

# OUTDOOR PLAY CANADA **ANNUAL REPORT**



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# 2023

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Outdoor Play Canada has had a busy, productive, and successful year in 2023!

Most notably, Outdoor Play Canada formally became a not-for-profit organization, and hosted its first in-person Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit! This Annual Report will provide a brief overview of the highlights from the year.

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# Message from the President

Outdoor Play Canada (OPC) has had a busy, productive, and successful year in 2023! After eight years of functioning as a series of alliances and networks, in January 2023 Outdoor Play Canada became an incorporated not-for-profit organization with a 12-person Board of Directors and an Executive Director (Dr. Louise de Lannoy). In September, OPC held the third biennial Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit at Wesley Clover Parks in Ottawa. The sold-out Summit consisted of three days of talks, workshops, panel discussions, and playful activities all held entirely outdoors. The post-Summit survey showed that, overall, the participants enjoyed all aspects of the Summit – congratulations Louise and team!

At the start of 2023 we received funding to create the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play (CCOP), a partnership between OPC, the Healthy Active Living and Obesity (HALO) research group at the CHEO Research Institute, Algonquin College, and Andrew Fleck Children's Services. The launch included creating a leadership team, hiring a CCOP Fellow, hiring a Postdoctoral Fellow, establishing a 12-person National Panel on Outdoor Early Childhood Education (ECE), creating a community of practice on outdoor ECE, and working on foundational documents. We also started working on a 10-year anniversary update to the 2015 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play, with support from The Lawson Foundation. his update will be more comprehensive and global in scope.

**Mark Tremblay, PhD, DLitt (hons),  
FCSEP, FACSM, FCAHS, CSEP-CEP**  
*President, Outdoor Play Canada*

OPC is also serving as a community partner on the Canadian Disability Participation Project 2.0 led by Dr. Amy Latimer-Cheung out of Queen's University. Please visit the OPC website ([www.outdoorplaycanada.ca](http://www.outdoorplaycanada.ca)) for further details on these and other projects and collaboration activities. OPC is committed to mentorship and building capacity within the outdoor play sector. In 2023 we supervised, hosted, guided, and mentored several trainees including undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and new graduates. With support from trainees, we were able to contribute to the knowledge base in relation to outdoor play with several research publications and reports. Finally, OPC was busy with many knowledge translation and mobilization activities to advance and galvanize the outdoor play sector in Canada. See further details on OPC publications, reports, and presentations in this Annual Report and on the OPC website.

Please enjoy reading OPC's 2023 Annual Report and accept our best wishes for a healthy, active, outdoor-filled 2024!





# Incorporation of Outdoor Play Canada

In January 2023 Outdoor Play Canada became a not-for-profit organization with a 12-person Board of Directors and an Executive Director (Dr. Louise de Lannoy). Andrew Fleck Children's Services is serving as our secretariat as we learn how best to streamline administrative processes. We have spent a good deal of time and energy setting up bank accounts, getting credit cards, creating organizational policies (e.g., Conflict of Interest), Standing Committees (e.g., Executive, Nominations, Finance, Partnerships), and setting up secretariat support.

## 2023 Outdoor Play Canada Board



**Mark Tremblay, PhD**  
PRESIDENT



**Heather Cowie**  
VICE PRESIDENT



**Matt Leung**  
TREASURER



**Eun-Young Lee, PhD**  
SECRETARY



**Kelly Arbour-Nicitopoulos, PhD**  
GENERAL MEMBER



**Mariana Brussoni, PhD**  
GENERAL MEMBER



**Jane Cawley**  
GENERAL MEMBER



**Kim Hiscott**  
GENERAL MEMBER



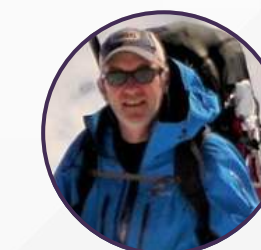
**Richard Larouche, PhD**  
GENERAL MEMBER



**Raktim Mitra, PhD**  
GENERAL MEMBER



**Frank Welsh, PhD**  
GENERAL MEMBER



**Trevor Zahara**  
GENERAL MEMBER

# 2023 Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit

## ***Hosting the third Biennial Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit***

OPC held the third biennial Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit at Wesley Clover Parks in Ottawa (the first was held in 2019 by the Child Nature Alliance of Canada and the second was held in 2021 by OPC but held entirely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The sold-out Summit consisted of three days of talks, workshops, panel discussions, and playful activities all held entirely outdoors. The post-Summit survey we circulated showed that over 80% of participants enjoyed all aspects of the Summit. We received constructive feedback, in particular some guidance on how to ensure that future Summits are inclusive and attentive to the needs of equity-denied groups.



*A group of participants walking at the Biennial Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit at Wesley Clover Parks in Ottawa, Canada.*



# Outdoor Play Canada 2023 Awards



## **BEVERLIE DIETZE**

### 2023 HONOUR AWARD WINNER

Dr. Beverlie Dietze is a lifelong advocate of outdoor play in early childhood education. Her career spans teaching, textbook authorship, and pioneering online resources. She recently launched the Play Outdoors Magazine and leads a national project at Okanagan College to integrate outdoor play into early childhood education programs across Canada. Her mentorship has empowered many professionals in this field.



## **MEGAN ZENI**

### 2023 DR. MARIANA BRUSSONI AWARD WINNER

Megan Zeni, a nature-based teacher and outdoor play advocate, mentors educators in integrating outdoor play and learning in elementary schools. With over 25 years of experience, she champions risky play, trains thousands of educators, and developed a free online tool for Canadian teachers to incorporate outdoor learning and risky play.



## **DOROTHY PENNER**

### 2023 PRACTICE AWARD WINNER

Dorothy Penner is a pioneering figure in outdoor play, leading the Kids Run Wild Youth and School programs with the Edmonton Overlanders Orienteering Club. Orienteering involves walking, running, climbing, and overcoming obstacles in natural settings. These programs teach map navigation for exploring nature, promoting decision-making and route choices. Dorothy also trains instructors, further extending the joy of outdoor play.

# Outdoor Play Canada 2023 Awards



## **LAURA MOLYNEUX AND CLOUDBERRY FOREST AND NATURE SCHOOL**

### 2023 POLICY AWARD WINNER

In 2013, Laura and her future business partner Nora Trask attended a pioneering Forest School Practitioner Course in New Brunswick, sparking the creation of Cloudberry Forest School in 2014. Initially a summer program, it became Newfoundland's first year-round outdoor preschool in 2014. They eventually expanded programs and advocated for changes in childcare regulations. Cloudberry has led efforts to license outdoor play programs nationally, inspiring other regions.



## **MARIANA BRUSSONI**

### 2023 RESEARCH AWARD WINNER

Dr. Mariana Brussoni is a leading researcher and advocate for outdoor and risky play in childhood development. Her work spans various aspects such as attitudes towards risk, play space design, and policy support. She has been published widely, influencing BC legislation, and receiving numerous awards for her contributions to child development. Dr. Brussoni is dedicated to advancing children's play opportunities through evidence-based practices, knowledge translation, and community partnerships.



## **XANDRIA REECE**

### 2023 YOUTH AWARD WINNER

As a founding member of the Ottawa Outdoor Gear Library, Xandria has been instrumental in reducing barriers to outdoor access through direct service, advocacy, and raising awareness. Xandria also contributed to Nature Canada's BIPOC "Work to Grow" cohort, focusing on diversity in the outdoor sector. Additionally, as a coordinator at Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre, she has facilitated various outdoor activities and programs, earning her the Outdoor Play Canada Youth Award.

# Launch of the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play

## OVERVIEW OF THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR OUTDOOR PLAY

At the start of 2023, we launched the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play (CCOP). This is a partnership between:



Canadian  
Centre for  
Outdoor Play



**LAUNCHING THIS 5-YEAR, \$2.1M\*  
PROJECT INVOLVED:**

### Building our team:

- Creating a leadership team
- Hiring a Post-doctoral Fellow
- Hiring the inaugural CCOP Fellow
- Creating a national community of practice on outdoor ECE
- Establishing a 12-person National Panel on licensing outdoor ECE in Canada

**Establishing an outdoor gear library**  
providing outdoor gear to 75% of children in the soon-to-be-launched Forest Explorers nature-based licensed child care program

**Developing the 'Educators Teaching Educators' Framework**  
a nationally agreed-upon Outdoor ECE Continuous Professional Learning Framework (to be launched soon!)

**Building out an outdoor-ECE certificate program**  
to be launched by Algonquin College in the Fall of 2024.

**Designing our 4-yr research study**  
exploring the benefits of play and learning outdoors in nature for early years children, their caregivers, and families.

\*Funding provided in memory of John and Susanne Graham and the Ottawa Community Foundation



# Over the Past Year...

OPC **served (and continues to serve)** as a community partner on the Canadian Disability Participation Project 2.0 (CDPP 2.0) led by Dr. Amy Latimer-Cheung out of Queen's University. This 7-year grant funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council supports several working groups dedicated to promoting accessibility in physical activity behaviours, including play in the early years (OPC is leading that working group).

OPC **continues to serve** as a knowledge translation and network collaborator on an outdoor learning project with Dr. Tanya Halsall, a Research Scientist at the Royal Ottawa.

OPC **contributes** as a partner of the Outdoor Learning Store, a charitable social enterprise that offers outdoor learning equipment, resources, tools and training.



*OPC President, Mark Tremblay and OPC Executive Director, Louise de Lannoy, at the 2023 Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit.*

# Development of the 10-Year Anniversary of the Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play

**“ Access to active play in nature and outdoors—with its risks—is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children’s opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings—at home, at school, in child care, the community and nature. ”**

*2015 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play*

With funding support from the Lawson Foundation, we initiated the development of a 10-Yr Anniversary update to the 2015 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play, which when released led to a galvanization of the outdoor play sector in Canada. We established an 11-person leadership group consisting of outdoor play leaders from every inhabited continent. We put out an open call for Steering Committee members and now have over 100 members supporting this work. Through this project we aim to:

- 1** Assess the current state of evidence on outdoor active play by conducting academic and grey literature reviews, and a review of reviews
- 2** Update the 2015 Position Statement to describe its impact, make it global in reach and relevance and identify learnings from the past 10 years.
- 3** Share our work broadly by creating digital summaries, slide decks for broad use, infographics, interviews, and curated social media content.

#### **Where the ultimate goal is to...**

- 4** Expand, rejuvenate, amplify, power, guide and direct the movement to get global citizens outside – to play, learn, teach, grow, and develop as healthy, caring and environmentally attentive citizens who act as responsible stewards of each other, the land, water, air, plants, and animals.

For more information, and learn how you can get involved, contact us!  
[info@outdoorplaycanada.ca](mailto:info@outdoorplaycanada.ca)

# Mentorship



**Katy Cameron** completed her MSc thesis through Carleton University, in partnership with OPC, on environmental considerations of promoting outdoor play and presented her findings at the 2023 Breath of Fresh Air Summit. The results of that project are undergoing a final review process before they are published on the OPC website for public use and dissemination.



**Yousif Al Baldawi** completed his BSc thesis at Carleton University, in partnership with OPC, on injury risk statistics in outdoor vs conventional ECE programs. He presented his findings at the 2023 Breath of Fresh Air Summit, and is now working to publish his findings as part of a cohort of publications being submitted by those affiliated with the International Play Association (IPA).



**Mallory Donaldson** served as the first CCOP fellow, spearheading the development of the 'Educators Teaching Educators' nationally agreed-upon Outdoor ECE Continuous Professional Learning Framework and the launch of the Outdoor ECE National Community of Practice. Mallory completed her fellowship in April 2024.



# Bachelor of Early Learning and Community Development (BELCD) Students



**Alexandra Apps**



**Bayan Kaid**



**Hope Myles**

As part of the CCOP, OPC mentored **Alexandra Apps, Bayan Kaid, and Hope Myles** in their fourth-year student thesis projects as part of the Bachelor's of Early Learning and Community Development at Algonquin College. Their final report 'Flourishing Futures: Fusing Research with Nature-Based Early Learning at OFNS' will serve to inform how research and outdoor education for the early years may be best integrated at the new Forest Explorers building, within which the CCOP will be based.

# Publications & Presentations

## Publications:

Prince SA, Lang JJ, de Groh M, Alacoque M, Badland H, Barnett A, Brandon N, Butler GP, Casu G, Cerin E, Colley RC, de Lannoy L, Demchenko I, Ellingwood H, Evenson K, Faulkner G, Fridman L, Friedenreich C, Fuller DL, Fuselli P, Giangregorio LM, Gupta N, Hino A, Hume C, Isernhagen B, Jalaludin B, Lakerveld J, Larouche R, Lemon S, Baugh Littlejohns L, Loucaides CA, Maddock J, McCormack G, Mehta A, Milton K, Mota J, Ngo VD, Owen N, Oyeyemi A, Palmeira A, Rainham D, Rhodes R, Ridgers N, Roosendaal I, Rosenberg D, Schipperijn J, Slater S, Storey K, Tremblay MS, Tully M, Vanderloo L, Veitch J, Vietinghoff C, Whiting S, Yang L, Geneau R. Prioritizing a research agenda on built environments and physical activity: a twin panel Delphi consensus process with researchers and knowledge users. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act* 20, 144 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-023-01533-y>.

de Lannoy L, Barbeau-Julien K, Seguin N, Tremblay MS. Scoping review of adult-oriented outdoor play publications in Canada. *Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention* 43(3);:139-150 (2023).  
<https://doi.org/10.24095/hpcdp.43.3.04>

de Lannoy L, Barbeau-Julien K, Seguin N, Tremblay MS. Scoping review of children's and youth's outdoor play publications in Canada. *Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention* 43(1), 1-13 (2023).  
<https://doi.org/10.24095/hpcdp.43.1.01>

de Lannoy L, Risky Outdoor Play – In S. Priest, S. Ritchie & H. Ghadery (Eds). *Outdoor Learning in Canada. Open Resource Textbook.* (2023) Retrieved from <http://olic.c>

Kuzik N, Cameron C, Carson V, Chaput JP, Colley R, Doiron J, Faulkner G, Janssen I, Saunders T, Spence JC, Tucker P, Vanderloo LM, Tremblay MS. The 2022 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth: Focus on the COVID-19 pandemic impact and equity-deserving groups. *Frontiers in Public Health* 11:1172168, 2023.

Larouche R, Kleinfeld M, Charles Rodriguez U, Hatten C, Hecker V, Scott DR, Brown LM, Onyeso OK, Sadia F, Shimamura H. (2023). Determinants of outdoor time in children and youth: a systematic review of longitudinal and intervention studies. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20, 1328.

Charles Rodriguez U, Venegas de la Torre MDLP, Hecker V, Laing RA, Larouche R. (2023). The relationship between nature and immigrants' integration, wellbeing and physical activity: a scoping review. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 25(1), 190-218.

Cheng, T., Brussoni, M., Han, C., Munday, F., & Zeni, M. (2023). Perceived challenges of early childhood educators in promoting unstructured outdoor play: An ecological systems perspective. *Early Years*, 43(4-5), 904-920. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09575146.2022.2034140>

Bauer, M. E. E., Giles, A., & Brussoni, M. Military mothering, responsibility, and children's outdoor risky play: "I do not want my children to be afraid to try things." (2023). *Journal of Leisure Research*, 54, 337-353. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00222216.2022.2119115>

# Publications & Presentations

Riley, K., Froehlich Chow, A., Humbert, M. L., Houser, N., Brussoni, M., Erlandson, M. (2023). Etuaptmumk (Two-eyed Seeing) in *Nature's Way—Our Way*: Braiding Physical Literacy and Risky Play through Indigenous Games, Activities, Cultural Connections, and Traditional Teachings. *AlterNative*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/11771801231167881>

Gemmell, E., Ramsden, R., Brussoni, M., & Brauer, M. (2023). Influence of neighborhood built environments on the outdoor free play of young children: A systematic, mixed studies review and thematic synthesis. *Journal of Urban Health*, 100, 118-150. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11524-022-00696-6>

Riley, K., Froehlich Chow, A., Wahpepah, K., Houser, N., Brussoni, M., Stevenson, E., Erlandson, M., & Humbert, M. L. (2023). A *Nature's Way—Our Way* Pilot Project Case Assemblage: (Re)Storying Child/Physical Literacy/Land Relationships for Indigenous Preschool-Aged Children's Wholistic Wellness. *Children*, 10(3), 497. <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-9067/10/3/497>

Riley, K., Froehlich Chow, A., Wahpepah, K., Houser, N., Brussoni, M., Stevenson, E., Erlandson, M., & Humbert, M. L. (2023). A *Nature's Way—Our Way* Pilot Project Case Assemblage: (Re)Storying Child/Physical Literacy/Land Relationships for Indigenous Preschool-Aged Children's Wholistic Wellness. *Children*, 10(3), 497. <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-9067/10/3/497>

Larouche, R., Belanger, M., Brussoni, M., Faulkner, G., Gunnell, K., Tremblay, M. S. (2023). Canadian children's independent mobility during the COVID-19 pandemic: a national survey. *Health and Place*, 81, 103019. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1353829223000564>

Duflos, M., Hussaina, H., & Brussoni, M. (2023). "When I'm playing with him, everything else in my life sort of falls away": Exploring grandparents' and grandchildren's learning through outdoor play. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, Advance online publication. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14729679.2023.2230503>

Sando, O. J., Sandseter, E. B. H., & Brussoni, M. (2023). The role of play and loose parts in children's deep level learning in early childhood education. *Education Sciences*, 13(7), 701. <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/13/7/701>

McCallum, K. S., Youngblood, J., Hayden, K. A., Brussoni, M., Emery, C., & Bridel, W. (2023). Children's knowledge about play-related risk, risk-taking, and injury: A meta-study. *Leisure/Loisir*, Advance online publication. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14927713.2023.2242859>

Boyes, R., Pickett, W., Janssen, I., Swanlund, D., Schuurman, N., Mâsse, L., Han, C., & Brussoni, M. (2023). Physical environment features that predict outdoor active play can be measured using Google Street View images. *International Journal of Health Geographics*, 22, 26. <https://ij-healthgeographics.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12942-023-00346-3>



# Publications & Presentations

Zeni, M., Schnellert, L., & Brussoni, M. (2023). "We do it anyway": Professional identities of teachers who enact risky play as a framework for education outdoors. *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*, 26, 341-358. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42322-023-00140-6>

Loebach, J., Ramsden, R., Cox, A., & Brussoni, M. (2023). Running the risk: The social, behavioral and environmental associations with positive risk in children's play activities in outdoor playspaces. *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*. Advance online publication. [https://trebuchet.public.springernature.app/get\\_content/7843ab73-8eb9-436e-8eb2-8c6503d014ea](https://trebuchet.public.springernature.app/get_content/7843ab73-8eb9-436e-8eb2-8c6503d014ea)

## **Presentations, Workshops & Webinars:**

Let's Talk Outdoors SaskOutdoors Podcast. (February 2023) Louise de Lannoy & Outdoor Play. de Lannoy L, Online.

Outdoor Learning Conference. (May 2023) Announcing the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play. de Lannoy L, Banff, Canada.

Outdoor Play Canada Webinar. (May 2023) Risky Outdoor Play. Olsen A, Tangen S, Ramsden R, Loebach J, Cox A, de Lannoy L, online.

International Play Association. (June 2023) Scoping review of outdoor play publications in Canada – from the 2015 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play to now. de Lannoy L, Glasgow, Scotland.

Active for Life. (December 2023) Highlights on Outdoor Play in Canada. de Lannoy L, Toronto, Canada.

Larouche R, Bélanger M, Brussoni M, Faulkner G, Gunnell K, Tremblay MS. (2023). *Seasonal variation and changes in children's outdoor time during the COVID-19 pandemic: a national longitudinal study*. 2023 Breath of Fresh Air Summit. Ottawa, ON.

Charles Rodriguez U, Larouche R. (2023). *Being "outdoors" in a new country. associations between immigrant characteristics, outdoor activities, and settlement satisfaction in Canada*. 2023 North American Refugee Health Conference. Calgary, AB.

# Communications

## OPC Engagement in 2023



**771 Followers**

**[Facebook.com/OutdoorPlayCanada/](https://www.facebook.com/OutdoorPlayCanada/)**

190 likes, 102 posts,  
285 likes, 29 comments,  
159 shares

**1233 Followers**

**[@Outdoorplayca](https://www.instagram.com/Outdoorplayca)**

97 posts, 57 stories,  
reach of 270,753  
accounts, 1703 likes,  
60 comments,  
206 shares, 132 saves



**1941 Followers**

**[@Outdoorplayca](https://twitter.com/Outdoorplayca)**

100,000 impressions in  
2023

**128 Followers**

**[@Outdoorplayca](https://www.tumblr.com/Outdoorplayca)**

10 posts and 15 likes



### Website Engagement

52 blog posts,  
updated/created 95 resource items



34,000 visitors:

- 26,000 from Canada,
- 2,300 from the United States,
- 705 from the United Kingdom,
- 577 from Australia,
- 571 from France,
- 455 from China,
- 217 from India,
- 197 from Germany,
- 177 from the Philippines, and
- 160 from Ireland.

### Community Engagement

**1** risky play webinar

**1** risky play PD workshop

**6** OPC bi-monthly newsletter – 47 new features, 14 guest blog posts, 14 resources

# Financial Review

## Revenue:

Program  
Income  
\$338,917



## Operating Expenses:

Salaries and  
Wages  
\$137,719



Direct Project  
Costs  
\$77,686



**Total:**  
\$277,528

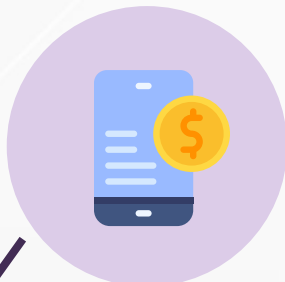


Administration  
and Overhead  
\$14,581

Measurement  
and Evaluation  
\$25,867



Professional  
Fees \$19,441



Travel \$2,234



**Net Revenue: \$61,389**



# CONTACT US

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-  415 Corkstown Rd
-  [info@outdoorplaycanada.ca](mailto:info@outdoorplaycanada.ca)
-  [outdoorplaycanada.ca](http://outdoorplaycanada.ca)
-  [facebook.com/OutdoorPlayCanada/](https://facebook.com/OutdoorPlayCanada/)
-  [@Outdoorplayca](https://www.instagram.com/Outdoorplayca)
-  [@Outdoorplayca](https://www.twitter.com/Outdoorplayca)