



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ENVIRONMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING TOOLKIT for Childcare Settings



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PREAMBLE: How to Use the Toolkit

The Physical Activity Self-Assessment and Planning Toolkit is intended for those who work in childcare settings (daycare, home daycare, early years centre, before and after school program, etc.).

Assessing the physical activity environment of your childcare setting is important to ensure that you are adequately supporting the growth and development of the children in your care. This toolkit will help you assess the physical activity environment of your childcare setting and prepare an action plan for addressing areas of improvement.

Ideally, your childcare setting should be assessed at least once a year. This provides you an opportunity to keep track of changes and accomplishments, and to set new goals on a regular basis.

Begin with SECTION 1 – Assessment Survey and move onto each section as instructed. If you are having any difficulties or have questions, refer to SECTION 3 and the APPENDIX.

**If you require more assistance, call Health Line at
613-933-1375 or at 1 800 267-7120.**

Ask to speak to the physical activity Health Educator/Promoter in your area.



SECTION 1: Assessment Survey

This section is intended to help you assess the physical activity environment of your childcare facility.































To complete the self-assessment survey:

- ⇒ Read each statement or question carefully and check the response that best fits your childcare facility.
- ⇒ Honestly assess your childcare facility's environment and practices to help better identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- ⇒ Consider what your childcare facility provides and practises a majority of the time.
- ⇒ Involve any key staff members that may help in answering questions.

Once you have completed filling out the self-assessment survey, use the responses to help create a plan for improvement using the Action Planning Guide in SECTION 2 and the Best Practice Recommendations in the APPENDIX. You can also visit the Daycare section (Schools - Daycares » Daycares » Physical Activity) of our website to get access to online resources.


























NOTE: Definitions of key terms can be found in the GLOSSARY IN SECTION 3 of this document.

1. ACTIVE PLAY AND SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR

a. Active play time* is provided to each child: * For children attending half-day, divide time in half for this item.	 60 minutes or less each day	 61-90 minutes each day	 91-120 minutes each day	 121-180 minutes each day	 More than 180 minutes each day
b. Structured (adult-led) activity is provided to each child:	 never	 1 time per week	 2-4 times per week	 1 time per day	 2 or more times per day
c. Outdoor active play is provided to each child (weather permitting):	 30 minutes or less each day	 31-60 minutes each day	 61-90 minutes each day	 91-120 minutes each day	 More than 120 minutes each day
d. Active play time is withheld for a child who misbehaves:	 Always	 Often	 Sometimes	 Never	 Never and we provide more active play time for good behaviour
e. Each child engages in sedentary activities for more than 30 minutes at a time (excluding naps and meals/snacks):	 2 or more times per day	 1 time per day	 3-4 times per week	 1-2 times per week	 Less than 1 time per week or never
f. Screen time (including television, computer and video games) is provided:	 3 or more hours per day	 2-3 hours per day	 1-2 hours per day	 1 hour or less per day	 We do not provide any screen time

Notes:

2. PLAY ENVIRONMENT

a. Fixed play equipment (tunnels, balancing equipment, climbing equipment, overhead ladders, etc.) is:	 Unavailable at our site	 Only one type of equipment is available	 Different equipment that suits most children is available	 Fixed play equipment within walking distance is available and utilized	 Wide variety of equipment available and accommodates needs of all children
b. Portable play equipment (wheeled toys, balls, hoops, ribbons, etc.) consists of:	 Little variety and children must take turns	 Some variety but children must take turns	 Good variety but children must take turns	 Lots of variety but children must take turns	 Lots of variety for children to use at the same time
c. Outdoor portable play equipment (tricycles, slides, balls, etc.) is:	 Not available	 Available during special events only	 Located out of sight and reach, staff must access	 Available at all times upon request	 Easily accessible at all times to each child
d. Outdoor play space is:	 Not available	 Available with very limited open running space, no track/path/area for wheeled toys	 Available with plenty of running space, no track/path/area for wheeled toys	 Available with a track/path/area for wheeled toys, limited open running space	 Available with plenty of open running spaces and a track/path/area for wheeled toys
e. Indoor play space is:	 Available for quiet play only	 Available for very limited movement (jumping and rolling)	 Available for some active play (jumping, rolling and skipping)	 Available for all activities, including running	 We provide a separate indoor play area for all types of activities

Notes:

3. SUPPORTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

a. During active play time staff:



Supervise play only (mostly sit or stand)



Sometimes encourage children to be active



Sometimes encourage children to be active and join children in active play



Often encourage children to be active and join children in active play

b. Age appropriate physical activity supports visibly displayed in common areas include:



No posters, pictures or books about physical activity displayed



A few posters, pictures or books about physical activity displayed in some areas



Posters, pictures or books about physical activity are displayed in most areas



Posters, pictures or books about physical activity are displayed in all areas.

Notes:

4. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY EDUCATION

a. Staff are provided opportunities to participate in training related to physical activity (webinars, online courses, workshops, conferences, guest speakers, etc.):



Rarely or never



Less than one time per year



1 time per year



2 times or more per year

b. Resources and information related to physical activity are available to staff (books, pamphlets, information guides, access to websites, etc.):



Rarely or never



Resources and information are sometimes made available and staff is encouraged to access it on their own time



Resources and information are available on-site and staff is encouraged to access it on their own time



Resources and information are available on-site and staff is encouraged to access it during work time

c. Children are provided with physical activity education (fundamental skill development, development of agility, balance, coordination and speed) through a standardized curriculum:



Rarely or never



1 time per month



2-3 times per month



1 time per week

Notes:

5. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

a. A written policy on physical activity that covers most of the topics discussed in this self-assessment survey:



Does not exist



Exists informally, but it is not written or followed



Is written, but not always followed



Is written, available, followed and revised on an annual basis

Notes:



Are there any other physical activity related items that your child care setting offers? If yes, please describe them in the space below.



Congratulations!

**Congratulations on completing the physical activity environment assessment survey.
Proceed to SECTION 2 to begin your action plan.**



SECTION 2: Action Planning Guide

This section is intended to help you use the results of the assessment you completed in SECTION 1.

Begin by identifying goals for each area assessed. Use the table in Step 1 to complete this.

Next, fill the tables in Step 2 to identify the specific actions (what, who, when) that need to occur to reach each goal.

Use the Best Practice Recommendations Appendix to help you formulate your goals. You can also use it to find resources that may help you with planning and implementation.

If you need assistance, contact the EOHU to set up a meeting with a Health Educator/Promoter who will be able to work with you to develop your action plan.

STEP 1: Areas for Improvement/Specific Goals:

SELF-ASSESSMENT AREA	▼ GOALS ▼
1. Active Play and Sedentary Behaviour	
TARGET DATE FOR ▼ COMPLETION ▼	
2. Play Environment	
TARGET DATE FOR ▼ COMPLETION ▼	
3. Supporting Physical Activity	
TARGET DATE FOR ▼ COMPLETION ▼	
4. Physical Activity Education	
TARGET DATE FOR ▼ COMPLETION ▼	
5. Physical Activity Policy	
TARGET DATE FOR ▼ COMPLETION ▼	

STEP 2: Actions to Reach Goals

Goal 1: _____

ACTIONS TO REACH GOAL 1 (WHAT)	PERSONS INVOLVED (WHO)	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION (WHEN)
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

Goal 2: _____

ACTIONS TO REACH GOAL 2 (WHAT)	PERSONS INVOLVED (WHO)	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION (WHEN)
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

Goal 3: _____

ACTIONS TO REACH GOAL 3 (WHAT)	PERSONS INVOLVED (WHO)	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION (WHEN)
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

Goal 4: _____

ACTIONS TO REACH GOAL 4 (WHAT)	PERSONS INVOLVED (WHO)	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION (WHEN)
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

Goal 5: _____

ACTIONS TO REACH GOAL 5 (WHAT)	PERSONS INVOLVED (WHO)	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION (WHEN)
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

Additional Notes:



SECTION 3: GLOSSARY

This section is meant to clarify some of the terms included in the assessment survey.

Physical activity

Physical activity is defined as any movement that increases heart rate and breathing or any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Physical activity includes exercise as well as other activities which involve bodily movement and are done as part of playing, learning, active transportation, house chores and recreational activities.

Infants (aged less than 1 year) should be physically active several times daily – particularly through interactive floor-based play. Being active as an infant means tummy time, playing or rolling on the floor, or crawling.

Toddlers (aged 1-2 years) and preschoolers (aged 3-4 years) should accumulate at least 180 minutes of physical activity at any intensity spread throughout the day. Being active as a toddler or preschooler means any activity that gets kids moving, such as climbing stairs, playing outside, running or dancing. The older children get the more energetic play they need such as hopping, jumping, skipping and bike riding.

Children (aged 5-11 years) should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily. This should include vigorous-intensity activities at least 3 days per week and activities that strengthen muscle and bone at least 3 days per week.

Source: Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (2011). Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines.

Moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity

Moderate-intensity physical activity causes children to sweat a little and breathe harder whereas vigorous-intensity physical activity causes children to sweat and be “out of breath”. The intensity of the exercise is dependent upon the effort exerted during the activity. Examples of moderate-intensity activities include: bike riding, playground activities and walking. Examples of vigorous-intensity activities include running, swimming, playing tag or sledding in the park.

Source: Physical Activity Resource Centre (2012) Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines Key Messages.

Structured activity (adult-led):

Structured physical activities are intentionally directed by an informed adult. These activities contribute to a child's basic motor development and enjoyment of movement.

Structured activities can be either indoor or outdoor activities. Examples of structured activities are:

- Musical games
- Guided play with homemade props (yarn balls, simple bean bags, paper plate paddles, scoops made from milk cartons)
- Games such as "Simon Says" or "Follow the Leader".

Sedentary behaviour:

Sedentary behaviour is time when children are doing very little physical movement, such as sitting or reclining in a stroller, high chair or car seat; watching television; or playing with electronic games. For healthy growth and development, parents and caregivers should minimize the time young children spend being sedentary during waking hours. This includes prolonged sitting or being restrained (e.g. stroller, high chair) for more than one hour at a time.

For those under 2 years, screen time (e.g. TV, computer, electronic games) is not recommended.

For children 2-4 years, screen time should be limited to under an hour per day; less is better.

For children 5-11 years, free time spent in front of any type of screen should be limited to no more than two hours per day; less is better. It is also recommended that inactive forms of transportation (such as being in a car or bus), extended sitting, and time spent indoors throughout the day be limited.

Source: Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (2011). Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines.

Screen time:

Screen time is a type of sedentary behaviour which includes watching television, time spent on the computer, and playing with electronic games.

Fixed play equipment:

Fixed play equipment is permanent play equipment that is part of the outdoor (or indoor) play-space and helps to promote child development. Play equipment should allow children to perform such activities as climbing, balancing, swinging, hanging, sliding and other full body movements.

Portable play equipment:

Portable play equipment stimulates a variety of motor skills, which allows children to develop and expand eye-hand and eye-foot coordination and develop other fundamental movement skills (such as throwing, catching and striking).

Physical Activity Policy:

A physical activity policy refers to decisions, plans and actions that are undertaken to achieve specific physical activity goals within the daycare setting. A clearly defined physical activity policy can achieve several things: it defines a vision for the future which in turn helps to establish targets and points of reference for the short and medium term. It outlines priorities and the expected roles of everyone involved; and it builds consensus and informs people.



APPENDIX: Best Practice Recommendations

This section is intended to help you create a plan using the Action Planning Guide in SECTION 2.

The table includes Best Practice Recommendations for each of the areas assessed in the survey. For a complete list of links and resources to support the planning and implementation of the goals outlined in your action plan, go to the Schools-Daycares section at EOHU.ca (Schools - Daycares » Daycares » Physical Activity) and click on the Best Practice Resource Guide.

ASSESSMENT AREA	BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour * For children attending half day, divide time in half.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide each child with at least 180* minutes of physical activity each day.• Provide structured (adult-led) physical activity 2 or more times daily.• Provide outdoor active play at least 120* minutes each day (weather permitting).• Ensure each child is not engaged in sedentary activities (excluding naps and eating) for more than 30 minutes at a time each day.• Rarely (less than 1 hour per day) or never provide screen time (including television, computer and video games).
2. Play Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a wide variety of fixed play equipment available that accommodates the needs of all children.• Have a large variety of portable play equipment available for children to use at the same time.• Ensure outdoor portable play equipment (such as tricycles, slides, balls, etc.) is easily accessible at all times to each child.• Ensure that outdoor play space is available with plenty of open running spaces and a track/path/area for wheeled toys.• Ensure indoor play space is available for all activities including running.
3. Supporting Physical Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff encourage children to be active and join children in active play.• Provide visible age-appropriate physical activity supports (such as posters, books, pictures) in all areas.
4. Physical Activity Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide staff with opportunities to participate in training related to physical activity for children (webinars, online courses, workshops, conferences, etc.) 2 or more times per year.• Ensure resources and information related to physical activity are available on-site and are accessible to staff during work time.• Provide children with physical activity education using a standardized curriculum at least one time per week.
5. Physical Activity Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a written policy on physical activity that is available and followed, and that is revised annually. The policy may include all or some of the topics from the previous four physical activity key areas.

