

OUTDOOR PLAY CANADA ANNUAL REPORT



2024

Outdoor Play Canada has had an exceptionally exciting and successful year in 2024!

Most notably, Outdoor Play Canada now has a permanent home within the newly-opened Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play! This Annual Report will provide a brief overview of the highlights from the year.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT 2

OPC BOARD OF DIRECTORS 3

OPENING OF THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR OUTDOOR PLAY 5

UPDATES FROM THE CCOP 6

LAUNCH OF THE SPROUT AND SPROUT-ABLE PROJECTS 7

OVER THE PAST YEAR 9

THE 10-YR ANNIVERSARY OF THE POSITION STATEMENT ON ACTIVE OUTDOOR PLAY 10

MENTORSHIP 12

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS 14

COMMUNICATIONS 17

FINANCIAL REVIEW 18

CONTACT US! 19



Message from the President

Outdoor Play Canada (OPC) has had an exceptionally exciting and successful year in 2024! In June 2024, after much anticipation, the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play (CCOP) opened its doors! The CCOP is a collaboration between OPC, the Healthy Active Living and Obesity (HALO) Research Group at the CHEO Research Institute, Algonquin College, and Andrew Fleck Children's Services through which we aim inspire commitment to advancing outdoor play and learning for the overall health and well-being of children in Canada. At its foundation is the Forest Explorers outdoor and nature-based early childhood education program, located on 500 acres of National Capital Commission land in the west end of Ottawa, Ontario.

At the start of 2024 we received funding through the Public Health Agency of Canada to expand the initiatives of the CCOP to explore how to support children living with disability in outdoor play and learning in natural spaces. This project aims to build on the work of the CCOP in leading demonstration projects, informing policy and practice, providing professional development opportunities, conducting applied research, and leading nationwide knowledge translation and mobilization efforts to advance outdoor play and learning for the health and well-being of children of all abilities in Canada.

Much progress has also been made on developing the 10-yr update to the 2015 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play ('AOP10'), with support from The Lawson Foundation.

(continued above)

For that project, we established an international leadership group with representatives from every inhabited continent and a 130+ person Steering Committee, again with representation from every inhabited continent. With this passionate and engaged group, we launched 10 comprehensive reviews and 6 continental narrative reviews. In December 2024, the leadership group met in Seoul, South Korea (a day after martial law was called and called-off!) to review the main findings from each of these 16 reviews and use that information to create a first draft of the updated statement. That draft has since been circulated to the AOP10 Steering Committee for assessment and will next be circulated broadly as part of our international consensus-building process for this project. The final Position Statement will be launched at the 2025 Breath of Fresh Air (BoFA) Outdoor Play Summit, once again at Wesley Clover Parks in Ottawa, Ontario. We invite you to join us!

But there's so much more to share! Please enjoy digging into OPC's 2024 Annual Report. We hope you have a healthy, happy, and outdoor-filled 2025!

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



Outdoor Play Canada

Board of Directors

In March 2024, we had the first changing of the guard of OPC Board members - Trevor Zahara and Frank Welsh graciously retired (we miss you!), and through a near-impossible vote amongst some extremely qualified and capable applicants, we welcomed two new board members: Megan Zeni and Angel Suarez Esquivel!

2024 Outdoor Play Canada Board



Mark Tremblay, PhD

PRESIDENT
Ontario



Heather Cowie

VICE PRESIDENT
Alberta



Matt Leung

TREASURER
Alberta



Eun-Young Lee, PhD

SECRETARY
Ontario



**Kelly Arbour-
Nicitopoulos, PhD**

GENERAL MEMBER
Ontario



**Mariana Brussoni,
PhD**

GENERAL MEMBER
British Columbia



Jane Cawley

GENERAL MEMBER
Nova Scotia



Kim Hiscott

GENERAL MEMBER
Ontario



**Richard Larouche,
PhD**

GENERAL MEMBER
Alberta



Raktim Mitra, PhD

GENERAL MEMBER
Ontario



**Angel Suarez Esquivel,
RECE**

GENERAL MEMBER
Ontario



**Megan Zeni, PhD
Candidate**

GENERAL MEMBER
British Columbia

Outdoor Play Canada Staff

In 2024, we grew a lot! Check out our incredible team here or [click here](#) to learn more about us!



Louise de Lannoy, PhD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Alessia Capone
PHD STUDENT



Ryan Fahey
COMMUNICATIONS
SPECIALIST



Maeghan James, PhD
POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW,
HALO RESEARCH GROUP
& CCOP



Bayan Kaid, RECE
RECE, 2024-2025
CCOP FELLOW



Amy Jo Smith, RECE
RESOURCE
CONSULTANT



Paula ter Huurne, RECE
PROJECT
COORDINATOR

Opening of the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play (CCOP)

IN JUNE 2024, THE CCOP OPENED ITS DOORS!



The Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play (CCOP) is a partnership between:

CHEO RESEARCH INSTITUTE
INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE
Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group
Recherche sur les saines habitudes de vie et l'obésité



Services à l'enfance
Andrew Fleck
Children's Services
since - depuis
1911

ALGONQUIN
COLLEGE

**Outdoor
Play
Canada**

The CCOP aims to lead demonstration projects, inform policy and practice, provide professional development opportunities, conduct applied research, and lead nationwide knowledge translation and mobilization efforts to advance outdoor play and learning for the health and well-being of children of all abilities in Canada. At its foundation is the Forest Explorers outdoor and nature-based early childhood education program, located on 500 acres of National Capital Commission land in the west end of Ottawa, Ontario.

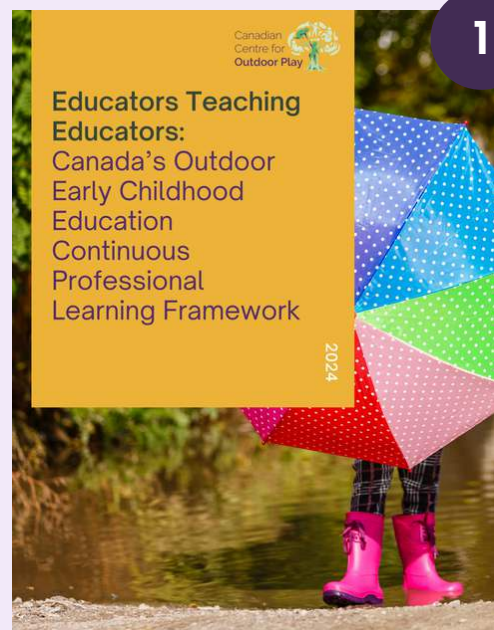
In June 2024, after much anticipation, the CCOP opened its doors! The opening was celebrated by the CCOP team, alongside colleagues, families, friends, plenty of children, government representatives, and even a few folks who were simply curious (it was an open event, after all!). We used a large burlap ribbon for the official ribbon cutting, where the resulting pieces were then re-used in the childcare program. One small piece of that ribbon has been kept for our time capsule.

Continue to the next page to read all that this collaboration has been up to!

Updates from the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play (CCOP)

OVER THE PAST YEAR, THIS COLLABORATION HAS ...

Released the 'Educators Teaching Educators: Canada's Outdoor Early Childhood Education Continuous Professional Learning Framework' ('Outdoor ECE Framework'). The purpose of this evidence-informed Framework was to achieve national consensus on key pedagogical practices in outdoor ECE and serve as a pedagogical tool to promote consistency and uphold quality in training and supporting outdoor ECE practitioners across Canada in their work. A year and a half was spent consulting with 300 outdoor ECE leaders and community members over three consultation phases and two rounds of national consensus-building surveys to develop the Framework. It is available on our website in English and French.



1

2

STARTING FALL 2024

PLAY, LEARN AND TEACH OUTDOORS IN THE EARLY YEARS

Algonquin College's PLaTO certificate immerses Early Learning Professionals in a program based on the national framework by the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play.

- Enjoy a more personalized learning environment with small classes.
- Benefit from supportive and experienced faculty who are active in their industry.
- Gain the latest industry knowledge and skills to be career-ready upon graduation.
- Flexible delivery, accessible for working professionals.

For more information, please scan the QR code or visit: algonquincollege.com/PLaTO

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play CHEO Outdoor Play

Launched the PLaTO certificate course. To ensure the practical application of the Outdoor ECE Framework, Algonquin College used this framework as a guide to develop the Play, Learn, and Teach Outdoors in the Early Years (PLaTO) certificate program to help grow the community of practitioners across the country who support outdoor play and learning for children. The first of 3 courses of that certificate was launched in September 2024!

Updates from the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play (CCOP)

OVER THE PAST YEAR, THIS COLLABORATION HAS... (CONTINUED)

3



Convened the National Panel on Licensing Outdoor ECE. This Panel serves to advance efforts towards changing ECE licensing regulations across provinces in Canada. In November 2024, we convened this group in St John's Newfoundland over two days to review existing efforts to advance licensing of outdoor ECE and discuss priorities and actions to move this effort forward. Panelists, guest attendees, and students attending this meeting took copious notes, from which we are now developing a forthcoming report .

4

Launched the SPROUT Project. In July 2024, hot on the heels of the opening of the CCOP, the HALO research group launched the three-year SPROUT (Sending Preschoolers OUTside) study, exploring the health and wellbeing of children, educators, and families participating in the Forest Explorers program in comparison to more conventional programs. To date, we have a total of 73 children and their families and 27 educators enrolled in the study!



Updates from the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play (CCOP) – SPROUT and SPROUT-Able Projects

OVER THE PAST YEAR, THIS COLLABORATION HAS... (CONTINUED)



Launched the SPROUT-Able Project: In January 2024, the CCOP in partnership with the Canadian Disability Participation Project secured 4-years of funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada to address challenges in the built and social environment for outdoor play and learning in natural spaces for young children living with disabilities. This project serves to build off the CCOP project, including the SPROUT Research project, to advance outdoor early childhood education in Canada, and improve quality participation in outdoor play and learning for children with disabilities.

Two main areas of focus of this project are to explore both the supportive and challenging elements of both the physical and social environment of Forest Explorers in supporting outdoor play and learning for children living with disabilities. In November 2024, our team held a World Cafe event with educators, partners, and our family engagement team to discuss these supportive and challenging elements. We had a graphic recorder pool together these lively conversations in the above infographic!

For more information about the CCOP and its projects, [click here](#).

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 quality participation in physical activity, including active play in the early years. OPC is the lead organization of this Active Play in the Early Years working group.



Canadian Disability Participation Project
Le projet canadien sur la participation sociale
des personnes en situation de handicap

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.



The Royal's
Institute of Mental Health Research
affiliated with the University of Ottawa

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



OUTDOOR LEARNING
SCHOOL & STORE
OUTDOORLEARNING.COM

OPC **serves** on Children's Health and Environment (CPCHE)'s advisory committee for their annual Healthy Environments for Learning Day (HELD) event.



OPC **has become a member** of the Early Childhood Work Group at the Screen Time Action Network at Fairplay.



screen time
action network
at fairplay

OPC **joined** the 1% for the Planet community as an environmental partner.



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 are in our second and final year of developing the 10-Yr Anniversary update to the 2015 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play. The 2015 Position Statement, 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 130 members supporting this work. Through this project we have:

1

Led the development of 10 comprehensive reviews and 6 continental narrative reviews on the relationship between active outdoor play and health and wellbeing, education, the environment, movement behaviours, nature and the environment, One health, human rights and policy, community connections and partnerships, education and learning, and social capital.

2

Developed a first draft of the updated Position Statement during a three-day in-person meeting in Seoul, South Korea, with the 10-Yr Anniversary Project leadership group. The group began a consensus-building process to achieve international consensus.



Pictured from Left to Right: Dr. Po-Yu Wang, Dr. Scott Duncan (top), Isabel de Barros, Dr. Maeghan James, , Dr. Mark Tremblay, Dr. Dina Adjei Boadi, Dr. Louise de Lannoy, Dr. Leigh Vanderloo, Dr. Eun-Young Lee (top), Robyn Munro Miller.

3

Began planning the official launch of the updated Position Statement at the Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit on September 25, 2025 in Ottawa, Ontario. Come join us! [Learn more here.](#)



4

Where the ultimate goal is to...

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

Mentorship



Alessia Capone is completing her PhD thesis through the University of Toronto, working under the supervision of Dr. Kelly Arbour-Nicitopoulos in the ADAPT Lab at the University of Toronto. Her thesis is focused on exploring ways to support outdoor play and learning in natural spaces among children living with a disability, as part of the SPROUT-Able project.



Nicholas Hayhow completed his MPH practicum placement at Guelph University, in partnership with OPC, spearheading the development of the systematic review on active outdoor play and environmental stewardship. He also led the development of a scoping review of nature and climate change benchmarks from global physical activity report cards.



Olivia Lopes is completing her MD at the University of Ottawa. She has been supporting the development of the 10-yr anniversary of the Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play from almost the very beginning! She has supported the development of the project Conceptual Framework, the launch of the 10 comprehensive and 6 narrative reviews, and hopes to support this project to completion.



Brianna Nasrallah is completing her MSc research project through Carleton University, in partnership with OPC, supporting the 10-year anniversary update to the Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play. She has supported the completion of the systematic review on active outdoor play and environmental stewardship and is currently supporting the consensus-building process surrounding the development of the updated Position Statement.

Bachelor of Early Learning and Community Development (BELCD) Students

As part of the CCOP, OPC mentored Jade Groompike, Kiera Publow, Eva Quenneville, Hannah Raudssus, and Emma Zimolong in their fourth-year student thesis projects as part of the Bachelor's of Early Learning and Community Development at Algonquin College. Over two placements this group collectively worked on pulling together efforts across Canada to advance licensing of outdoor early childhood education, with Eva and Emma focusing on policy work in this area in Canada, and Kiera, Jade and Hannah focusing on broader initiatives. Their collective work has informed the development of a report on this very topic that is soon to be released!

Jade Groompike



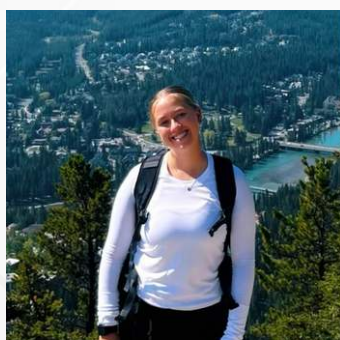
Kiera Publow



Eva Quenneville



Hannah Raudssus



Emma Zimolong



Publications & Presentations

Publications:

Bains, A., Lim, H., & Lee, E.-Y. (2024). Relationships and potential mechanisms between parental sociodemographic characteristics, concerns, and children's physical activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Canadian Studies*, 30(1), 5–23. <https://doi.org/10.22691/kacs300101>

Charles-Rodriguez, U., & Larouche, R. (2024). Being “outdoors” in a new country: associations between immigrant characteristics, outdoor recreation activities, and settlement satisfaction in Canada. *Leisure Studies*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2024.2328087>

Lee, E.-Y., Khan, A., Vanderloo, L. M., Ferguson, L. J., O'Reilly, N., Rhodes, R. E., Spence, J. C., Tremblay, M. S., & Faulkner, G. (2025). Are experiences of discrimination associated with views of physical activity and climate policy support in Canada? *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 22(2), 252–261. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2024-0367>

Lee, E.-Y., Park, S., Kim, Y. B., Lee, M., Lim, H., Ross-White, A., Janssen, I., Spence, J. C., & Tremblay, M. S. (2024). Exploring the interplay between climate change, 24-hour movement behavior, and health: A systematic review. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 21, 1227–1245. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2023-0637>

Lee, E.-Y., Shih, A.-C., & Tremblay, M. S. (2024). Exploring the world of active play: A comprehensive review of global surveillance and monitoring of active play based on the Global Matrix data. *Journal of Exercise Science & Fitness*, 22(3), 254–265. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesf.2024.03.008>

Publications & Presentations

Presentations, Workshops & Webinars:

Capone, A. M., Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K., de Lannoy, L., Deliscar, S., Taylor, L. G., Tucker, P., Vanderloo, L. M., & James, M. E. (2024). *Active play among young children (0-4 years) with disabilities: A scoping review* [Conference session]. Eastern Canada Sport and Exercise Psychology Symposium, London, Canada.

de Lannoy, L. (2024). *The Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play* [Webinar]. Story Park.

de Lannoy, L. (2024, October). *Inclusive outdoor risky play* [Conference session]. Lanark Early Learning and Child Care Association Conference. Lanark County, Canada.

de Lannoy, L., & Kaid, B. (2024, September). *The Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play model as an approach to increasing equity in outdoor play* [Conference session]. International Play Association, USA Conference, Greenville, USA.

de Lannoy, L. (2024, May). *One year in: Our journey launching the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play* [Conference session]. The Outdoor Learning Conference, Banff, Canada.

de Lannoy, L., & Davidson, M. (2024, February). *Outdoor play and learning* [Workshop]. OCDSB Regional Workshop. Ottawa, Canada.

de Lannoy, L., & Donaldson, M. (2024, June). *Outdoor play and learning* [Workshop]. OCCC Regional Workshop. Ottawa, Canada.

de Lannoy, L., Lalonde, L., Donaldson, M., & Kaid, B. (2024). *Educators teaching educators: Canada's outdoor ECE continuous professional learning framework* [Webinar]. The Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BP0ILtQgBZE>

Doan, N., Lang, J. J., Rainham, D., Manyanga, T., Villeneuve, P., Larouche, R., Prince Ware, S., & Srugo, S. (2024). *Investigating the relationship between green space and physical activity among youth and adults in Canada* [Conference session]. Health Canada Science Forum, Ottawa, Ontario.

International Play Association Podcast. (Host), de Lannoy, L., Brussoni, M., Beaulieu, E., Fuselli, P., & Beno, S. (2024). *International day of play: Safe as necessary, not as safe as possible* [Audio podcast]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kG-22Jv7wK4>

James, M. E., de Lannoy, L., Lee, E.-Y., Cheruvathur, J., Ryu, S., Vanderloo, L. M., & Tremblay, M. S. (2024, October). *Developing an evidence-informed conceptual framework for the 10-year update on the position statement on active outdoor play* [Conference session]. International Society for Physical Activity and Health Congress, Paris, France.

Publications & Presentations

Presentations, Workshops & Webinars:

Lee, E.-Y. (2024). *Exploring the interplay between climate change, 24-hour movement behavior, and health: A systematic review*. In Tremblay MS (Symposium Chair) *Climate Change Concerns: Should we let the kids out?* [Conference session]. The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology Annual Conference, Montreal, Canada.

Lee, E.-Y., Khan, A., Vanderloo, L. M., Ferguson, L. J., O'Reilly, N., Rhodes, R. E., Spence, J. C., Tremblay, M. S., & Faulkner, G. (2024, October). *Does experience of discrimination influence perspectives on the social climate of physical (in)activity in Canada?* [E-Poster presentation]. The 10th International Society of Physical Activity and Health (ISPAH) Conference, Paris, France.

Macleod, O., de Lannoy, L., Barbeau, K., Vanderloo, L., Goldfield, G., Lang, J., & Tremblay, T. (2024, June). *The impact of 24-hour movement behaviors on child and youth mental health* [Conference session]. PCYMH Conference, Ottawa, Canada.

Read, J. (Host), de Lannoy, L., & James, M. (2024, January). (2024-present). The PHE Canada podcast, episode 1: Outdoor play [Audio podcast]. <https://phecanada.ca/professional-learning/journal/phe-canada-podcast-episode-1-outdoor-play>.

Tremblay, M. S. (2024, December). *The importance of outdoor play* [Symposium presentation]. Conference at Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea.

Tremblay, M. S., Faulkner, G., Bélanger, M., Brussoni, M., Gunnell, K., & Larouche, R. (2024, October). *Social-ecological correlates of children's outdoor time: a national longitudinal study* [Conference session]. 10th International Society for Physical Activity and Health Congress, Paris, France.

Tremblay, M. S., Timmons, B. W., Lee, E.-Y., & Kuzik, N. (2024, November). *Climate change concerns: Should we let the kids out?* [Symposium presentation]. The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology Annual Scientific Conference, Montreal, Canada.

Reports:

Lalonde, L., Donaldson, M., Kaid, B., de Lannoy, L & the Outdoor ECE Framework Contributors* (2024). *Educators teaching educators: Canada's outdoor early childhood education continuous professional learning framework*. Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play. <https://www.outdoorplaycanada.ca/outdoor-ece-framework/>

Communications

OPC Engagement in 2024



902 Followers

Facebook.com/OutdoorPlayCanada/

>12,900 views
11,900 people reached
>1000 content interactions
2000 profile visits
173 new followers

257 Followers

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

16 posts
but we're looking forward to engaging more!



125 Followers

[@Outdoorplayca](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Outdoorplayca)

2,000 impressions
52 members reached



1428 Followers

[@Outdoorplayca](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-4W3333333333333333)

Over 40,000 views
Over 900 interactions

15 Subscribers

[@Outdoorplayca](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-4W3333333333333333)

6 videos and
1,160+ views










Website Engagement

37 blog posts,
updated/created 18 resource items



41,000 visitors:

-  30,000 from Canada
-  3,700 from the United States
-  1,000 from Poland
-  1,000 from the United Kingdom
-  597 from France
-  492 from Australia
-  381 from China
-  224 from India
-  218 from Germany
-  181 from Ireland

Our website is a comprehensive and robust repository of information to help practitioners, researchers and policy leads access the latest insights, tools, and resources to support outdoor play in Canada.

Community Engagement

3 workshops, 2 podcasts, 2 webinars

6 OPC bi-monthly newsletters – 54 new features, 8 guest blog posts, 19 resources

Financial Review

Revenue:

Program
Income
\$773,139



Operating Expenses:

Salaries and
Wages
\$506,488



Direct Project
Costs
\$97,025



Total:
\$760,565

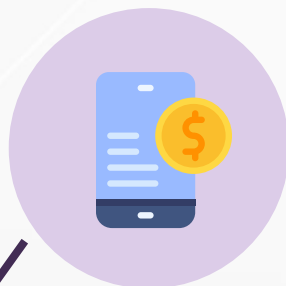
Measurement
and Evaluation
\$25,030



Administration
and Overhead
\$73,498



Professional
Fees \$4,972








Travel \$53,552



Net Revenue: \$12,574

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-  [@outdoorplayca.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/outdoorplayca.bsky.social)