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Welcome to the Outdoor Play Canada Summer 2025 Newsletter

OPC projects and activities encompass all traditional territories of the Indigenous Nations of Turtle Island, within the land we now call Canada.

Featured Announcements

The Breath of Fresh Air Summit is approaching!

The third edition of the biennial summit on outdoor play, Breath of Fresh Air is happening this year from **September 25-27th** in Ottawa!

BREATH OF FRESH AIR SUMMIT		
OTTAWA, ONTARIO	WESLEY CLOVER PARKS	25-27 09.2025
The 2025 BoFA Summit theme is 'Play Across the Ages - Nature's Call to All' .		SCHEDULE INCLUDES:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keynote by Dr. Stuart Brown, his daughter and grand-daughter• Launch of the 10-Yr Update to the Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play• Launch of the Vision 360 tool• Workshops, symposia, fireside chats.

The Book of Abstracts is out!
Visit the [summit's website](#) to
learn more!



Register for Breath of Fresh Air Now!

In This Issue...

Policy

- [Launch of the 10-Year Update to the Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play!](#)
- [The Raising the Nation Play Commission launched its final report on the International Day of Play!](#)

Practice

- [The Forest Explorers Program Celebrates its first year anniversary!](#)
- [Learn about The Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play's Outdoor Gear Library](#)
- [The Roberta Bondar Foundation Summer Camp Bondar Challenge](#)
- [The French Version of the Lawson Report "The Power of a Relational, Values-driven Approach to Building Adult Capacity" is now available! / La Version Française du Rapport de la Fondation Lawson "Le pouvoir d'une approche relationnelle fondée sur des valeurs pour renforcer les capacités des adultes" est maintenant accessible!](#)
- [The Learning from Indigenous Perspectives: Land-Based Learning in the Early Years Project](#)

Research

- [Outdoor Play Canada attends ISBNPA in Auckland, New Zealand!](#)
- [New Study Explores Outdoor Education for Children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders](#)
- [Blog Post: Are Outdoor-Focused Childcare Programs Safe? A Look at Injuries in Canadian Early Childhood Education Programs](#)
- [Blog Post: A global PhD network for research and collaboration: Frontline research – Part II](#)
- [Blog Post: Two hours per day outdoors can positively impact young people's mental health, Canadian researchers find](#)

- [Blog Post: Learning From Indigenous Perspectives: Well-Being in the Early Years](#)
- [Blog Post: The Nature Remedy: Find Freedom from Tech Overload](#)

Join Us!

Learn more about Outdoor Play
Canada membership!

Learn more about our
Community of Practice!

Policy



[Launch of the 10 Year Update to the Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play!](#)

The [2015 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play](#) highlighted the benefits of active outdoor play for children's physical, mental, social, and emotional health, well-being, and development. It served as a galvanizing force for the outdoor play sector in Canada and an inspiration for aligned organizations worldwide. The Position Statement brought together previously disconnected groups from education, community, health, environment, wildlife, ecology, law, and Indigenous rights, amongst others, that collectively shared a passion for outdoor play. It also provided direction and a common purpose: to promote healthy child growth and development in harmony with the outdoor, natural environment. In Canada, it inspired significant philanthropic investment in outdoor play initiatives, informed a British Columbia Supreme Court decision, led to a 10-fold increase in academic publications on outdoor play, and inspired the launch of Outdoor Play Canada and the global Play, Learn and Teach Outdoors Network (PLaTO-Net).

On September 25, 2025, we will celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the Position Statement and the many projects, initiatives, and other successes it has inspired by launching the **2025 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play** (AOP10 hereafter). AOP10 extends the original Position Statement by being global in scope, broader in scope of content, inclusive of all ages, while exploring the benefits of active outdoor play for people (of

all ages, cultures and abilities), communities, environments, and the planet. This initiative has been an extensive and intensive two-year process, involving an international Leadership Group consisting of researchers and thought leaders from every inhabited continent, alongside a larger Steering Committee consisting of over 130 researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and other active outdoor play-relevant actors and groups. Collectively this team has helped guide, inform, and provide input on the development of the AOP10 project.

[The Raising the Nation Play Commission Report](#)

The Raising the Nation Play Commission launched its final report on the International Day of Play!

The report warns that cuts to clubs and playgrounds, busier roads, and increased fears among parents and children about safety have left children in England with fewer safe places to play. As a result, children's independence to play outside has shrunk dramatically over the last 30 years, impacting their health and happiness and increasing screen time. In an effort to see play firmly back on the policy agenda, the report calls for a new, cross-departmental National Play Strategy for England, led by a Minister for Play.

Access the full report [here](#).



Back to Top



[Celebrating the One Year Anniversary of the Forest Explorers Program](#)

On June 26th, the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play (CCOP) hosted its first-ever Open House to celebrate one year of the Forest Explorers licensed outdoor early learning program and launch of the CCOP at Wesley Clover Parks. Families,



educators, and community members joined us for an evening of connection, reflection, and celebration! **Read more [here!](#)**



[The Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play's Outdoor Gear Library](#)

High-quality outdoor gear can be expensive — especially for growing children and for adults new to the outdoors. This presents a barrier for many early childhood education settings: when children arrive without weather-appropriate clothing, educators often have no choice but to shorten outdoor time or stay inside entirely on colder or wetter days.

The Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play is working to change that! **Read more [here.](#)**



[The Roberta Bondar Foundation Summer Camp Bondar Challenge](#)

The Summer Camp Bondar Challenge is an immersive photography program that fuses art and science to help youth explore nature through a new lens. The program teaches photography skills and an understanding of the science behind the natural world. Participants are challenged to take a photo that captures the biodiversity of nature, and use their creativity to interpret the artistic and scientific components of their image. Campers are encouraged to submit their best photo to the competition and complete an artist's statement that helps them reflect on what they've learned.

To learn more and register click [here.](#)



[The French Version of the Lawson Report "The Power of a Relational, Values-Driven Approach to Building Adult Capacity" is now available!](#)

[This resource](#) is intended to enable those with prior knowledge and experience in outdoor play as a pedagogical practice to act on the calls to action. It is designed for ECE leaders such as post-secondary ECE faculty and ELCC directors, managers, and pedagogical leaders. We hope this resource will support you in your leadership role nurturing meaningful, sustained changes in quality outdoor play practice and policy for the groups of early childhood educators (ECEs) and other early learning professionals you serve.

To access the French version click [here](#).



[La Version Française du Rapport de la Fondation Lawson "Le pouvoir d'une approche relationnelle fondée sur des valeurs pour renforcer les capacités des adultes" est maintenant accessible!](#)

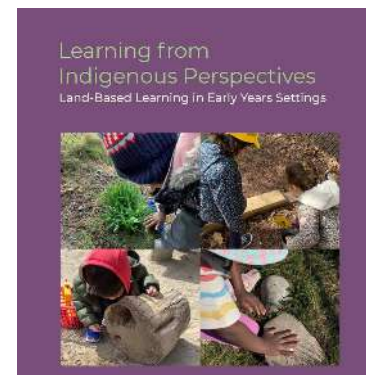
[Cette ressource](#) a pour but d'aider les personnes qui possèdent déjà des connaissances et une expérience en jeu extérieur en tant que pratique pédagogique permettant d'agir sur les appels à l'action. Elle est conçue pour les professionnels en EPE, comme les enseignants en EPE au postsecondaire et les directeurs, administrateurs et responsables des enseignants en AGJE. Nous espérons que cette ressource puisse vous accompagner dans votre rôle de soutien pour favoriser des changements porteurs de sens à long terme concernant la pratique et la politique du jeu extérieur de qualité pour les groupes de professionnels en éducation à la petite enfance ou tous autres professionnels de l'apprentissage précoce que vous représentez.

Pour accéder au rapport complet cliquez [ici](#).

[The Learning from Indigenous Perspectives: Land-Based Learning in the Early Years](#)

The [Learning from Indigenous Perspectives: Land-Based Learning in the Early Years](#) research project was a four-year initiative (2020-2024) based at The School of Early Childhood at George Brown College, Toronto, Ontario. It aimed to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and pedagogies into early years education. The project involved 20 educators from 10 childcare centres across Toronto.

Access their website through [here](#) to learn more and find guides



offering insights and practical advice on various aspects of Land-based learning and cultural appreciation.



[Back to Top](#)

Research

[OPC attends ISBNPA in Auckland, New Zealand!](#)

Congratulations to OPC team members Drs. Mark Tremblay (OPC Board President), Louise de Lannoy (Executive Director) and Maeghan James (Postdoctoral fellow) on their presentations at [the International Society of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity \(ISBNPA\) Congress](#), June 11-14, 2025!

Click [here](#) to see their presentations!



[New Study Explores Outdoor Education for Children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders](#)

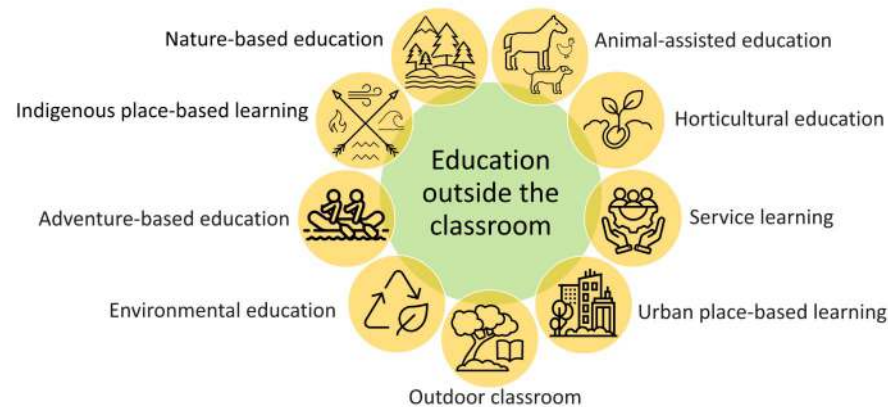
Researchers from the Danish MOVEOUT-SPECIAL project have published a scoping review highlighting what is currently known about education outside the classroom (EOTC) for children with neurodevelopmental disorders in special education settings.

The review, based on 50 studies and contributions from the international [PLaTO-Net](#) community, identifies nine categories of EOTC (see picture) – including nature-based, horticultural, and adventure-based education – and outlines reported benefits across cognitive, social, and physical domains. It also maps key enablers and barriers to implementing outdoor learning and provides recommendations for adapting and structuring activities to meet diverse student needs.

This study marks a significant step toward building a stronger evidence base for inclusive outdoor education. The

authors warmly thank all [PLaTO-Net](#) members who contributed knowledge, resources, and inspiration.

Read the open access article [here](#).



[Are Outdoor-Focused Childcare Programs Safe? A Look at Injuries in Canadian Early Childhood Education Programs](#)

Injury Statistics in Outdoor Compared to Conventional Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs in Canada

Outdoor play is widely recognized as essential for children's health and development. It encourages physical activity, builds confidence, and helps children learn to assess and manage risk. However, many parents and educators worry that outdoor environments might be more dangerous than traditional indoor settings. This research study aimed to address a key question: Are children more likely to be injured in outdoor-focused early childhood education (ECE) programs compared to conventional ones?

Researchers surveyed 150 conventional and 160 outdoor-focused ECE programs across Canada in early 2023. The survey asked about the number and types of injuries that occurred in 2022, the activities children were doing when injured, and where the injuries happened (indoors or outdoors). In total, 39 programs (13 conventional and 26 outdoor-focused) provided usable data, capturing over 1,750 children.

Read more [here](#).

[A global PhD network for research and collaboration: Frontline research – Part](#)

II

Part II – This blog post, part 2 of a series of 3 on an international PhD network in school-based outdoor education, highlights four emerging research areas explored by PhD students as part of this network: 1) outdoor practices in schools, 2) teaching methods, 3) place-based literacy, and 4) science education outdoors.

PhD projects in the network within the four emerging areas explore how outdoor learning benefits students and teachers; the training needed for effective implementation; how place-based approaches support literacy and sustainability; and the value of outdoor science education across all educational levels. The overarching aim is to enhance engagement, wellbeing, and learning through real-world, nature-based experiences.

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

[Two hours per day outdoors can positively impact young people's mental health, Canadian researchers find](#)

Less than five per cent of Canadian teenagers spend at least two hours a day outdoors in physical activity – despite the fact that this very time frame brings significant benefits for their mental well-being and life satisfaction. The alarming trend of youth disconnection from nature, but also the positive consequences of returning to the outside world, is highlighted in a study conducted by researchers Dr. Louise de Lannoy and Taylor Bradbury. We asked them why it is important to move and play outdoors. **Continue reading [here](#).**

[Learning From Indigenous Perspectives: Well-Being in the Early Years](#)

In their [recent article](#) Monica McGlynn-Stewart et al., discuss a three-year qualitative research study (2020-2023) in which they have explored the impact on early years educators' knowledge, perspectives, and pedagogies when introduced to Indigenous perspectives on Land-Based Learning in 10 urban preschool early learning centres (ages 2.5-4 years).

Many young children in urban mainstream early learning centres have limited access to natural outdoor spaces to play and learn, and early years educators typically receive little training in nature-based pedagogy, and even less in Indigenous perspectives on Land-Based learning.

Over the three years of the project, the team held workshops, interviews, shared resources, and held space for regular opportunities to share what they were learning and practicing with others in the project. These engagements were used to explore educators' knowledge, perspectives, and pedagogies when introduced to Indigenous perspectives on Land-Based. **Continue reading [here](#).**

[The Nature Remedy: Find Freedom from Tech Overload by Dr. Kerry Crofton](#)

“You’ve probably felt that pull, too, right?—the urge to check your phone, the compulsion to scroll endlessly, the creeping exhaustion that comes from too many hours in front of a screen. Digital overload is real, and it’s quietly seeping into every corner of our lives.

Here’s some good news: If you are already a meditator, or interested in mindfulness, you have a distinct advantage in finding freedom from tech overload. [...]”. **Continue reading [here](#).**

Back to Top

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 champions (\$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 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.

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.



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!

[Back to Top](#)



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