

SPROUT-able Quarterly



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The [SPROUT-able Project](#) is a four-year project led by the [Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play \(CCOP\)](#). It builds off the [SPROUT study](#), a three-year research initiative led by the [Healthy Active Living and Obesity \(HALO\) Research Group](#) - and the [University of Ottawa](#), as part of the CCOP. SPROUT-able is a research-practice-policy project that explores **how children with disabilities engage in outdoor play and learning**. Through this exploration, our team aims to enhance the physical and social environments of outdoor childcare programs, support professional development for early childhood educators, and design evidence-based strategies to promote inclusive outdoor play. These project initiatives are led by [Outdoor Play Canada's](#) Project Coordinator, **Cécile Tang**, and Project Assistant **Hannah Raudssus**, RECE, to integrate a strong practice-based perspective into the research. The research arm of SPROUT-able is spearheaded by **Dr. Maeghan James**, Assistant Professor at the [University of Ottawa](#) and Investigator, [CHEO Research Institute](#), in collaboration with **Dr. Kelly Arbour-Nicitopoulos** and the [ADAPT Lab](#) at the [University of Toronto](#).

Each quarter, we'll bring you project milestones, opportunities to get involved, and highlights from our team!





Project Updates

Thank you, Paula!

In February, the SPROUT-able team wished project manager **Paula ter Huurne** well as she moved on to a new position at Algonquin College. While this ends her role as project manager, Paula will still be around supporting the initiatives of SPROUT-able, the Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play and Outdoor Play Canada.

We thank Paula for the care, commitment, and contributions she brought to the SPROUT-able project over the past two years. Her leadership and expertise will be missed. Paula's efforts have left the new project coordinator, Cécile and project assistant Hannah, with the important responsibility of carrying forward her dedication. We wish Paula all the best in her next chapter and look forward to working alongside her in other ways.



Welcome to our new SPROUT-able Team Members!

Cécile Tang, Project Coordinator
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Cécile Tang is a bilingual project coordinator from France and China, based in Tiohtiá:ke/Montréal. She studied Biology at McGill University and completed an MSc in Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management (Erasmus Mundus MESPOM). Cécile is passionate about youth programming, outdoor education and cross-cultural community engagement, and has spent the past seven years supporting environmental non-profits in strengthening youth engagement strategies and advancing programs focused on community-building and environmental education. She brings a collaborative and equity-informed lens to her work, grounded in a deep belief in the power of connection to place and community. Outside of work, Cécile enjoys exploring new places, spending time outdoors, sharing meals with loved ones, and soaking up the sun whenever possible. She is the proud mother of a toddler who brightens her life every day.





Project Updates

Hannah Raudssus, RECE, Project Assistant

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Hannah Raudssus is a Registered Early Childhood Educator and a graduate of the Bachelor of Early Learning and Community Development (BELCD) Degree at Algonquin College. She has diverse experience both locally and internationally working with children, families, and communities. Hannah enjoys research, policy, and advocacy work in early learning, with particular interests in child rights, international policy and practice, and outdoor learning. She is committed to approaching her work through a lens of understanding, compassion, and social justice. Her personal passion for the outdoors inspires her to advocate for accessible outdoor spaces for children and all individuals. In her free time, Hannah enjoys spending time outdoors, especially running, hiking, canoeing, and camping. Additionally, she is always seeking ways to be actively involved in her community, often volunteering and contributing in diverse ways.



Bayan Kaid, RECE, Sustainability Planning Coordinator

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Bayan Kaid is a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) and a graduate from the Bachelor of Early Learning and Community Development (BELCD) honours degree program at Algonquin College. Bayan has an advanced diploma in Advertising and Marketing Communications Management and a diploma in Early Childhood Education. With a strong interest in bridging policy, research, and practice, Bayan has held several roles with Outdoor Play Canada, including the 2024–2025 Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play Fellow, Research Assistant with the Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group, and Sustainability Planning Coordinator for the SPROUT-able project. Having a deep passion for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB), Bayan is excited to find ways in all her work to make the benefits of outdoor learning accessible for all.





Project Updates



SPROUT Testing in February

SPROUT testing continued in February 2026, completing the fourth time point. The SPROUT assessors worked with the educators at each centre to complete the SPROUT assessments, with 73 children participating. Six children were first-time participants, 32 completed their second round of testing, seven their third, and 28 their fourth. This included a total of 44 children at Forest Explorers and 29 at control centres. All parents were also invited to complete an online questionnaire. A special thank you to the eight SPROUT assessors whose energy and commitment made testing an efficient and positive experience for the children. SPROUT testing will resume in August 2026! Of the children currently enrolled in SPROUT at Forest Explorers, three have a diagnosed disability and are therefore part of the SPROUT-able project. In total, we have had nine children in the SPROUT-able project since it began.



Inclusive Outdoor Play Kits

Kelly Arbour-Nicitopoulos and Maeghan James are currently supervising two occupational therapy students, Rachel and Sarah, from the University of Toronto. Rachel and Sara are co-creating an evidence-informed outdoor play toolkit with the support of the SPROUT-able team. This toolkit will help educators promote active outdoor play and act as a guide for resource and material recommendations grounded in occupational and rehabilitation science.

A key deliverable of this work will be a toolkit guide available on the CCOP website with a list of items to support various types of disabilities. A matrix will also be created to demonstrate how each tool supports inclusion. We look forward to sharing this toolkit upon completion!



Paula's & Amy Jo's Travels to BC

In March, two SPROUT-able team members, Paula and Amy Jo, had the privilege of gathering in Prince George, BC, with 18 participants from the Child Care Resource and Referral network. They shared SPROUT-able's learning journey, including experiences and stories from Forest Explorers. This opportunity deepened the team's understanding of early learning contexts around rural BC. The participants spent time outdoors in the beauty of a fresh spring snow using loose parts to build and create their own 'special spots'. These 'special spots' connect them to natural settings, both in places from their childhood and today. Together, they discussed the benefits of inclusive outdoor play for children with disabilities, shared ideas and inspirations on how to overcome some of the barriers that are present, and discussed creative ways to further inclusion in each of their community contexts. Through workshops like this, SPROUT-able aims to broaden its reach as part of its ongoing efforts to connect with communities nationwide.





Project Updates

Lots More to Come... Stay Tuned...



Interviews with Parents and Educators

Spring GoPro data collection will begin again in April, led by SPROUT-able Resource Consultant Amy Jo. Complementing GoPro data collection, parent and educator interviews will also be underway this summer. Through these parent and educator interviews, the SPROUT-able team hopes to gain valuable insight into the barriers and facilitators to outdoor play in childcare settings (both at Forest Explorers and the control sites). The insights gained from these interviews will help inform the team's next steps.



Knowledge Translation

As we enter the final two years of the project, the SPROUT-able team has been exploring ways to extend our reach and plan for long term continuation of our efforts. Continued knowledge translation efforts are a significant part of SPROUT-able's focus. We look forward to continuing the dissemination of our learning to new communities. Stay tuned for more updates and information on SPROUT-able's knowledge translation efforts.



Reflective Companion Guide

Our team is putting together a Reflective Companion Guide to accompany the [video modules](#) on our website. This companion guide will support educators in thinking practically about advancing inclusive outdoor play in their own contexts. The guide will encourage critical thinking, support reflective practice, and inspire practical change. The guide can also act as a valuable tool for collaborative professional learning among educators and colleagues.



OLSS 4-Part Webinar Series

Stay tuned for more information coming soon about our 4-part webinar series with the Outdoor Learning School & Store (OLSS) in Fall 2026. This webinar series on Inclusive Outdoor Play will highlight the diverse methods, tools, and resources to support the creation of inclusive outdoor spaces in the early years. The webinar series will be an interactive opportunity for learning, reflection, and connection among participants.



Outdoor Play Canada Resource Library

Check out our [resource library](#) full of useful content for your outdoor play efforts and initiatives. Our resource library is helpful for policy, practice, research and knowledge mobilization. Keep an eye out for our new category on accessibility and disability coming soon!

Want to get involved? Reach out! We're always looking to form new partnerships and expand our work. Info@OutdoorPlayCanada.ca





Out and About

Check out this list for our latest presentations, workshops, publications, and knowledge translation tools

> Conference Presentations

- Capone, A.M., James, M. E., de Lannoy, L., ter Huurne, P., Smith, A.J., and Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K. (Oct 2025). **Nature in Motion – Physical activity levels of children with disabilities at an outdoor childcare center.** (Oral Presentation) Canadian Society for Psychomotor Learning and Sport Psychology, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada.
- Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K., Leo, J., de Lannoy, L. (Sep 2025). **CDPP Symposium: Bridging Research-to-Practice on Quality Participation in Active Play for Children and Young Persons with Disabilities Across Different Contexts.** (Symposium). Breath of Fresh Air Summit, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- Capone, A.M., ter Huurne, P., James, M., Smith, A.J., Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K., and de Lannoy, L. (Sep 2025). **Strategic Planning for Inclusive Outdoor Play.** (Oral Presentation) Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- Smith, A.J., ter Huurne, P. (Sep 2025). **Learning Kits for Inclusive Outdoor Play.** (Workshop). Breath of Fresh Air Outdoor Play Summit, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- Capone, A.M., James, M.E., de Lannoy, L., Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K., Tremblay, M. (2025). **Forging Paths: Understanding Outdoor Play for Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood.** (Poster Presentation) International Symposium of Adapted Physical Activity, Kerry, Ireland.
- 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.** (Oral Presentation) International Symposium of Adapted Physical Activity, Kerry, Ireland.
- Arbour-Nicitopoulos KA, Capone A, James ME, Odorico N. (Sep 2023). **CDPP Symposium: Promoting Accessible and Inclusive Outdoor Play in Early Childhood Education.** (Symposium). Breath of Fresh Air Summit, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
- Glossip, E., James, M., Reece, X. (Sep 2023). **Reducing Barriers to Accessing Outdoor Opportunities.** (Presentation). Breath of Fresh Air Summit, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.





Community Presentations and Workshops

- Smith, A.J., ter Huurne, P. (Mar 2026). **Supporting Children with Disabilities in Active Outdoor Learning and Play.** (Workshop). BC North Region Child Care Resource and Referral Workshops, Prince George, British Columbia, Canada.
- ter Huurne, P. (Nov. 2025). **Visible and Invisible Disabilities in Outdoor Early Learning Environments.** (Presentation). BELCD Algonquin College, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- Smith, A.J., ter Huurne, P. (Nov. 2025). **Inclusion Outdoors: Engagement, Connection, and Making Learning Visible.** (Workshop). CHEO School, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- Smith, A.J., ter Huurne, P. (Oct. 2025). **Inclusive Outdoor ECE Packs: For Children with Disabilities in the Early Years.** (Webinar). Outdoor Learning in the Early Years. Outdoor Learning School & Store, Canada.
- James, M., ter Huurne, P. (Oct 2025). **Fostering Inclusive Outdoor Play and Learning Experiences in Early Learning Settings.** (Presentation). Rooted in Hope - Child Care and EarlyON Conference, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada.
- James, M., ter Huurne, P. (Oct 2025). **Supporting Educators' and Children's Access to Outdoor Play.** (Workshop). Rooted in Hope - Child Care and EarlyON Conference, Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada.
- ter Huurne, P., Smith, A.J. (Jul 2025). **One-Year Later: A Reflection of Your Journey.** (Facilitated Discussion). Forest Explorers, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- Smith, A.J., ter Huurne, P., Clement, D. (Jun 2025). **Inclusion Outdoors: Engagement, Connection, and Making Learning Visible.** (Workshop). CHEO School, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- Lalonde, L. Smith, A.J., Sletcher, J. (Apr 2025). **The SPROUT-able Project and Discussion on Inclusion.** (Facilitated Discussion). Canadian Centre for Outdoor Play Community of Practice, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- ter Huurne, P., Smith, A.J., Sletcher, L. (Mar 2025). **Connecting with the Land: Creating Calming Spaces for Children and Educators.** (Workshop). Forest Explorers, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- Smith, A.J., Sletcher, L. (Mar 2025). **Responding with Intention: Building Positive Connections.** (Workshop). Forest Explorers, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
- James, M., de Lannoy, L., Præsthholm, S., Bøiling, M., Stahlhut, M. (Nov 2024). **Supporting Outdoor Play and Learning for Children with Disabilities: Insights from Canada and Denmark.** (Webinar). Outdoor Play Canada and Children & Nature Denmark, Canada.
- ter Huurne, P., de Lannoy, L., James, M., Lalonde, L., Sletcher, L., Smith, A.J. (Jun 2024). **Preparation and Connection Days.** (Workshops and Facilitated Discussions). Forest Explorers, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.





Out and About

> Papers and Publications

- James, M.E., de Lannoy, L., Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K.P., Capone, A., Belton, L., Hiscott, K., Lalonde, L., Potter, T., Tremblay, M. (In Prep). **Sending PReschoolers OUTside (SPROUT) Prospective Cohort Study: Study Protocol**
- Capone, A.M., James, M.E., ter Huurne, P., de Lannoy, L., Tremblay, M., Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K. (In Prep). **Forging Paths: Understanding Outdoor Play for Children with Disabilities in the Early Years.**

> Knowledge Translation Tools

- [Communicating with Families: Health Concerns Video Module and Tip Sheet](#)
- [Communicating with Families: Physical Safety Video Module and Tip Sheet](#)
- [Sensory Needs: Dressing for Outdoor Play Video Module and Tip Sheet](#)
- [Risky Play: Video Module and Tip Sheet](#)
- [Supporting Inclusion Outside with Puppets Tip Sheet](#)
- [World Cafe Graphic Recording](#)



Access these tools and additional resources on [our website](#)



This work would not be possible without our partners!

Thank you to the SPROUT-able
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Partners, Advisory Panel members,
and our Funders!



Thank you!

