

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS OF OUTDOOR PLAY

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS & PROFESSIONALS



### **MAKE VARIOUS TYPES OF OUTDOOR PLAY OPPORTUNITIES AND SETTINGS AVAILABLE, ACCESSIBLE, AND INCLUSIVE**

- Ensure accessible use of natural play spaces in all seasons
- Incorporate fixed and natural play spaces in both rural and urban areas, as well as lower SES areas in municipal planning
- Increase culturally-sensitive, accessible, and inclusive nature-based play opportunities for equity-seeking children and youth
- Create more free community outdoor play programming

### **EASE SAFETY CONCERNS AND OTHER BARRIERS TO OUTDOOR PLAY**

- Implement strategies to address neighbourhood safety concerns (e.g., traffic, crime). For example:
- create volunteer-supervised outdoor play programming
- restrict traffic near play areas at certain times of the day
- Increase awareness of the importance of having safe outdoor nature spaces for children and families through community outreach
- Develop appropriate risk-assessment and evaluation tools to moderate liability with the developmental benefits of outdoor play

### **INCREASE CHILDHOOD OUTDOOR EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

- Provide educators with outdoor play tools and resources
- Offer professional development training on environmentalism
- Secure provincial and municipal aid in providing resources and programming
- Create safe schoolyards that include natural elements
- Encourage outdoor play and nature-based learning in schools
- Ensure adult role models (e.g., parents, educators, program leads) are provided with nature-based learning opportunities

### **FOSTER HUMAN-NATURE CONNECTION AT AN EARLY AGE THROUGH OUTDOOR PLAY**

- Develop comprehensive outdoor play programming opportunities for all ages, including early years
- Launch environmental/nature-based play educational campaigns in schools and municipalities
- Increase environmental awareness signage in nature play spaces

### **EMBRACE INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS THE LAND IN OUTDOOR PLAY POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND STRATEGIES**

- Promote acceptance of Indigenous Land-based teachings and collaborate in incorporating this knowledge into Western standard outdoor play and educational practices
- Increase partnership with Indigenous leaders and organizations in all areas relating to outdoor play
- Support Indigenous children and youth who want to take lead in outdoor play and educational leadership opportunities
- Incorporate Indigenous traditional values in concepts and definitions of outdoor play and associated programming

For more information, see the full guide which includes an in-depth review of the best available evidence on this topic and a comprehensive suite of resources, [here](#).