to assess their School Streets interventions through comprehensive data collection and evaluation. The goal is to deepen understanding of the impacts of these interventions and to identify policy pathways that can help expand them, particularly in historically underrepresented communities. We are excited to support nationwide momentum for creating safer, healthier, and happier environments around our schools!

Learn More here: <https://greencommunitiescanada.org/programs/school-streets/>

## Children's Outdoor Play and Time in Denmark May Be on the Rise – What's Next?

In recent years, many countries have seen a decline in the time children spend outdoors and in nature. However, a new national survey from Denmark brings promising news, showing that this trend may be stabilizing, with increased visits to parks, nature, and green spaces. These findings highlight the importance of supporting children's outdoor play and exploring ways to make nature more accessible in everyday life. [Learn more here.](#)

## Press Release: Canadian Children with Greater Freedom to Roam Show Lower Psychological Distress

Today's parents might not be surprised that their children have less freedom to explore their neighborhoods compared to previous generations. What they may not realize, however, is how this limited independence could be impacting their children's mental health. New research led by Dr. Richard Larouche from the University of Lethbridge reveals a link between children's independent mobility (CIM) and lower levels of distress, shedding light on the potential mental health benefits of giving children more freedom to roam.

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

## Playful Mindset

Playful Mindset is a national, charitable organization currently operating in the Ottawa, Ontario region with plans to expand nationally in coming years. Their mission is to disrupt adverse childhood experiences and support children and caregivers' mental health through outdoor play. They offer a number of Outdoor Play Support Groups, including:

- Grief & Loss
  - Gender Based Violence (Domestic Violence / Intimate Partner Violence)
  - Poverty (Resulting in Housing and Play Insecurity)
  - Abuse and Neglect (Engaged with Child Protection Services)
  - Postpartum Isolation and Vulnerability
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For more information please visit: [playfulmindset.ca](https://playfulmindset.ca).

## Let's Move Canada Podcast

The Let's Move Canada podcast published an episode on Risky Play with Dr. Suzanne Beno and Dr. Mariana Brussoni. Dr. Suzanne Beno is a pediatric emergency medicine physician based at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Ontario, and senior author of the new Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS)'s [Position Statement on Outdoor Risky Play](#). Dr. Mariana Brussoni is the Director of Human Early Learning Partnership, a professor at the University of British Columbia in the Departments of Pediatrics and Nursing, key consultant on the CPS's Position Statement, and OPC board member. Please click [here](#) to view the podcast episode.

## CHFI: The Importance of Movement and Physical Activity

The Canadian Health and Fitness Institute welcomed Diane Nelson, Director of Education for the West Vancouver School District, to share her thoughts on the critical role of movement and physical activity on National Health and Fitness Day on June 1st, 2024. Diane shared key insights from research on the benefits of physical activity and the need for increasing physical literacy through intentionally teaching movement competencies.

Please click [here](#) to watch Diane Nelson's presentation.

## The ScreenTime Action Network at Fairplay's Nature Inspiration Guide

Extend summertime nature exploration and its many benefits for children with the ScreenTime Action Network at Fairplay's [Children and Family Nature Inspiration Guide](#), created by their very own Nature & Play Working Group. Designed to jumpstart outdoor creativity and exploration, this guide is filled with creative outdoor activities, nature timekeeping tools, and evidence-based resources on nature's many benefits, to name a few. Their Working Group is also looking for new members with fresh ideas to brainstorm for their next project.

[Click here to download the Guide](#)

Are you passionate about replacing children's screen time with green time? [Click here to learn more about joining the Nature & Play Working Group](#)

## Active for Life: Activeplay.ca Website

This website by Active for Life was developed in response to a need identified by ECEs to better support children's active play. The site offers videos filmed in childcare centres demonstrating active play integration into childcare programs. It includes videos on loose parts, adventure play in urban spaces, and outdoor play in winter, amongst others. To support ECEs working in diverse communities, the videos and materials have been translated into [four Indigenous languages](#) (Plains Cree, Ojibwe, Inuktitut, and Mi'kmaq) and [six international](#) languages (Simplified Chinese, Arabic, Farsi, Tagalog, Spanish, and Urdu).

Checkout the Activeplay.ca website [here](#).

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## Invitation to Complete a Survey by Anna Gunz's Children's Environmental Health Clinic (ChEHC)

The Children's Environmental Health Clinic (ChEHC) is asking Canadians to share their views on child environmental health (CEH) priorities, via an [online survey](#). The survey is open to anyone, including children and youth, parents and caregivers, and environmental and health experts in any field, from medicine, to research, to policy. The team at ChEHC will then analyze the data to identify key child environmental health challenges and share the findings to organizations who can use real data on public concerns to inform their work.

Access [the survey 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!](#)

## 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](#), [Queens 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.](#)

## 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.

All OPC members 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!

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[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.*



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