

# PLAY Bruce Grey Advocacy Toolkit

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



This project was made possible  
through funding from the  
Heart and Stroke Foundation  
of Ontario



# Acknowledgements

**The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario** has generously funded the development of this Advocacy Toolkit. The toolkit will mobilize community members and policy makers within municipalities, schools boards, schools and other community organizations that work with children and youth to make changes that will have a sustainable impact in supporting increased opportunities for physical activity in Grey Bruce.

We would also like to acknowledge the many community champions in Grey Bruce who are dedicated to ensuring that all children and youth have access to quality and inclusive opportunities for physical activity. Their steadfast commitment to getting kids physically active is grounded by the recognition that active healthy bodies lay a foundation for optimal growth, learning and development. Their efforts are truly exemplary.

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# Introduction

Physical activity is a key building block of proper childhood development and long-term health and well-being. It is also an important contributor to healthy body weights. Unfortunately, recent studies of local youth have proposed that many are not getting enough physical activity<sup>2</sup> to meet Canada's recommended guidelines. A study involving a sample of children from Grey and Bruce Counties revealed that 29% of children were classified as overweight or obese,<sup>1</sup> which is higher than both national and provincial averages. These staggering facts suggest serious implications for the current and future health and well being of children in Grey Bruce and demand immediate action.

In 2006, a physical activity strategy called *PLAY* Bruce Grey was developed to address the issue of overweight and obesity among children and youth in our community. A partnership among municipalities in Grey and Bruce counties, the Grey Bruce Health Unit and the Ministry of Health Promotion the *PLAY* strategy was launched in 2007. Silken Laumann was a keynote speaker at the launch where over 600 children participated in an active *PLAY* day. On this day municipalities signed a *PLAY* charter affirming their commitment to support the strategy.

The *PLAY* Bruce Grey Committee was formed to steer implementation of the strategy. The partners on the committee include the Grey Bruce Health Unit, Bluewater District School Board, Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board, the YMCA, the local tourism sector and municipal recreation departments. The Health Unit and local municipalities created Community Action Networks of volunteers to actively mobilize *PLAY* in local communities.

*PLAY* Bruce Grey has celebrated many successes in getting families and children to be physically active. Community Action Networks in each municipality are working hard to engage children and youth by creating opportunities for physical activity that are tailored to the needs of their specific communities. Activities are consciously organized to be inclusive to the many low-income families in our communities by providing opportunities that are unstructured and free of charge. In 2008, *PLAY* sponsored a "Fitness for all abilities" workshop addressing the needs of people living with disabilities in participating in physical activity in Grey Bruce. These varying initiatives can be enhanced and complimented by using current research findings to further propel action in our communities.

Recent results from the *School Health Action, Planning and Evaluation System (SHAPES)* show that more work is needed to improve the physical activity levels of children and youth in Grey Bruce. The findings of this study illustrate that although children understand the importance of being physically active this is not reflected in their behaviour.<sup>2</sup> Current organizational structures and policies may be limiting the creation of environments that make it easy for children and youth to be more physically active. In fact, in Ontario's Action Plan for Healthy Eating and Active Living, The Ministry of Health Promotion

identified the lack of public policy to support active living as one of the challenges for making physically active choices.<sup>3</sup>

A focus on advocacy and policy is highly significant to this project. **The Heart and Stroke Foundation** believes that public policy change must be part of any long-term solutions to Ontario's health issues. With help from the **KidFit Community Advocacy Fund** this project will work to transform attitudes through advocacy and lead to the development of policies that will support and sustain increased physical activity levels in our community.

## Methodology

This toolkit was developed with the goal of influencing policy and program development in our community to create supportive environments in which children and youth can be physically active. Through use of the *PLAY* Report Card, focus groups assessed the policy barriers and opportunities for *PLAY* friendly environments within municipalities, schools and other community organizations. A series of key informant interviews were completed to further enhance the information gathered from stakeholders in each setting. This was an opportunity to identify barriers and discuss opportunities for addressing these barriers. Interviews also identified some genuine community champions and highlighted the physical activity interventions that they use to engage local youth. Gathered information was used to provide policy and procedural options for decision makers in each setting to introduce new policies or change existing ones to facilitate physically active environments and opportunities.

## Results

The *PLAY* report card workshops and key informant interviews uncovered some general themes:

- There is an overall lack of policy to support physical activity in all settings.
- Very few reciprocal agreements exist to support joint-use of school and municipal facilities.
- Positive relationships between municipal personnel and school principals are associated with increased joint-use of facilities.
- Smaller communities report generally benefiting from easy access to local municipal facilities, school and community facilities. This is supported by existing positive and close relationships that are naturally established in small communities.
- Great potential exists for sharing costs of recreation facilities and equipment between municipalities and school boards.
- Safety and liability concerns are a major barrier to being physically active in all settings.
- Higher-level support from decision-makers is associated with increased access to physical activity programming.

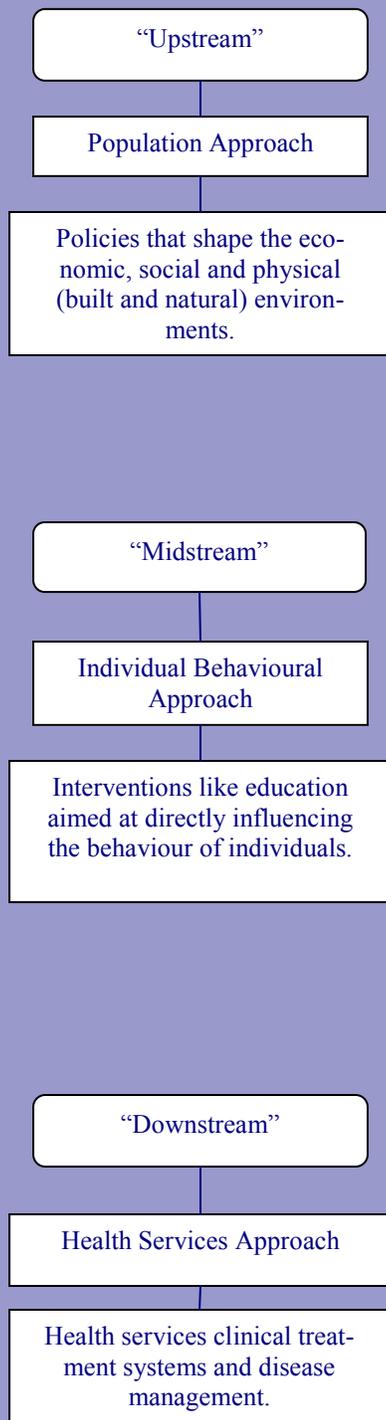
- When decision-makers are enthusiastic and actively participate with children, they report more opportunities for physical activity and more engaged children.
- Schools that have partnerships with other organizations (Ophea, Heart & Stroke, etc.) report increase opportunities for physical activity.
- Teachers and principals who encourage physical activity in their schools and classrooms report:
  - reduced absenteeism
  - fewer behavioural problems
  - better attention & learning
  - increased sense of belonging in school community
  - increased sense of ownership and responsibility for school property
- Transportation is a huge issue affecting access to physical activity opportunities in our rural communities. When transportation services and assistance do exist, access to and participation in activities is increased.
- There is a real need for increased access to and opportunities for unstructured physical activity opportunities.
- The lack of dedicated funding to support low-income access to physical activities is a major concern.
- A great deal of work is needed to make participation in physical activities accessible and inclusive for children with disabilities in all settings.

This toolkit includes a list of recommendations for each of the three settings: schools / school boards, municipalities and community organizations and are reflective of the uncovered issues. Recommendations are supported by research from various supporting organizations and are consistent with current best or promising practices.

Given the number of small communities that make up Grey and Bruce Counties, many municipalities, schools, school boards and community organizations face tremendous demands for their staff's time and limited resources. It can be difficult for these groups to find accurate information upon which to base their policy and program decisions and to apply for external funding, such as grants. The information in this toolkit provides support to these organizations by providing current statistics, evidence-based information and recommendations that will assist them in advocating for and creating policy change and applying for external funding.

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|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Galloway, T. Obesity Rates Among Rural Ontario Schoolchildren. <i>Canadian Journal of Public Health</i>. Sept.– Oct. 2006. Vol.97(5) 353-356.</li> <li>2. Manske, S. Key results for: Survey of physical activity and eating behaviour in Grey-Bruce Grades 5-12 students. <i>Grey Bruce Media Event 2008-10-27</i>.</li> <li>3. Ministry of Health Promotion. Ontario's Action Plan For Healthy Eating And Active Living. <i>Queen's Printer for Ontario</i>. 2006. p.7</li> </ol> |
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# Moving “Upstream”



Many Grey Bruce residents face barriers and inequities that make it difficult for them to be physically active. Research shows that children and youth in Grey Bruce understand the importance of being physically active, but this is not reflected in their behaviour<sup>1</sup>. While educating people about physical activity is important, it is simply not enough. This “midstream” approach fails to take into account the influence of broader environmental factors on physical activity levels of children and youth in our community.

An “upstream” population-health approach suggests that individual approaches need to be balanced and supported with strategies for environmental change. Central to the creation of supportive environments are policies that support and encourage youth in being physically active. Policies set a framework within which children and youth are enabled to take control over their health. They can create shape for an inclusive, supportive and barrier-free community that makes being physically active an easy choice.

Successful policy development in Grey Bruce must involve active participation by community members and a conscious decision to focus on developing positive infrastructure and supportive environments that support physical activity. Policy outcomes have the capacity to impact large numbers of people and create sustainable long-term change.

The nature of our small communities in Grey Bruce is one that we can use to our advantage in both advocating for and creating policy change. Existing positive relationships and partnerships between sectors and decision-makers makes the policy development process a promising one. The information in this toolkit will provide information and support for community organizations to work together in creating environments to support physically active children.

# What Is Advocacy?

## **Examples of advocacy strategies:**

### **Media**

- Letter writing
- Press conference
- Mass media (radio)
  - Petition
- Posters, pamphlets

### **Interpersonal**

- Telephone campaign
- Debriefing sessions
  - Presentations
- One-on-one meetings

### **Events**

- Public forum
- Demonstrations
  - Elections

Source: THCU's "Developing Health Promotion Policies"

**"Advocacy is used to promote an issue in order to influence policy-makers and encourage social change. Advocacy in public health plays a role in educating the public, swaying public opinion or influencing policy-makers."**

American Public Health Association

**Advocacy involves persuasive communication and targeted actions in support of a cause or issue that seek to change policies, positions, and programs."**

<http://www.rho.org/html/glossary.html>

## **Why is advocacy important?**

**"Physical, economic and social environments determine peoples' access to healthy choices and these environments are created by decisions made by individuals, organizations and governments. It is essential that people concerned about promoting the health and well-being of populations and individuals be engaged in making these decisions – either directly, as participants or indirectly, by providing information, and building constituencies to support preferred courses of action".**

Marilyn Wise, The role of advocacy in promoting health.

## What are the components of successful advocacy?

**Information** about the issue and its causes or determinants and about effective solutions. Information is also needed about the policy development process.

**Champions or leaders** to draw public and political attention to the issue and proposed solution.

**Partnerships or coalitions** with key stakeholders. These might be individuals or organizations.

**Media** to engage community attention, to initiate and encourage debate about both the problem and suggested solutions.

**Research** to identify problems, test solutions, and to assess the “readiness” of communities to take action on an issue.

**Evaluation** to assess the effects of the activity and measure impact outcomes.

**“Advocacy is neither the domain of a single person or single organization. Successful public health advocacy requires multiple actions by multiple people and organizations. Effectiveness comes when the widest range of community members and organizations are actively engaged.”**

## Does advocacy work?

Policies tend to be adopted only in a climate of public readiness. Experience shows that scientific evidence on its own is not sufficient to bring about changes in policies, programs and services to ensure they are conducive to health. Successful advocacy works by shifting public and political opinion towards the preferred position to a point where the change becomes compelling and inaction a liability.

Advocacy is a powerful strategy for promoting health. Through advocacy it is possible to bring about positive changes in the policies and environments that shape people’s and populations’ access to healthy choices. The following section of this toolkit will get you started in your advocacy initiative by providing you with relevant information and statistics about the issue of physical inactivity both within our community and beyond.

Source: Marilyn Wise, The role of advocacy in promoting health.

# Grey Bruce Statistics

Results from the **Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) 2007** show that:

- 57.7% of Grey Bruce residents are overweight or obese, which is significantly higher than the rest of Ontario and Canada.
- 23.1% of residents report having high blood pressure, which is significantly higher than the rest of Ontario and Canada, and has increased since 2005.
- 52% of residents are *inactive* which has significantly increased since 2005.

Results of the ***School Health Action, Planning and Evaluation System (SHAPES)*** research show that **physical activity levels of children in Grey-Bruce require immediate attention.**

- Although Grey-Bruce children understand the importance of being active, it is not reflected in their behaviour.
- 14% of Grey-Bruce secondary school students report getting *no activity* either in school or outside of school.
- School opportunities for activity (physical education class, intramural activities, school sports) represent a significant amount of the activity they do get.
- At least one in four Grey-Bruce students spend three or more hours daily in front of a TV, computer screen or on the phone.
- The national recommendation for these activities is two hours or less daily.

*The School Health Action, Planning and Evaluation System (SHAPES) study is a collaboration of the Bluewater District School Board, Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board, Grey Bruce Health Unit and the Centre for Behavioural Research and Program Evaluation at the University of Waterloo.*

For more details on SHAPES-Ontario go to:  
[www.shapes.uwaterloo.ca](http://www.shapes.uwaterloo.ca)

**The Bluewater Nutrition Project** is a 2004 study of children's growth and nutrition in Grey and Bruce Counties. In the sample, rates of overweight and obesity were high, and there was a significant gender difference in obesity prevalence.<sup>3</sup>

- 18% of children were classified as overweight.
- 11% of children were classified as obese.
- Boys and girls were equally at risk of being overweight.
- Overall, boys rates of obesity (15%) were significantly higher than girls (7%).

It was also noted that:

- There appear to be cultural forces at work in Grey Bruce that emphasize large body size in boys. Boys tend to express a desire to be large and anxiety about being considered “underweight” or small. The result appears to be a population in which large numbers of school-age children are overweight and at risk of poor health.
- A low household income contributes to the risk associated with overweight and obesity.
- Transportation issues may affect children's levels of physical activity as they spend hours commuting to and from school by bus.
- Families without cars have limited access to safe, low-cost options for physical activity.

1. Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey 2007.  
2. Manske, S. School Health Action Planning and Evaluation System. [www.shapes.uwaterloo.ca](http://www.shapes.uwaterloo.ca)  
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# Physical Activity

***Be aware of the benefits of physical activity and the negative effects of physical inactivity!***

*Canada's Physical Activity Guide recommends that inactive children and youth should accumulate **at least 90 minutes more physical activity per day and reduce sedentary activities by 90 minutes per day.***

## The Issue

- Physical activity helps to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight and has many other benefits, including reducing stress and depression, increasing energy levels, and improving overall outlook on life.<sup>1</sup>
- Physical inactivity increases the risk of a range of chronic conditions including heart disease, hypertension, stroke, type II diabetes, osteoporosis and certain cancers, as well as premature death and disability.<sup>1</sup>
- Regular physical activity protects against overweight, obesity and many chronic diseases.<sup>2</sup>
- 90% of Canada's youth are not active enough to meet guidelines for optimal growth and development.<sup>5</sup>
- Physical activity behaviours started in childhood and adolescence tend to carry over into adulthood.
- Over the past two decades, rates of overweight and obesity have nearly tripled among Canadian children.<sup>2</sup>
- Rates of overweight and obesity are much higher among Aboriginal peoples<sup>2</sup> living both on and off reserve.
- Children from low socio-economic status (SES) families tend to be less active than those from higher-SES families.<sup>2</sup>
- Across Canada, only 38% of children in families with income below \$25,000 participate in organized sport, compared to 44% amongst middle income children and 50% of children in families with incomes of \$80,000 or more.

## **Negative Impact of Physical Inactivity**

- The International Agency of Research on Cancer attributes about one-fourth to one-third of cancers of the breast, colon, esophagus, kidney and uterus to excess body weight and physical inactivity.<sup>8</sup>
- The American Cancer Research estimates that about 30% to 40% of all cancer cases could be prevented over time by a combination of following recommended diets and maintaining physical activity and appropriate body weight.<sup>8</sup>
- Current estimates place the cost of physical inactivity in Canada at \$5.3 billion and the cost of obesity in Canada at \$4.3 billion in health care expenditures.<sup>9</sup>
- Due to increased rates of childhood obesity and its correlation to life-long diseases, today's children may be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.<sup>10</sup>

## **Barriers to Physical Activity as reported by parents:**

- 46% say high costs
- 44% say lack of convenient facilities
- 21% say lack of skill or ability
- 26% say safety concerns
- 34% say lack of time<sup>11</sup>

## **Addressing the Issue**

- Children do not have to participate in organized sports to be physically active.<sup>3</sup>
- Obesity in children and youth can be reduced by decreasing the time they spend watching television.<sup>2</sup>
- Even moderate physical activity such as a brisk walk on most days of the week can improve health.<sup>4</sup>

- Physical education classes taught in schools are effective at improving both physical activity levels and physical fitness among school-aged children.<sup>1</sup>
- Certain community planning and design features like recreation facilities, trails, sidewalks and bike lanes promote physical activity.<sup>2</sup>
- The growth of roads and freeways, separation of commercial and residential land use discourage physical activity.<sup>2</sup>
- Providing intramural programs, equipment and transportation can help to increase physical activity levels for children from low-SES families.<sup>1</sup>
- A number of sectors working together on complimentary strategies that support physical activity can contribute to reversing the trends associated with physical inactivity in our community.<sup>1</sup>

1. Health Canada. *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living*. Ottawa: Health Canada, 2002.
2. Canadian Institute for Health Information. *Improving the Health of Canadians*. 2004.
3. Gavin ML, Dowshen SA, Izenberg N. Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada Fit Kids. Dorling Kindersley Limited, Toronto, Ontario, 2004.
4. Health Canada. *Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living*. Ottawa: Health Canada, 2002.
5. Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2008 Report Card.
6. Cameron, C., Craigm C.L., Paolin, S. (2005) Increasing physical activity: Communicating the benefits of physical activity for children: A parent's perspective. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute.
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9. Katzmarzyk, P.T., & Janssen, I. (2004). The economic costs associated with physical inactivity and obesity in Canada: an update. *Canadian Journal of Applied Physiology*: 29(1), 90-115.
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# Active Transportation

**Active transportation is any form of transportation that is a self-propelled alternative to the automobile, such as walking, cycling, rollerblading or skateboarding.**

The **built environment** strongly affects whether individuals can choose modes of active transportation. Sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trails, safe pedestrian crossings, parks and the locations of workplaces, schools and housing are all aspects of the built environment that encourage active transportation and physical activity.

A **Walking School Bus** involves an organized group of children actively traveling to and from school together for safety.

For more information, visit: [www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca)

- People living in smaller towns rely more on cars to travel; they therefore get less physical activity and are at greater risk of being overweight or obese.<sup>1</sup>
- A walkable neighbourhood has good street lighting, continuous sidewalks and parks, schools and shops within walking distance of homes.
- Studies in the United States and Canada have shown that people who live in more walkable neighbourhoods make more trips on foot or by bicycle, spend less time driving and are more likely to meet recommended levels of physical activity and are less likely to be overweight or obese.<sup>2-5</sup>
- Research indicates that the risk of obesity can decline by 5% for each additional kilometer walked per day and can increase by 6% for each hour spent in a car per day.<sup>6</sup>
- Safety concerns keep 1 in 5 Canadians from walking or bicycling.<sup>7</sup>
- Community planning that encourages walking and biking is likely to improve perceived neighbourhood safety among parents of young children.<sup>3-5</sup> and may help to increase rates of physical activity.
- In Ontario, less than 35% of children are regularly using active transportation to get to school.<sup>8</sup>



- Active commuting has largely been overlooked as a source of children’s physical activity and can be influenced by aspects of environmental design such as sidewalks and path networks, street connectivity and proximity to schools.<sup>8</sup>
- Communities that develop pedestrian and bicycle friendly infrastructure with links to destinations of interest have more physically active residents.<sup>9</sup>
- Across Canada, only about 10% of trips to the grocery store, work or school are made on foot or by bicycle.<sup>10</sup>

### **Active Transportation: Not just a “big city” issue!**

“In order to promote and maintain health and ensure equitable access to services such as employment, education and health services” and physical activity opportunities, “smaller and rural communities also need to find solutions to increase transportation options for their citizens.”<sup>11</sup>

“Many rural and small communities are not well served (if at all) by sustainable transportation options such as public transit, cycling and walking paths, or carpooling programs.”<sup>11</sup>

There is often “an assumption by key decision makers that all rural and small community residents have access to a personal automobile. However, not all residents have such access; those living in single vehicle households may not have access to a car during certain times of the day. Adding to the situation is the fact that many health and social services, employment, shopping and schools-are often centralized to serve higher density areas. This can result in less than equitable access to these services, by residents in small or rural communities.”<sup>11</sup> For many rural and small community children the distance to school makes walking or cycling impossible. After school they may have the option to participate in physical activity opportunities, but transportation barriers prevent many from doing so.

**A number of rural Canadian communities have had success in improving their active and sustainable transportation infrastructure to benefit all age groups. For a sample of initiatives and recommendations, go to:**

**Transport Canada:**

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/Programs/environment/utsp/smallruralcomms.htm>

**Victoria Transport Policy Institute:**

<http://www.vtppi.org/tdm/tdm87.htm>

**Minden's Active Transportation Plan**

[http://www.mindenhills.ca/pdfs/at\\_plan\\_minden\\_july08.pdf](http://www.mindenhills.ca/pdfs/at_plan_minden_july08.pdf)

## **What does this mean for us?**

For all sectors it means a focus on achieving improved transportation options, increased transportation affordability and flexibility to preserve and create environmental features that promote active transportation.

For parents and school staff, it means finding creative ways to get kids active who bus to school.

At a municipal planning level it means gathering knowledge about best-practices for making rural communities conducive to physical activity through land use and planning—and putting that knowledge into action!

For recreation and program providers it means holding activities in areas that children can easily access through walking or cycling, and/or providing affordable and accessible alternative transportation options.

1. Heart and Stroke Foundation, (2005). "Heart and Stroke Foundation 2005 Report Card on Canadians' Health—Has The Suburban Dream Gone Sour?" Heart and Stroke Foundation.
2. Sanitch, H. How Suburban Sprawl Shapes Human Well-Being. *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*. 2003; 80:590-606.
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5. Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. *Addressing Obesity in Canada. A Think Tank on Selected Policy Research Priorities—Precedings Report*. October 6&7, 2005, Toronto ON.
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# Physical Activity & School

***Schools play a key role in facilitating and inhibiting physical activity behaviour given that it is a place where children spend a large proportion of their time.***

- Only 20% of Canadian children receive daily physical education in school. This number gets worse as children move through high school grades.<sup>1</sup>
- Mandating curriculum requirements for quality daily physical education is a key means of ensuring children have sufficient physical activity and is an important element of a comprehensive obesity prevention strategy.<sup>8</sup>
- Physical education classes averaging 18 minutes a day can more than double the odds that an overweight or obese child becomes and remains physically active.<sup>3</sup>
- For some children, physical education classes provide their only opportunity to participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity.<sup>4</sup>
- School sport participation serves as a protective factor against anxiety, depression and low self-esteem.<sup>2</sup>
- Physical education has been found to increase school achievement, improve attendance, and contribute positively to social and personal development.<sup>9</sup>
- Participation in school physical activities is associated with positive teacher-student relations and school climate.
- Schools reporting the lowest levels of user fees report the highest levels of community use.<sup>5</sup>
- Despite the government investment in supporting community use of schools, more work is needed to support use.<sup>6</sup>
- In Ontario, less than 35% of children are regularly using active transportation to get to school.<sup>7</sup>

**Physical & Health Education (PHE) Canada** (formerly CAPHERD) developed recommendations for the provision of daily and quality physical education for students from kindergarten through to graduation. They recommend **150 minutes per week spent in physical education programs** to meet standards for Quality Daily Physical Education (QDPE).

The **Quality Daily Physical Education (QDPE) Report Card** was developed by PHE Canada and can be used as a first step to assessing and improving the Physical Education program in your school.

The Report Card is available at:

<http://www.cahperd.ca>

1. Canadian Association of Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance. Time to Move, 2005.
2. Active Healthy Kids Canada. *Canada's Report Card on Physical Activity for Children & Youth, 2008*.
3. Sallis J, McKenzie T., 1991. In McKenzie, Feldman, Woods, Romero, Dahstrom, Stone et al. 1995.
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7. Trudeau F, Shepherd R. Contribution of school programmes to physical activity levels and attitudes in children and adults. *Sports Med.* 2005;35:89-105.
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# Reciprocal Agreements

*The Ontario Ministry of Education recognizes that:*

***“Schools are the hubs of their communities and offer an effective use of taxpayers’ investment in providing citizens with a place to...become physically active and build strong healthy communities.”***

***“The Community Use of Schools program supports and promotes healthy, active living for community youth.”***

***The Ministry explicitly recognizes the development of reciprocal agreements between school boards and municipalities as an effective practice.***

For more information on how the Ministry of Education supports Community use of schools, visit:  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/g>

- Reciprocal agreements (also known as Joint Use Agreements) are the backbone for successfully implementing shared use of school and municipal facilities.
- Schools and municipalities can be restricted by policies and procedures when they work alone, but by establishing a partnership and combining resources, they can achieve a common goal of providing supportive and accessible environments for physical activity.
- Sharing of facilities results in the most economic provision of education and recreation.
- Many municipalities have recreation facilities that are not fully utilized during school hours and many schools have facilities that are not fully utilized during non-school hours.
- The building of new independent recreation facilities often duplicates facilities and resources already available.
- Reciprocal agreements can cut costs by sharing in the use and maintenance of outdoor playing fields and indoor gym spaces and in the purchase of playground equipment.
- Agreements may prompt municipalities and school boards to work together in the design of new school buildings and to share costs of recreation facilities.
- Coordination and cooperation in maintenance and use of facilities ensures that they remain sustainable community assets.
- Free or discounted rates for municipal ice and pool facilities provides students with access to superior facilities, increase physical activity levels and promote active living.

## **A Success Story!**

In June 2008 The City of Vaughan, the York Region District School Board and the York Catholic District School Board signed a precedent-setting reciprocal agreement called “Youth First Through Cooperative Agreements and Programs”.

The agreement marks the first time that a reciprocal agreement has been signed between any municipality and its school boards and focuses on the sharing of facilities and resources to promote youth activities. This is an excellent example of how policy can make it easier for kids to be physically active by making facilities and resources more accessible.

For more information and highlights of the agreement go to:

[www.city.vaughan.on.ca/newscentre/2008/news08-052.cfm](http://www.city.vaughan.on.ca/newscentre/2008/news08-052.cfm)

Source: The City of Vaughan, News Release June, 11, 2008

# Safety Concerns: a barrier to physical activity

**“Countless communities have virtually outlawed unstructured, outdoor, nature play, often because of the threat of lawsuits, but also because of a growing obsession with order. Many parents believe outdoor play is verboten even when it is not; perception is nine-tenths of the law.”**

(Excerpt from LAST CHILD IN THE WOODS by Richard Louv)<sup>5</sup>, Source: Canada's Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth 2008.

**In Ontario, less than 40% of parents report playing actively with their children often or very often.<sup>1</sup>**

In Grey Bruce, safety concerns are often identified as barriers to getting kids physically active, which is reflective of an overall North American trend. Parents, teachers, coaches, and organizations are rightfully wary about issues surrounding injury, safety, liability and insurance and are committed to ensuring that children remain free of harm. However, a problem presents when guardians perception of the environment as unsafe is *unrealistic* and discourages or prevents children from being physically active.

Media coverage of the incidence of violence against or abduction of children often results in parents indicating concern about children's participation in neighbourhood-based physical activity, whether it is active transportation or unstructured play in parks and playgrounds. Yet, Statistics Canada reports consistently demonstrate that, 75% of the time, violent crime against children and youth is perpetrated by someone known to the child.<sup>3</sup>

One of the best ways for parents to relieve themselves of safety concerns is to get out and play with their kids. Despite this, the majority of Canadian parents are seldom playing actively with their children. Not only can playing with children minimize or eliminate safety and injury concerns, it allows parents to model healthy, active behaviours for their children. Youth who rate themselves as active are 3 times more likely to have parents who are physically active.<sup>1</sup>

Experts state that “a real gap exists between parental safety concerns and reality”.<sup>2</sup> It can be difficult to convince parents to leave their cars at home and encourage their kids to walk to school.

“Parents express concerns about abductions and similar threats en route, although traffic is a much more real danger to children”.<sup>2</sup> The concern for personal safety creates a vicious cycle. The large number of vehicles parked outside before and after school creates considerable safety and environmental problems, including exhaust fumes breathed by passing children.<sup>2</sup>

One of the key issues associated with safety concerns is the lack of overall community cohesion in today’s society. People don’t know their neighbours or who their children play with. Organizing a “Safe Routes to School” program can benefit community cohesion, as it requires participation from parents, teachers, planners and community groups. The act of walking with neighbours builds social cohesion and lessens safety concerns as people make friends with their neighbours and discover their community.<sup>2</sup>

Parents, guardians and the whole community have an immense responsibility to get kids physically active. Parents must get to know their neighbours and community groups and work together to advocate to their municipality, schools and government to take action in making our environments safe and more conducive to physical activity.

### **Fear of Injury?**

A recent study in Australia in children aged 4-12 suggests that fear of injury should be of modest concern only. It was found that injury rates per hours of exposure to physical activity were low with fewer than 2 injuries requiring medical attention for every 10,000 hours of activity participation outside of school.<sup>1,4</sup>

1. Healthy Active Kids Canada. *Canada’s Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, 2008.*
2. Kennedy J. Active and Safe Routes to Schools, Green Communities Canada. *How Healthy Public Policy Can Support Healthy Eating and Active Living.*
3. Active Healthy Kids Canada. *Canada’s Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth 2006.*
4. Spinks A, McClure R, Bain C, Macpherson A. Quantifying the association between physical activity and injury in primary aged children. *Pediatrics.* 2006;118:e43-50.
5. Lov R. *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder.* Chapel Hill: Algonquin Book; 2005.

# Why policy?

***The government of Ontario identified the lack of public policy to support active living as one of the challenges for making active choices.***

***The Ministry of Health Promotion recommends developing policies that promote physical activity.***

There are many community champions in Grey-Bruce that create, promote and implement successful physical activity interventions for children. A fantastic collection of school principals, teacher, municipal recreation directors and other community leaders are dedicated to ensuring that all children are involved in quality physical activities.

A problem exists, however, when these champions move on and the programs and practices that they support fade into the background or disappear altogether. This is where policy-making provides a solution. Policies provide the necessary anchor for the long-term sustainability and success of interventions. When an initiative is anchored only by champions or “keen” personalities, it often disappears over time because no policy has been developed and adopted to ensure its long-term success<sup>1</sup>.

### **For example:**

The Daily Physical Activity (DPA) legislation is an excellent example of a good policy instrument.

The goal of DPA is to increase students’ physical activity levels. It is based on the belief that healthy, active students are better able to learn and that the school environment is a key setting for helping students to develop healthy behaviours.

Daily Physical Activity ensures that all students in grades 1 to 8 get a minimum of 20 minutes of sustained moderate to vigorous physical activity each school day during instructional time (not during lunch, recess or breaks).

This policy instrument has changed the school environment to make it easier for students to be active - and difficult for them to be inactive!

For more information on DPA, visit: [www.ophea.net/dpa](http://www.ophea.net/dpa)

1. Katcheson, L. How Healthy Public Policy Can Support Healthy Eating and Active Living.
2. Physical Activity Resource Centre. *Workbook for Influencing Physical Activity Policy.*

# What Can Your School Do?

***Make it easy to be physically active every day!***

**In September 2008, the government of Manitoba extended secondary school graduation requirements from 2 to 4 health and physical education credits, mandating physical education for Grade 11 and 12 students for the first time in Canada.<sup>1</sup>**

Schools are encouraged to establish policies that promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity among all students. Developing and enforcing school policies on physical activity demonstrates a commitment to promoting physical activity, provides guidance, direction and establishes accountability for action for school staff and administration. Recommended policies cover the following areas:

- Working with other community organizations to improve awareness and knowledge about the effects of physical activity and healthy body weights.
- Actively participating in the role of providing information and resources to children and their families to enable physical activity in the community and at home.
- Providing innovative opportunities for children who are regularly bused to school to be physically active.
- Ensuring that physical activity will not be taken away or enforced as a form of punishment.
- Providing students with adequate and appropriate bicycle parking and secure areas for storing equipment like helmets, rollerblades and skateboards.
- Hiring of qualified physical education specialists.
- Mandating curriculum requirements for quality daily physical education for all children from kindergarten through grade 12.
- Providing students with the necessary transportation for participating in after-school activities (e.g. late-busing program).

**Speak out for changes that will make your school a more physically active place!**

- Availability of a broad range of physical activities to meet the needs, interests and abilities of all students, including competitive and non-competitive sports, structured and unstructured activities.
- Ongoing funding for adequate physical activity equipment and facilities to meet the needs of all students.
- Reduction or elimination of fees associated with physical activity opportunities.
- Be committed to promoting and supporting safe routes and active transportation to and from school.

***“But, our kids bus to school!”***

In many of our rural communities it is difficult for children to actively commute to school. Unrealistic travel distances mean that the majority of kids in these communities take the bus. This stresses the importance of finding creative ways to get kids active once they arrive on the playground, or by dropping kids off a certain distance from the school and allowing them to walk the rest of the way.

Concerned about their safety walking on the side of a road? Use the resources in this toolkit to advocate to your local council for sidewalks or paved shoulders on the routes that children will be taking!

Involve children in mapping out safe-routes!  
Have bus-patrols become “walking school bus leaders” the rest of the way to school!

For more information, go to:

<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/>

1. Active Healthy Kids Canada. *Canada's Report Card on Physical Activity for Children & Youth, 2008.*

# What Can Your Municipality Do?

Municipalities are encouraged to establish policies that ensure that the community's infrastructure provides many opportunities for residents to be physically active. Developing and enforcing policies that promote physical activity demonstrates that a municipality is committed to adopting the health of the community as a goal for their official plans. Recommended policies cover the following areas:

- Explicitly recognizing and placing high priority on active transportation and physical recreation within official community plans.
- Routine accommodation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities whenever a road or highway is built or rebuilt.
- Ensuring dedicated funding for the development and maintenance of physical activity infrastructure especially facilities that serve as the hubs for community life in our rural areas.
- Ensuring the needs and interests of youth in the community are taken into account when developing physical activity programs and facilities.
- Recreation departments establishing reciprocal agreements regarding joint-use of facilities with local schools/school boards.
- Programs and services to provide children and youth with necessary transportation to-and-from after school activities.
- Partnering with schools to promote active transportation to-and-from school.
- Ensure that fee-assistance programs are discrete, easy-to-access and well promoted.
- Ensuring dedicated funding for fee-assistance programs.

***Many recreation departments assist only those who seek out and ask for help and many low-socio-economic-status families are too proud to ask.***

For information on developing effective Fee Assistance Programs and providing inclusive and accessible opportunities for physical activity and recreation go to:

**<http://www.everybodygetstoplay.ca>**

***Everybody gets to play™*** is a Canada'-wide initiative led by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) to make recreation more accessible for low-socio-economic-status children and their families.

The *Everybody gets to play™* toolkit offers a number of useful tools for developing policies and programs to support access to recreation. It also offers supplements for Ontario and specific targets for aboriginal peoples and people living with disabilities.

# What Can Your Community Organization Do?

***Make it easy for children within your organization to be physically active!***

Community organizations that involve children (such as Brownies, Scouts, etc.) are encouraged to establish policies that promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity among all children in their care. Developing and enforcing physical activity policies demonstrates a commitment to promoting active lifestyles, provides guidance, direction and establishes accountability for action for staff and administration. Recommended policies cover the following areas:

- Actively participating in the role of providing information and resources to children and their families to enable physical activity in the community and at home.
- Collaborating with other organizations to improve awareness and knowledge about physical activity and healthy body weights.
- Creating and expanding partnerships with local agencies, recreation resources and community groups.
- Organizing neighbourhood-based programs to minimize travel and associated travel costs.
- Specifically set aside time for active breaks or incorporate physical activity into activities each time you meet.
- Incorporating physical activity into special events and fundraisers.
- Combining approaches to both reduce inactive screen time and increase active play.
- Using active transportation (walking, cycling, etc.) to get to locations whenever possible.

- Creating opportunities to increase girls' interest in physical activity.
- Staff and volunteers positively role model physically active behaviours.
- Encouraging children and youth to participate in organizing physical activities.
- Appropriate training for volunteers, coaches, leaders, and other adults who are responsible for the delivery of organized sport programs.
- Specifically targeting vulnerable and underserved populations in the community when advertising programs.
- Providing a combination of structured and unstructured physical activities.
- Making use of local infrastructure like parks, community centers, churches and trails.
- Providing physical activity opportunities that can be appropriately adapted to include children of all skill levels and abilities.
- Consistently following safety recommendations for all equipment and activities.
- Recognizing children for their physical activity achievements and involvements.
- Providing opportunities for informal and drop-in activities.

# Self-Assessment of Barriers

### When to use the self-assessment?

- To identify areas requiring action
- To identify progress in creating supportive environments for physical activity
- To educate staff, potential partners, funding bodies and decision-makers

### Self-assessment checklist

Use this tool to evaluate how well your organization is supporting physical activity for children and youth. By rating your organization using the five-point scale and assigning a level of priority, you can identify strengths and areas that need work. Results of your assessment can create discussions, build commitment to the issue, and help with planning future policy goals.

The following checklists have been broken down into four organizational settings:

1. Schools / school boards
2. Municipal planning and recreation
3. Community groups
4. Workplaces

### Who should use the self-assessment checklists?

Checklists can be used by individuals within each organization, members of the community or decision-makers. Don't feel restricted to just one category, you will likely belong to more than one organizational setting — feel free to complete a checklist for each one. If you are a parent, teacher or recreation provider, encourage the children and youth in your care to complete the checklist. They will be able to provide a valuable perspective on what is actually happening.

## Instructions

Record how well each statement describes the state of your organization. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. Don't get caught up with one question. If you are unsure of the answer, or it has no relevance, skip it and move on to the next one.

Current Status		
<b>A</b>	Excellent	<b>(Example) Formal and approved policy</b> in place that is <b>consistently followed</b> .
<b>B</b>	Very Good	
<b>C</b>	Good	
<b>D</b>	Satisfactory	
<b>E</b>	Poor	<b>(Example) We have never considered</b> this issue before.

Once you have identified the current status for each statement, go back through the survey and identify the **priority** of the issue.

Priority	
<b>H</b>	High
<b>M</b>	Medium
<b>L</b>	Low

If you identify a large number of areas where you need improvement, do not let it discourage you! Every organization and community has room for improvement!

Keep your checklist results! You can use them as a baseline for monitoring progress over time.

## **Analysis**

Once you have completed the self-assessment checklist and identified the areas that need improvement, review your results using the accompanying worksheet.

Worksheet #1 will help you decide which specific areas you are going to focus on.

### **Consider the following:**

- **What is the most pressing issue (or aspect of a complex issue)?**
- **What seems to be the one issue that you would have the greatest chance to resolve?**
- **Which issue will attract reasonable support from the community?**
- **Which issue will those who are working with you be willing to focus on?**

When you have completed Worksheet #1, and have decided which area or policy you would like to advocate for, you are ready to move onto Worksheet #2 in the Advocacy section. This worksheet will help you to clarify your advocacy strategy and gather the information needed to move forward.

## Schools / School Boards Self-Assessment Checklist

Priority:  H = High M = Medium L = Low	Regarding Current Status, keep the following scale in mind:  A = We have a <b>formal</b> and <b>approved</b> policy in place that is <b>consistently followed</b> .  E = We have <b>never considered</b> this issue before.	Current Status: A = Excellent B = Very Good C = Good D = Satisfactory E = Poor
	<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	
	Students are provided with adequate and appropriate bicycle parking.	
	Students are provided with secure areas for storing equipment like helmets, rollerblades and skateboards.	
	Vehicle drop-off and pick-up traffic is controlled to minimize barriers for students who walk and bike to school.	
	Active transportation is used to field trip locations instead of driving (weather and safe routes permitting).	
	Along with training for safety guards and bus patrollers, training is provided for Walking School Bus leaders.	
	Transportation support is offered and readily available for students to get to and from physical activity opportunities (e.g. late busing program).	
	We advocate for active and safe routes to school to our local council.	
	We encourage and promote active transportation to both students and parents.	
	<b>DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY &amp; EDUCATION</b>	
	DPA is consistently and appropriately adapted for the specific needs of children with disabilities.	
	All teachers receive appropriate training and resources to foster a culture of physical activity in school.	
	DPA is consistently implemented throughout classrooms in the school.	
	Children are educated about the benefits of daily physical activity.	
	We have a qualified physical education specialist on staff.	
	All students participate in daily physical education classes.	

<b>Priority:</b> <b>H = High</b> <b>M = Medium</b> <b>L = Low</b>	<p>Regarding Current Status, keep the following scale in mind:</p> <p>A = We have a <b>formal</b> and <b>approved</b> policy in place that is <b>consistently followed</b>.</p> <p>E = We have <b>never considered</b> this issue before.</p>	<b>Current Status:</b> <b>A = Excellent</b> <b>B = Very Good</b> <b>C = Good</b> <b>D = Satisfactory</b> <b>E = Poor</b>
	We have a broad range of physical activities to meet the needs, interests and abilities of all students.	
	There are a combination of competitive and non-competitive sports and structured and unstructured physical activities available.	
	Students are encouraged to accumulate 90 minutes of physical activity daily in blocks of 10 minutes or more.	
	<b>ACCESS</b>	
	Fees associated with physical activity opportunities are substantially reduced or eliminated for students from low-income families.	
	Access to fee reduction or elimination is simple and discrete for students from low income families.	
	Information about resources and community supports available for low-income families is distributed to every child in the school (e.g. Canadian Tire Jump Start)	
	Physical activity <b>is not</b> taken away or enforced as a form of punishment (e.g. running laps or taking away gym privileges)	
	Availability of school physical activity facilities for community use is posted and well promoted.	
	We have a partnership with our local municipality regarding shared use of indoor and outdoor facilities (e.g. reciprocal agreement).	
	We recognize the importance of our role in getting information about physical activity to and from children and families.	
	Accessing insurance for use of school facilities <b>does not</b> create a significant barrier for community members.	
	Indoor and outdoor facilities are well-used by community members and municipal programs during non-school hours.	
	Physical activities are specifically set up to include children with intellectual and physical disabilities.	
	<b>OTHER</b>	
	Physical activity is incorporated into staff meetings, special events and fundraisers.	
	School staff positively role model being physically active.	
	Students are recognized for their physical activity achievements both inside and outside of school.	

<b>Priority:</b> <b>H = High</b> <b>M = Medium</b> <b>L = Low</b>	<p>Regarding Current Status, keep the following scale in mind:</p> <p>A = We have a <b>formal</b> and <b>approved</b> policy in place that is <b>consistently followed</b>.</p> <p>E = We have <b>never considered</b> this issue before.</p>	<b>Current Status:</b> <b>A = Excellent</b> <b>B = Very Good</b> <b>C = Good</b> <b>D = Satisfactory</b> <b>E = Poor</b>
	Screen time is limited to 60 minutes or less per day.	
	Safety recommendations are followed for all equipment and activities.	
	Students are encouraged to participate in organizing physical activity events.	
	School participates in regular physical activity promoting events (e.g. Turn Off the Screens, Walk to School Week, etc.)	
	School is aware of and makes use of physical activity resources within the community (e.g. Library, Health Unit)	
	Peer mentoring is used to encourage more active playgrounds (e.g. PROPS model)	
	Incentive programs/challenges are regularly implemented to increase student enjoyment of physical activity (e.g. World Record Walk, Stepping Out on the Bruce Trail pedometer challenge, use of GPS/compasses within school setting)	

## Municipal Planning & Recreation Self-Assessment Checklist

Priority:  H = High M = Medium L = Low	Regarding Current Status, keep the following scale in mind:  A = We have a <b>formal</b> and <b>approved</b> policy in place that is <b>consistently followed</b> .  E = We have <b>never considered</b> this issue before.	Current Status: A = Excellent B = Very Good C = Good D = Satisfactory E = Poor
	<b>MUNICIPALITY</b>	
	Sidewalks are consistently cleared of snow and ice in a timely manner for students who walk to school.	
	Routes to schools, and other places frequented by children have bike-lanes, sidewalks, cross-walks, speed control and are tree-lined.	
	Routes to schools, and other places frequented by children have good street lighting to ensure safety and security.	
	Planning and design maximizes pedestrian and bicycle travel.	
	School travel is considered part of overall municipal transportation policies and plans.	
	In transport and land-use planning, the needs of children and youth receive as much priority as the needs of other populations and the requirements of business.	
	We have an established forum for children and youth to bring their perspectives to transport and land-use planning issues.	
	We are aware of and address the by-laws that create barriers for physical activity in our community (e.g. no ball hockey in streets, no skateboarding in public areas, no riding bicycles on sidewalks).	
	Transportation services are provided or subsidized for children and youth to participate in physical activities.	
	Neighbourhoods offer a variety of passive spaces for informal and free physical activity.	
	Playing fields and other facilities are available and easy to access through active or city transportation.	
	Adequate and appropriate bicycle parking is provided throughout the community and at all municipal buildings.	
	Dog walking is permitted in recreation areas and the areas are kept clean with dog-litter facilities provided.	
	Events and recognition programs are in place to celebrate successful physical activity strategies and community champions.	

<b>Priority:</b> <b>H = High</b> <b>M = Medium</b> <b>L = Low</b>	<p>Regarding Current Status, keep the following scale in mind:</p> <p>A = We have a <b>formal</b> and <b>approved</b> policy in place that is <b>consistently followed</b>.</p> <p>E = We have <b>never considered</b> this issue before.</p>	<b>Current Status:</b> <b>A = Excellent</b> <b>B = Very Good</b> <b>C = Good</b> <b>D = Satisfactory</b> <b>E = Poor</b>
	<b>RECREATION DEPARTMENT</b>	
	We actively engage community youth in recreation program planning.	
	Operating hours of facilities are tailored to children and youth.	
	There are programs that allow for unstructured “drop-in”.	
	Recreation programs and facilities are accessible and are adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities.	
	We have a partnership with our local schools for sharing facilities (e.g. reciprocal agreement).	
	We actively encourage parental involvement.	
	Information about programs is strategically placed in areas that youth will look.	
	Recreation areas have well-maintained age-appropriate playgrounds, which attract and engage children.	
	We offer physical activity programs that are specifically tailored for the cultures in our community.	
	<b>ACCESS</b>	
	We have an access or subsidy program in place.	
	Sustainable funding is ensured for our subsidy programs and for no-cost programming.	
	Fee assistance or elimination for transportation costs is available, or transportation is provided, if needed.	
	Information about subsidy opportunities and free programming is designed to reach low-income families in our community.	
	Front-line staff are given the tools and training to appropriately and discretely handle financial assistance programs.	
	We offer a variety of free physical activity programs.	
	Our municipality renews its commitment to the PLAY Charter annually.	

## Community Organizations Self-Assessment Checklist

Priority: H = High M = Me- dium L = Low	Regarding Current Status, keep the following scale in mind:  A = We have a <b>formal</b> and <b>approved</b> policy in place that is <b>consistently followed</b> .  E = We have <b>never considered</b> this issue before.	Current Status: A = Excellent B = Very Good C = Good D = Satisfactory E = Poor
	<b>COMMUNITY GROUPS</b>	
	We recognize and actively participate in our role of getting information about physical activity to children and their families.	
	Screen-time is limited and active options are provided instead.	
	Children and youth are actively engaged in planning activities.	
	We work cooperatively with other community partners to provide the best variety of physical activity options for children and their families.	
	Physical activity programs are specifically set up to include children with physical and intellectual disabilities.	
	We offer fee assistance or reduction for children from low-socio-economic-status families.	
	Staff are encouraged to be role models for physically active behaviour.	
	Volunteers, coaches, parents and others who are responsible for the delivery of sport programs are provided with appropriate training.	
	There are daily opportunities for physical activity.	
	Free or low-cost transportation services are offered to get children to and from activities.	
	Physical activity is incorporated into special events and fundraisers.	
	Active transportation is used to get to and from events whenever possible.	
	Activities and programs are neighbourhoods-based to minimize transportation barriers.	

## Workplace Self-Assessment Checklist

Priority: H = High M = Medium L = Low	Regarding Current Status, keep the following scale in mind:  A = We have a <b>formal</b> and <b>approved</b> policy in place that is <b>consistently followed</b> .  E = We have <b>never considered</b> this issue before.	Current Status: A = Excellent B = Very Good C = Good D = Satisfactory E = Poor
	<b>WORKPLACE</b>	
	Adequate and appropriate bicycle parking is provided.	
	Secure areas are available for storing equipment like helmets, roller blades and skateboards.	
	Educational resources are provided about the benefits of physical activity.	
	Employees are encouraged to make active choices through the use of promotional resources. (e.g. Bike Walk to Work Day).	
	We have mapped out walking routes in the surrounding area and posted them with times and distances.	
	Information is provided about local sports and leisure facilities and classes.	
	Lunchtime activity groups are encouraged (e.g. walking club).	
	Subsidies are provided for active recreation memberships (e.g. gym membership, team sport fees).	
	Employees can “flex” their work hours to allow for physical activity before, during and after work.	
	Incentives are provided for employees who walk or cycle to meetings.	
	Changing rooms and shower facilities are provided.	

## Worksheet #1

**Use this form to identify high-priority areas, propose potential policy or program options, and identify community partners.**

**Actively discuss options with others!**

**Based on your self-assessment checklist, which high-priority areas do *you* feel are the most important?**

1)

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2)

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3)

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**Of the 3 priorities that you have chosen, provide a proposed solution and identify a policy or program-option for each.**

1)

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**Policy Option:**

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2)

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**Policy Option:**

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3)

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**Policy Option:**

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**Of the three policy or program options you have suggested, which one are you the most motivated to advocate for?**

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**What community partners could you potentially work with on advocating for this policy or program?**

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**You have completed Worksheet #1, and have decided which area or policy you would like to advocate for. You are now ready to move onto Worksheet #2 in the Advocacy section. This worksheet will help you to clarify your advocacy strategy and gather the information needed to move forward.**

# Creating a proposal for change.

*This section will provide you with some sample policies that will assist you in creating a draft for your proposed policy change. Remember, they are just a small selection of examples and are by no means the only options available. Tailor your draft policy to meet the specific needs of your organization and target population.*

When you're advocating for policy change it is not enough to point out what's wrong or could be improved. It's important to present a proposal for change that includes policy suggestions. Demanding action from decision-makers is easier when you are advocating for something specific.

Rather than simply advocating for policy makers to find an answer, you can advocate for your proposed solution. One of the best ways to do this is to draft a sample policy yourself. This is helpful because it gives the policy-makers something to start with and saves them from a considerable amount of research and work. If the organization you're dealing with prefers to draft the policy themselves, you can still assist by providing them with suggestions for specific language and issues that should be covered. Don't assume that they will simply adopt the policy that you've drafted. The policy-makers may or may not accept any of your recommendations, but they certainly won't accept them if they're not offered.

If you draft a policy, you can include everything reasonable to create the desired change. It's best to start with what represents the ideal and then compromise by dropping the least crucial parts. This may give you a little more room for negotiation without having to lose the essential elements for the desired change.

Whenever possible, involve all stakeholders (especially members of the target population) in the creation of your proposal. This creates a sense of community ownership for your proposed policy and increases the chances that the policy will actually work because it draws on the knowledge and experience of a broad range of people.

The timing of your proposal is also important. Try to present your proposals during times that are crucial for an organizations development, like during an annual budget process. Or, during a time when the issue is in the public consciousness – this is often a time when policy-makers have already turned their attention to it.

\* Adapted from the Community Tool Box

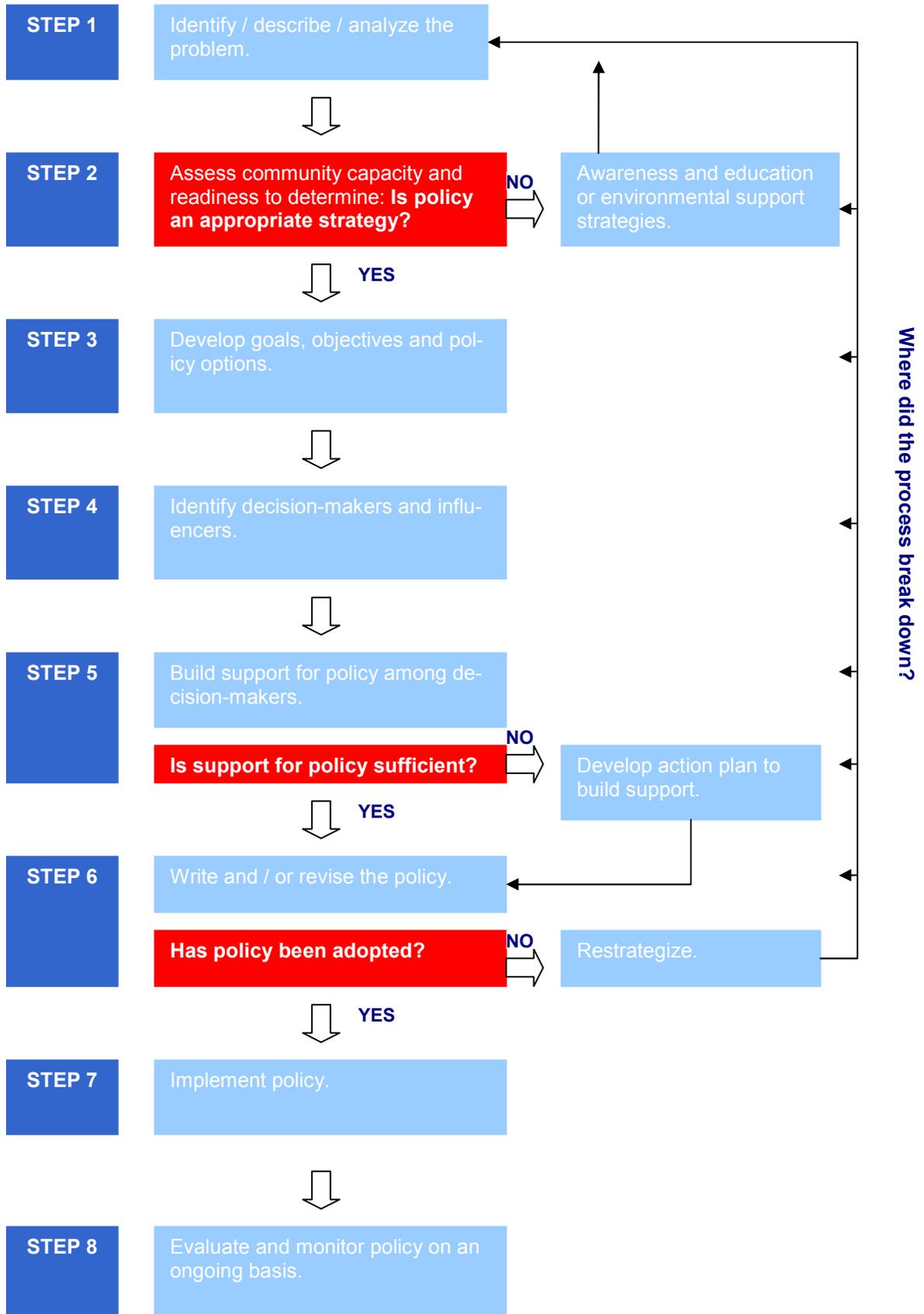
**For a more comprehensive look at policy development, go to:**

**The Physical Activity Resource Centre's (PARC) Online Toolkit for Influencing Physical Activity Policy. It can be found at:**

**[www.ophea.net/parc](http://www.ophea.net/parc)**

**PARC's toolkit provides you with more specific information and guidelines for developing a physical policy for your particular setting (schools, communities, workplaces).**

# The Health Communication Unit's (THCU) Roadmap to Policy Development



# SAMPLE Physical Activity Policy

## Physical Activity Policy: **SAMPLE**

**A physical activity policy for:** “Your organization’s name”

**Effective from:** 00/00/00

**Next review date:** 00/00/00

### **Rationale: The need for a physical activity policy**

This section of the policy could include information on some of the following topics:

- Why and how physical activity affects health
- Quality-of-life benefits
- How the organization can create an environment that supports and encourages physical activity
- How the support of physical activity initiatives can demonstrate that the health of the target population is valued

For background information for this section, see corresponding “Fact Sheets”.

### **Aim of the policy**

This section of the policy states what the policy will do. For example:

- Increase the number of people in the organization or community who are physically active
- Create an environment that encourages people to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives

### **Objectives**

This section of the policy should clearly list the goals or objectives. They should be realistic and achievable. Each objective should be followed by the policy actions – what will be done.

### **Dissemination, review and monitoring**

This section of the policy should detail when the policy will be reviewed and where it will be posted.

**Date:**

**Signature:**

**WORKPLACE  
Physical Activity Policy: SAMPLE**

**Physical Activity Policy: SAMPLE**

**A physical activity policy for:** “Your organization’s name”

**Effective from:** 00/00/00

**Next review date:** 00/00/00

**The need for a physical activity policy**

Physical activity is essential for good health and contributes to positive well-being. *Physical inactivity* in our community is associated with many chronic diseases.

According to Canada’s Physical Activity Guidelines, for general health benefit, adults should get a total of **at least 30 minutes a day** of moderate intensity physical activity, 5 days a week. The 30 minutes can be achieved all at once, or in shorter 10 minute sessions.

The workplace is an important setting in which people can increase their levels of activity to benefit their health and protect against illness.

Employees engaged in physical activity initiatives have reported greater enjoyment in their work, improved concentration and alertness and improved cooperation with colleagues.

**Aim of the policy**

To promote and encourage employee participation in regular moderate intensity physical activity.

**Objectives**

**To raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity.**

*Policy actions:*

- Provide educational resources on physical activity
- Provide staff seminars on the benefits of activity and risks of inactivity
- Hold physical activity promotional events

**To support employees in becoming more active in a variety of ways.**

*Policy actions:*

- Encourage employees to make active choices through the use of promotional resources, for example: “Bike Walk to Work Day”
- Map out walking routes within the area and post them with times and distances
- Provide information on local sports and leisure facilities and classes
- Establish a lunchtime activity group
- Subsidize active recreation memberships

**To remove barriers and enable staff to be active in and around work.**

*Policy actions:*

- Provide flexible working hours to allow for physical activity before, during and after work
- Provide incentives to staff who walk or cycle to meetings
- Provide appropriate bicycle racks
- Provide showering/changing facilities

**Review and monitoring**

The policy will be circulated to management and be available upon request.

All employees will be made aware of the physical activity policy and the facilities available. It will be included in the employee handbook.

The policy will be reviewed six months from implementation and then annually after that.

**Date:**

**Signature:**

*Adapted from Think Fit! British Heart Foundation*

## POLICY

# SAMPLE Reciprocal Agreement

### JOINT USE OF FACILITIES

This is an agreement between:

The Board of Education  
(Hereinafter called the "Board")

And

The town of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Herein after called the "Town")

**WHEREAS**, the board and the town recognize that this mutually cooperative partnership will expand and enhance the utilization of shared resources, and

**WHEREAS**, the board and the town continue to promote the health and wellbeing of community members and in particular youth, and

**WHEREAS**, the town has facilities that are not fully utilized during school hours, and

**WHEREAS**, the board has facilities that are not fully utilized during non-school hours.

### **NOW THEREFORE THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS:**

#### **General Provisions:**

1. The town will make available to the schools for school use, town operated facilities such as parks and playing fields, the sports complex at no charge, if such facilities are not in use for regular community programs.
2. The school board will make available facilities within the school grounds for recreation activities that have been authorized by the town, at no charge, for times not designated for school activities.
3. Activities under this agreement are not for profit making.
4. The board and town will consult and cooperate with each other in the design and use of present and future school and recreation buildings, playing fields and parks.

### **Facilities to be used:**

1. School facilities shall include
  - A. Gymnasiums
  - B. Auditoriums
  - C. Playing fields
  
2. Town facilities shall include
  - A. Sports complex
  - B. Ball park
  - C. Tennis courts
  - D. Community centre
  - E. Parks and playgrounds

### **Booking and use of facilities:**

1. On an ongoing and timely basis, both Principals and Recreation Services shall provide each other with a schedule of availability of their prospective facilities.
2. Decisions for requests will be made within one week or the receipt of the request.
3. Town employees shall be in attendance while town facilities are used by schools.
4. Where the use of equipment has been authorized, damage will be compensated for, for anything incurred beyond normal wear and reasonable use.

### **Other areas to consider:**

- **Times of use**
- **Supervision/staffing**
- **Fees (custodial)**
- **Details of facility maintenance**
- **Liability insurance**
- **Dispute Resolution**
- **Amendments**
- **Termination**

# Advocacy Survival Skills

*Advocacy skills are a set of general guidelines for pleading your case – and for staying in the game long enough to be successful. You may want to review and adapt them as you develop your strategy and tactics for policy change.*

### ***Accentuate the positive!***

Keep your eyes open for positive events that happen in and around your community initiative or because of your group's work.

- When you notice something great happening, even if it's something small, recognize it publicly
- Thank others for their efforts. It will help motivate people to contribute in the future.

### ***Emphasize your organization's values and accomplishments to the community.***

Always highlight the positive values and vision relating to your work. For example, you are ultimately working towards improved community health and safety. Everybody wants to experience these things, so it's difficult for skeptics to argue against the kind of values you promote.

- Keeping public attention focused on values that benefit everyone helps move your initiative along and prevents petty arguments from sidelining your efforts.
- Communicate to others your group's accomplishments: the new programs policies and practices it helped bring about.

### ***Plan for small wins.***

If you aren't able to see any progress after dedicating a lot of time and effort to your mission, interest and motivation won't last very long. People like to see results, no matter how small. Sometimes, significant progress in policy development is slow to show itself. Develop a plan of action that has some shorter term goals or intermediate goals.

### ***Present the issues in the way you want others to see them.***

A common strategy of skeptics or opponents to a proposed policy is to "frame" the issues in such a way that the people or communities most affected by the problem are held responsible for their situations. Instead of responding to criticism in their terms, move support away from their perspective by framing the issue in your own voice.

### ***Keep it simple.***

Small successes help build morale and sustain commitment to the issues. They don't always happen as a result of complex, super involved actions. Give simpler, short-term solutions that move toward a bigger solution.

### ***Take advantage of organizations' procedures for how activities are carried out.***

Advocates can use mandatory public hearings to show support for or opposition against proposed policy changes.

# Advocacy Survival Skills

## ***Check your facts.***

Understand your issues and actions inside out. This involves being able to quote a source of information or point to reliable statistics for claims you make publicly. Facts should guide your actions and public statements. Inaccurate information or documentation could seriously damage your organization's reputation and take attention away from important issues at hand.

- Obtain accurate, high quality information from experts or those who most likely have current facts and figures about the issue and options you present.
- Verify your information. Use as many believable sources as possible.
- Practice using those facts and figures to explain why you're doing what you're doing. Be able to point to the source of your information. Most importantly, express information clearly, showing that you've done more than just know the facts – you understand them.

## ***Be passionate and persistent.***

Working for policy change and ultimately community health can be an uphill battle, because so often the solutions need to be the responsibility of everyone, not just a few. It's important to have the passion and persistence to overcome entrenched attitudes the public may have toward physical activity and health, and possible public resistance to change.

- Passion gives energy to your movement. It can help sway undecided people to your viewpoint, and it helps you focus on your goals.
- Persistence keeps your issues in the public eye, helps you follow through on commitments, and keeps your opponents scrambling to keep up with your dedication.

## ***Be prepared to compromise.***

Influencing policy change sometimes calls for compromise with groups whose goals may not be identical to your own.

- Although you want to stay true to your vision, be open to alternative plans of action or compromises that, although not ideal, may get you closer to your goals.
- Your willingness to compromise fosters good will between you and your opponents by making you appear reasonable. This may encourage wider support within the community, as long as you are not too willing to compromise, which may be perceived as weakness.

## ***Be opportunistic and creative.***

Look out for opportunities to promote your goals and seize them when they come along. This may involve waiting for an appropriate time when you can capitalize on some event related to your objectives.

# Advocacy Survival Skills

***Stay the course.***

Advocates have successfully gone head-to-head with some pretty powerful people. Facing such influential opponents can be scary, especially when they have greater name recognition and resources to oppose you.

As an advocate for your community, you will have credibility with the public – after all, you’re fighting for their well being – increased access to physical activity opportunities. The public will recognize this! The bottom line is this: if you are intimidated into inaction then nothing will change.

***Look for the good in others.***

When you encounter people who disagree with your goals or viewpoint, don’t assume they are “out to get you”.

- Begin by assuming the person doesn’t have the same understanding that you do and is speaking out of lack of information.
- Educate the person. You could even invite them to attend some of your meetings or functions to find out what you’re all about.

***Make issues local and relevant.***

When you bring your issues to the local level, you increase your chances for public support. Issues become relevant to community members when they are close to home. Include statistics for the issue gathered locally and present the issues in a certain way to help community members understand how they will be affected.

***Get broad-based support from the start.***

Even though there may be some differences between your group and key segments of the community, you are likely all (more or less) working towards the same broad goals of helping the community become healthier.

It’s important to include people from “inside the system” in your advocacy efforts. This helps you not only widen your perspective on the issue, but helps you identify “ins” with key organizations and people who can provide valuable support.

***Tie your advocacy efforts to related events.***

Watch for events that might be relevant to your group’s objectives or tactics. Linking to such events helps publicize your cause and strengthen your position in the community.

## Worksheet #2

Use this form to clarify your advocacy strategy. Decide on your overall-goal, the policy or program area for which you are going to advocate, and the information needed to move forward.

Actively discuss options with others!

**Overall Goal:**

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**Policy or Program Goal:**

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**Analysis of Policy or Program Goal:**

**A) What are the related health issues?**

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**B) What are the costs (financial and health) related to the issue?**

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**C) What will the costs of adopting or *not* adopting the policy or program be?**

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**D) What valid and convincing evidence is there that your proposed change will have the desired effect?**

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**Identify Primary and Secondary Audience(s);**

**A) Who has the power to make your proposed change happen (decision-makers)?**

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**B) Who has the power to influence the decision-makers?**

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# Sample Advocacy Tools

*Your primary audience will be decision-makers—the people who have the power to make your suggestions happen.*

*When advocating for policy-change, consider including the following elements:*

- *The costs (financial and health) associated with issue*
- *The cost of adopting or not adopting the proposed policy*
- *Evidence that the policy change is the most effective solution*

The following samples and templates are provided as examples only. They are meant to be personalized with your own experience, community realities and expertise. Letters become much stronger when they are filled with your specific examples and genuine concerns. Feel free to personalize your letter around the backbone of these examples and the information from the corresponding fact sheets.

## **QUICK TIP:**

Shift the “frame” of your proposals from individual responsibility to social and environmental causes. For example, instead of:

“People in the community need to increase their physical activity by walking more”

Try:

“Local municipalities need to create safe walking paths in the community”

# Writing Letters

One of the most popular advocacy tools is letter writing. Such letters can be delivered by post, fax, or email.

Here are some letter writing tips to assist you:

- Letters should be brief—preferably not more than one page
- Cover only one issue per letter
- Make sure your tone is courteous, not confrontational
- Always ensure that the first paragraph of your letter clearly states why you are writing to them i.e. what is your issue
- The next few paragraphs should note your core facts (use the fact sheets to help you with this) and deliver your message
- Next, be specific about what you want them to do
- Conclude by thanking them and asking for a written response
- You can accompany your letter with supporting documents such as fact sheets, news articles, etc.
- Always include your full name, address and other contact information

**YOUR NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY, PROVINCE  
POSTAL CODE**

**COMMITTEE NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY, PROVINCE  
POSTAL CODE**

Dear Operations Advisory Committee:

The **“Your Municipality” PLAY Community Action Network** would like to endorse your decision to extend the construction and implementation of bicycle lanes on 1st Avenue East in **‘Your town’**. We believe it is important that municipalities continue to support active modes of transportation such as walking and cycling.

As you are aware, the benefits of the construction of these bicycle lanes are numerous. These lanes would improve conditions for cyclists while reducing the likelihood of injury, encourage active living, reduce the amount of vehicular traffic on the roadway thus improving air quality and establish a link between the downtown core and local parks.

It is our hope that as any road way comes up for review your Committee will support the construction of bicycle lanes which will ultimately result in a healthier and safer community. Best wishes in your pursuit of this endeavour.

Sincerely,

**“Your Municipality” PLAY Community Action Network**

NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY, PROVINCE  
POSTAL CODE

NAME OF DECISION-MAKER  
ORGANIZATION  
ADDRESS  
CITY, PROVINCE  
POSTAL CODE

DATE

Dear 'Decision-maker',

Recent studies suggest that children and youth in Grey Bruce are not getting enough physical activity for optimal growth and development. Furthermore, a sample of children from Grey Bruce showed that 29% were classified as overweight or obese, which is higher than the provincial average.

Children who are overweight are more likely to be overweight as adults and have increased risk of developing a range of chronic diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes. Given that childhood is a critical period for the development of lifelong habits and that **'target organization'** is a group where children spend a lot of time, it is imperative that **'target organization'** supports children in making healthy choices.

Recent research shows that although children in Grey Bruce understand the importance of being physically active, it is not reflected in their behaviour. Experts recommend policy-development as a key factor in supporting children in changing their behaviour.

We would like to encourage you to create a physical activity policy that will support the creation of programs and environments that encourage children to be physically active. Creating a physical activity policy for your organization is a vital part of ensuring that children in our community have the best chance for a healthy and active start. We would be happy to support the creation of your policy by providing input, including statistics, research and program ideas.

We welcome the opportunity for further discussion on this issue.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

**YOUR NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY, PROVINCE  
POSTAL CODE**

**MAYOR / PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
COUNCIL / COMMITTEE NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY, PROVINCE  
POSTAL CODE**

**DATE**

To whom it may concern,

The **'Your Municipality'** *PLAY Community Action Network* believes that our community would benefit from the development of more activity-friendly facilities to increase families' active living opportunities and boost the overall health of the community.

Providing aesthetically pleasing and well-maintained walking and cycling tracks between residential areas and popular destinations (local schools and recreation areas) will encourage active transport methods, such as walking and cycling, and promote healthy lifestyles.

Maintenance of streets and recreation areas, improved safety and the availability of facilities like public restrooms, rest areas and shelter/shade also play a big part in how activity friendly our community is.

*Insert a specific suggested improvement that can be made in your municipality here. For example, additional bicycle racks outside your local library or more shade provided at a local children's playground.*

Families are more likely to spend time outside being physically active if their local environment has been thoughtfully created to encourage active living and outdoor pursuits. **'Council Name'** can play a vital role in improving the lifestyle options for residents and the future of their families by providing these facilities.

We welcome the opportunity for further discussion on this issue.

Sincerely,

***'Your Municipality' PLAY Community Action Network***

**YOUR NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY, PROVINCE  
POSTAL CODE**

**PRINCIPAL'S NAME  
SCHOOL  
ADDRESS  
CITY, PROVINCE  
POSTAL CODE**

**DATE**

Dear *'Principal's Name'*,

I am writing to you today as the parent of **'child's name'** to suggest that **'school name'** start up a walking school bus to increase the students' physical activity opportunities via active transportation to and from school.

A walking school bus is a group of students who walk to and from school along a safe set route, accompanied by a minimum of two parent or trained student supervisors. The walking school bus picks up passengers along the way at designated stops. You can find more information at: <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca>.

The benefits to active transportation are numerous. It allows students to incorporate moderate physical activity into their day, creates a safer environment around the school as the car-traffic is reduced, increases socializing with other students, builds neighbourhood cohesion and lessens parental safety concerns.

Many parents say that lack of time and concerns about safety are the major factors preventing them from encouraging their children to walk or cycle to school. Organized walking groups alleviate both of these problems and enable a large number of students, who would otherwise miss out, the opportunity to walk to school.

I welcome the opportunity for further discussion on the issue.

Sincerely,

***'Your Name'***

**Attention Assignment Editor:**

**Media Advisory**

Month day, year

**Title of Media Advisory**

This template is not for news releases to the general public. Its purpose is to invite media to an event or news conference, or to solicit media cooperation in a media campaign. If you are notifying them of an event, specify the purpose, list of speakers, date, time, location and directions (the five W's: who, what, where, when and why). Try to keep it to one page. Instead of indenting paragraphs, leave a blank line between them.

**Attachments:**

[Optional – if you have a feature article, backgrounder, fact sheet, etc.]  
[Name of attachment]

**For more information:**

Contact name  
Title  
Organization  
Contact phone number

**Attention News Editor:**

**News Feature**

**For Immediate Release**

Month day, year

**Title of News Feature**

A news feature presents a point of view on an issue and backs up that point of view with examples and data. It is similar to a feature story you would read in a newspaper. It usually contains quotes from at least one credible source, preferably a local source. Use local statistics, events and analogies if possible. Double-space. Try to keep it to one page. Instead of indenting paragraphs, leave a blank line between them.

End the news feature with a line similar to “For further information please visit. . .”.

**Attachments:**

[Optional – if you have a backgrounder, fact sheet, etc.]

[Name of attachment.]

**For more information:**

Contact name

Title

Organization

Contact phone number

# Local Success Stories

**The following success stories are meant to celebrate the triumphs of local organizations and community champions, and to inspire others to tackle advocacy and policy change.**

**Stories may belong to one or more of the following categories:**

1. Existing policies that support physical activity for local children and youth.
2. Successful advocacy and policy change initiatives.
3. Successful physical activity programs—these types of stories can be used to build awareness, communicate the need for action and provide supportive examples to be used during your advocacy efforts.

**Use these success stories (or your own!) to:**

- Make the case for how policy can create supportive environments for physical activity.
- Generate media attention and have your message heard.
- Motivate others to get involved in your advocacy efforts—show them what's possible!

# Local Success Stories

## **Spirit In Motion**

Spirit In Motion was created by the Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board in 2005. The program, which is based on the Peers Running Organized Play Stations (PROPS) model gathers students from all eleven elementary schools in active workshops to learn leadership skills and basic playground games. Through peer mentoring these skills are transferred to other children at their school. This proactive approach to meaningful playground time uses games such as rock-paper-scissors, skipping and four-squares to get kids active, promote leadership and resolve conflict. These skills transcend from the playground to the classroom, the home and the community. Spirit In Motion also promotes inclusiveness by training leaders to encourage students to play who might not otherwise get involved, out of shyness or a feeling of being awkward. The program supports the board's Safe Schools Policy that addresses the issue of bullying behaviour within schools. Overall outcomes include improved behaviour on the playground, a decrease in bullying incidents and increased participation in active play.

## **Bruce Grey Catholic School Board : Late Busing Program**

The Bruce Grey Catholic School Board provides funding for a late busing services as part of the school budget. The service is provided three nights a week to help support students and their parents by allowing students to participate in after-school activities regardless of where they live in the area and whether or not they have access to a vehicle. Most school boards cut this busing service years ago when budgets tightened. However, The Bruce Grey Catholic School board has avoided the temptation to cut funding as they believe it addresses the transportation realities of living in our rural area. The Board and schools believe strongly in supporting student involvement in after-school endeavors, including physical activities, and therefore ensure it's funding in the budget each year. By reducing transportation barriers, this service makes it easier for kids to be physically active after school!

# Local Success Stories

## **Local Youth Successfully Advocate for Policy Change!**

In 2008 youth from the Youth Action Alliance (YAA) of Grey Bruce set out to make change and advocate for the abolishment of smoking in cars with children. The campaign piggy backed on the proposed Bill 11, which would ban smoking in cars with children 16 and under. The youth wanted their voices heard, and figured the only way was to be as creative as possible. Their goal was to inform as many people as possible in the shortest amount of time. During National Non Smoking Week in 2008 the youth took to the streets, local hockey arenas and to the mall in Owen Sound to campaign for a smoke-free ride. The youth designed cardboard cars, and wore them in public while handing out smoke-free messaging to get their point across. The campaign was a huge success and was picked up by media outlets throughout Grey Bruce. After youth laid the awareness ground work they then approached local town councils and asked each council if they would send a letter of support for Bill 11 if they felt the cause was worthy enough. Of the 7 councils approached all sent in letters. As a result of the work the YAA did in coordination with other youth, lobby groups and Politicians the bill passed and came into effect January 21, 2009.

## **Bike Lanes in Saugeen Shores**

The Saugeen Shores Parks and Trails Advisory Committee put advocacy into action by selecting and advocating for the construction of bike lanes on seven area roads during reconstruction projects. The roads all lead to connections to local trails and beach areas. After their motion was passed, recommendations were made and approved by council in March, 2009. While council members noted the cost associated with the construction will be a barrier, this is still evidence of success. This success can help sustain commitment to the issue and move toward a bigger goal of securing funding for the project.

# Local Success Stories

## **Saint-Dominique-Savio Innovative in Getting Kids Active!**

Saint-Dominique-Savio is a small French-language school in Owen Sound that has been truly innovative in getting students active. As the physical education teacher, Marc-André Proulx has been instrumental in making the school environment a place that encourages and supports physical activity. In fact, physical activity is so well incorporated into the school's daily routine, that it is virtually impossible not to be active! Each and every classroom has successfully blended physical activity with their standard curriculum.

Each day in the kindergarten class a senior student conducts Daily Physical Activity (DPA) with the children. Senior students not only lead but, many of the students, actually create their own activities and incorporate the ongoing kindergarten curriculum subjects.

In Mme Morin's grade 1 and 2 class stationary bikes and stability balls are available for students to move and exercise while listening to the teacher's lesson or doing silent reading. In Mme DesRoche's grade 2 and 3 class, stability balls have replaced chairs at every desk, including the teacher's! Students are allowed to lightly bounce or roll at their desk while lessons are taught. This helps them to develop better posture and learn to multitask from a very young age.

The grade 4 and 5 classes take part in "Points pour les collations saines" (Healthy Snacks Point Rewards) which is a program that they created to eliminate junk food in the school. The kids are able to earn points based on what they bring to school, with the most points being awarded for fruits and vegetables.

The grade 6 class was unable to make use of stability balls because of the limitations of their portable classroom, but they have not let this limit them from being active! Instead they take part in "Marchons d'un océan à l'autre" (Walk from one Ocean to the Other). With a donation from the Heart and Stroke Foundation each student and the teacher was given a pedometer. They have incorporated math into the program by having each child calculate their distance from Ocean to Ocean. So far they have left Victoria and are planning to walk all the way to Newfoundland!

Ping pong tables are set up in the grade 7 and 8 classes and in the teacher's lounge. The tables have brought success in getting the students and teachers active and in building teamwork. The

# Local Success Stories

teachers and administrators at Saint-Dominique-Savio believe strongly in positively role modeling physically active behaviour for their students. Staff members are encouraged to be physically active through opportunities such as yoga classes – which are also a great stress reliever.

Besides the classroom innovations, students benefit from many other school-wide activities, including: intramurals that are offered four times a week, snowshoeing on snow-days, organized sports, hip hop classes, winter electives and the newest project a Heart and Stroke skipping team. Saint-Dominique-Savio is a model school for physical activity. Marc-André acknowledges that none of these activities would have been possible without the dedicated support of his fellow teachers, school administration and parents who believe strongly in physical education, DPA and supporting healthy, active students. Saint-Dominique-Savio challenges other schools and community groups who work with children to ‘think-outside-the-box’ in creating innovative opportunities that make it easy for kids to be physically active!

## **Bruce Peninsula Secondary School Creates Supportive Environments for Physical Activity—Without Traditional Playground Equipment!**

Bruce Peninsula District School (BPDS) in Lion's Head is a unique place. Along with St. Edmunds School in Tobermory, BPDS is one of two schools in Ontario to be recognized as an Associate Schools Project Network (ASP-net) school. This UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) designation means that BPDS and St. Edmunds try to create programming that adheres to the four pillars of UNESCO: Human Rights, World Concerns, Intercultural Learning and Environmental Concerns. BPDS is also a place that promotes healthy lifestyles for all students and staff. On their vast expanse of playground, traditional playground equipment does not exist. In 2008, the final swing set disappeared when the health and safety requirements became too expensive to maintain. However, this has not deterred the students from being physically active! In fact, Principal Matt Pickett and Vice Principal Patti Hellyer both recognize that "healthy play" is not about having expensive playground equipment. Mr. Pickett points out that, "A swing set is only good for one or two students to swing, whereas a ball can keep 20 students moving." BPDS is a very

# Local Success Stories

special rural school that provides a variety of opportunities for students to be active. Many staff like long time teacher Mrs. Janice Eckenswiller (or Mrs. E as her students know her) have spent years working to keep students active and encouraging the administration team to keep promoting a healthy lifestyle among students. Mrs. E has been a mastermind behind school track meets and cross-country meets at the school for many years. "Students learn by doing, and part of play is learning new games and getting along with your peers," grade 5/6 teacher Terri McIver points out. A typical playground day at BPDS might include 4-square, soccer, basketball, crazy-carpetting, road hockey, running the track or playing many of the games that students have made up like "shed tag". McIver also points out that, "Students are definitely active and the more they tire themselves out on the playground, the more they can focus on the lessons in the classroom." Vice Principal Mrs. Hellyer points out that, "We are not that different from other schools, but we have noticed that behaviour issues on the playground drop off significantly if the students are active." The desire to keep students active has also become part of the school routine for many teachers who utilize "brain gym-like" activities in the morning to get blood flowing and the brain working. The school is also a very active "community hub" in the evening. After school sports and community groups use the school for everything from dance to badminton. Mr. Pickett points out that the school has also applied for some external funding for 2009-10 through the Royal Bank in order to provide some busing and activities for students after school. Pickett points out that, "Our goal is to mix literacy and homework club with lots of activities like music, hip-hop dancing and gym activities that students might otherwise not be able to access."

## **On the Move: "Girls Night Out"**

"Girls Night Out", run by a Dundalk teen, provides an opportunity for girls to have an enjoyable and positive recreation experience while increasing their comfort levels in physical activity environments. The program was designed to accept girls of all shapes, sizes, abilities and interests and was targeted at a local elementary school. A community "champion" was found in the school's principal who was integral to making the program a success by hosting the program at the school—a place where the girls could easily get to in their rural community. Each week the girls were provided with a

# Local Success Stories

healthy snack (possible through a grant from Grey Bruce Partners in Health) and varying physical activities. Volunteers from the community came each week to teach the girls a new activity (i.e. ballet, tae kwon do, etc.). Turn-out for the program was a huge success with 22 girls consistently attending. The program even attracted media attention and was featured in the local newspaper. With help from the Grey Bruce Health Unit a “how to guide” was created to help others start up the program in their own community. The program filled a definite need in this under-served area and the simple, low-cost approach can be easily adapted and sustained in other communities.

## **Saugeen Shores Community Action Network (SS CAN)**

As part of the “PLAY in Bruce Grey” initiative, the Saugeen Shores Community Action Network (SS CAN) was formed in the summer of 2007. In 2008, the CAN team participated in a number of physical activity events including the Bruce Power Beach Party, Southampton’s 150<sup>th</sup>, Family Day and Kite Night. While all events were successful in getting kids active, group members were also interested in exploring ways to have a broader impact within the community.

Using the PLAY-Friendly Report Card as a guide, the SS CAN identified a number of priority areas within the community for advocacy was needed. Active transportation, specifically walkability within Port Elgin and Southampton, came out on top of the list. As such, a sub-committee of the CAN began working to develop a walkability checklist to be distributed to all students within Port Elgin and Southampton. The initiative would be incorporated as part of the annual Turn Off The Screens challenge within the local school boards. The survey, complete with an introduction, a walkability checklist, ideas for improvement and traffic safety rules, was sent home with students to complete during the week. Families were asked to walk their neighbourhood, complete the checklist and return it to their school for a chance to win prizes donated by the municipality.

Results from the walkability checklists were presented to Council and members were challenged to complete the walkability checklist in their own communities. The survey and checklist serve as a powerful tool for gathering information and building the case for making environmental changes to support active transportation.

# Local Success Stories

## **Cape Croker Elementary School: Celebrating Traditional Ways of Life Through Walking**

Featured on Green Communities Canada's Active and Safe Routes to School website is Cape Croker Elementary School in Wairton. The following story was featured in their August 2008 newsletter:

"Local champion Laura Robinson has worked for the past few years with students from Cape Croker School in Wairton, encouraging physical activity through cycling and cross country skiing. To further promote the idea of active transportation and relate it to tradition Laura worked with school staff and others on an exciting project focused on daily physical activity. Some of the students have become avid mountain bikers and are competing in the Ontario elementary school mountain bike championships. A bicycle repair clinic, arranged with the assistance of Jolley's Alternative Wheels in Owen Sound, was held for the students and their families to teach bike repair skills. On an additional evening, Laura taught mountain biking skills to the students.

A community walk was arranged and two inspiring long-distance runners from the 1960's, Charlie Nelson and Patrick Bruyere, offered to participate with the students, along with Violet Caibaisoai, a 'water-walker'. The event kicked off with a talk from Violet and Charlie about the relationship between running and traditional life. They incorporated drumming into the talk and the grade 5-8 girls, dressed in their drumming skirts, drummed with the women's drums. Violet taught them a song which was extremely moving. The walk, which took about one-and-a-half hours, incorporated an amazing water ceremony that mesmerized the students."

For more information, go to: <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/featuredschool.asp>

## RESOURCES

# Physical Activity Advocacy & Policy Resources

### **Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada**

A national voluntary non-profit organization whose mission is to further the study, prevention and reduction of disability and death from heart disease and stroke through research, education and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. The Foundation is taking a leadership role in advocating for heart healthy public policy. For more information:

<http://www.heartandstroke.on.ca>

### **Physical Activity Resource Centre (PARC)**

PARC provides physical activity promoters in public health, recreation, and community health centres in Ontario with training, consultation, networking, referrals, and resource and information services. The PARC Workbook for Influencing Physical Activity Policy is an excellent resource to assist in the development of policies that support physical activity. For more information visit:

<http://www.ophea.net/parc/>

To access the online PARC Physical Activity Policy Workbook:

<http://www.ophea.net/parc/policy.cfm>

### **Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE) Formerly: CAHPERD**

PHE Canada is a national not-for-profit, volunteer organization committed to the health and well-being of young Canadians. It brings together teachers, administrators, researchers, coaches, students and others with an interest in physical activity and health. Their website has an excellent “advocacy action centre” with sections devoted to parents, teachers and administrators. It also features the Quality Daily Physical Education Report Card. For more information visit:

<http://www.phecanada.ca/eng/index.cfm>

To access the QDPE Report Card:

[http://www.cahperd.ca/eng/physicaleducation/qdpe\\_report\\_card.cfm](http://www.cahperd.ca/eng/physicaleducation/qdpe_report_card.cfm)

# Physical Activity Advocacy & Policy Resources

## **Statistics Canada's Community Profiles**

Statistics Canada provides free community profiles online. These profiles contain information for all Canadian communities (cities, towns, reserves). Information categories include population, education, earnings and work, income by families and dwellings and religious breakdown.

You can use this tool to learn about the low-income population in your community and use this information to build greater commitment to increasing physical activity policies that support low-income families and their children.

To access the community profile resource:

<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E>

## **ParticipACTION**

ParticipACTION is the national voice for physical activity and sport participation in Canada. Originally established in 1971, ParticipACTION was relaunched in 2007 to help prevent the looming inactivity and obesity crisis that faces Canada. It works with its partners, which include sport, physical activity, recreation organizations, government and corporate sponsors, to inspire and support Canadians to move more. For more information visit:

[www.participACTION.com](http://www.participACTION.com)

## **Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA)**

CPRA is dedicated to the enhancement of quality community leisure services, lifestyles and environment for all Canadians through the efforts of its members and allies in advocacy, education, information sharing, policy development and national initiatives. They developed an excellent toolkit called "Everybody gets to play: Recreation without barriers" that mobilizes communities to reduce the barriers to recreation for low-income families and their children. For more information:

<http://www.cpra.ca/>

To access the "Everybody gets to play" toolkit Ontario supplement:

<http://www.cpra.ca/EN/main.php?action=cms.EgtpFacts>

# Physical Activity Advocacy & Policy Resources

## **Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea) – Living School: Physical Activity**

Ophea is an online community of individuals and organizations committed to improving the physical health and well-being of children and youth. For more information, visit:

<http://www.livingschool.ca/Ophea/LivingSchool.ca/physicalactivity.cfm>

## **Coalition for Active Living**

Coalition for Active Living is a national action group of more than 100 organizations committed to making sure that the environments where we live, learn, commute, work and play support regular physical activity. CAL is working to achieve this goal by advocating for public policies that support physical activity. The website includes a section with sample letters that have been sent out as part of their ongoing advocacy.

<http://www.activeliving.ca/English/index.cfm?fa=whatwedo.advocacy>

## **GoodLife Kids Foundation**

Silken Laumann has joined forces with GoodLife Kids Foundation. This kid-friendly website offers a variety of activities and information for parents, teachers and kids. For inspiration on getting kids active and words from Silken, visit:

<http://www.goodlifekids.com>

## **Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability**

The Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability (ALACD) promotes, supports and enables Canadians with disabilities to lead active, healthy lives. They provide nationally coordinated leadership, support, encouragement, promotion and information that facilitates healthy, active living opportunities for Canadians of all abilities across all settings and environments. For more information, go to:

<http://www.ala.ca>

# Physical Activity Advocacy & Policy Resources

## **Children's Fitness Tax Credit**

The government of Canada allows a non-refundable tax credit based on eligible fitness expenses paid by parents to register a child in a prescribed program of physical activity. For details, go to the Canada Revenue Agency website:

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/fitness/>

## **Canadian Tire JumpStart**

Canadian Tire JumpStart is a community-based charitable program that helps kids in financial need participate in organized sport and recreation such as hockey, soccer and swimming. For more information, visit:

[www.canadiantire.ca/jumpstart](http://www.canadiantire.ca/jumpstart)

## **Public Health Agency of Canada**

The Public Health Agency of Canada offers a range of up-to-date information on children's health, including safe, supportive environments and physical activity. From this website you can access a pdf version of The Pan-Canadian Healthy Living Strategy. For more information, visit:

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/index-eng.php>

## **Active 2010**

Active 2010 is a comprehensive strategy to increase participation in sport and physical activity throughout Ontario. The website offers great tools and tips for getting active and a collection of up-to-date news articles about physical activity. For more information, visit:

[www.active2010.ca](http://www.active2010.ca)

# Physical Activity Advocacy & Policy Resources

## **Active & Safe Routes to School, Green Communities Canada**

The Active & Safe Routes to School program in Ontario is supported jointly by Green Communities Canada, Transport Canada's Moving on Sustainable Transportation initiative, Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, the Public Health Agency of Canada and a host of local partners and supporters. This website provides resources, tools, information and links for schools and communities to create their own unique Active & Safe Routes to School program. All the resources for teachers are linked to the Ontario Curriculum! Go to the link below to learn more and see how you can get involved!

<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/>

## **Active Healthy Kids Canada**

Active Healthy Kids Canada advocates the importance of quality, accessible, and enjoyable physical activity participation experiences for children and youth. A national leader in the area, they provide expertise and direction to decision makers at all levels, from policy-makers to parents. They are dedicated to increasing the attention given to, investment in, and effective implementation of physical activity opportunities for all Canadian children and youth. Annually, they release Canada's Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. For more information, and to access the Report Card visit:

[www.activehealthykids.ca](http://www.activehealthykids.ca)

## **Active Living By Design**

Active Living By Design is an organization that works to increase physical activity and healthy eating through community design. Their vision is that all communities be healthy where routine physical activity and healthy eating are accessible, easy and affordable to everyone. For more information, got to:

<http://albd.quietdns.net/>

# Grant Writing Tips

For more information and tips on grant writing, go to:

**The Health Communication Unit (THCU)**  
“Strategies for Effective Proposal Writing”

[www.thcu.ca](http://www.thcu.ca)

**Ontario Trillium Foundation**

Tips, tools, templates and examples for writing grant proposals.

<http://www.trilliumfoundation.org/cms/en/ToolsAndTips.aspx>

<http://www.trilliumfoundation.org/cms/en/TemplatesAndExamples.aspx>

**Have an idea, but need funding?**

CharityVillage.com contains links to online directories of Canadian funding agencies.

<http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/ires/fund.asp>

## Use this toolkit to help you prepare your grant proposal!

### Identifying the need:

1. The fact sheets and language in this toolkit can be used to help you explain how the need for your project was identified. Use a combination of national, provincial and local statistics to paint a complete picture of the issue. Cite studies like the Bluewater Nutrition Project and SHAPES to show that the issue of physical inactivity is local and relevant.
2. Next, narrow down your need to a specific population. Choose a specific age group, gender or neighbourhood in your community in which the need is most prevalent.
3. What are the main barriers to physical activity for that population? This means narrowing down your need statement to something more specific and tangible. For example, within that population, physical inactivity could be related to transportation barriers, cost of participation, or a lack of unstructured opportunities. Be sure to consider how policy could provide a solution to each of these issues.

### Project goals:

The recommendations section can be used to help you decide on or tailor your project goal. The recommendations are based on current best (or promising) practices, so be sure to point this out. Also, by framing your project from an advocacy or policy standpoint you can clearly address the sustainability aspect that many grants require.

### Always communicate with the funding organization!

Before you begin your application, call and speak with the funding organization. Find out if you are eligible and familiarize yourself with the funder's priorities and mirror these in your application.

# Cool Cat CAN PLAY

*Use your  
Imagination and  
create costumes for  
each of the  
characters in the  
skit!*

*Performing this skit  
is a great chance to  
draw media  
attention to your  
issue!*

*Invite the media and  
use this opportunity  
to tie in your  
advocacy efforts by  
making a statement  
about policies that  
support children in  
being physically  
active!*

Get children in your community laughing and **PLAY**ing with this “Cool Cat” skit developed by the Brockton - South Bruce Community Action Network.

Cool Cat is the star of the show and with his crazy, fun ways he will get everyone playing! The scene takes place in a local park where Bear and Cool Cat find themselves having fun playing together, but wishing they had more friends to play with. This leads them on a silly search for skunk, who is often hiding under the bridge. Skunk watches from afar wishing she too could play, and eventually finds the courage to join her new friends in the fun.

The skit is about having fun playing. It teaches children to include others and that finding the courage to join new playmates is a rewarding experience.

At the end of the skit, engage children in making a list of the things they like to play, and leave them with a copy of the connect-the-dots activity.

# COOL CAT CAN PLAY

Characters:   Cool Cat (Bright Orange Cat)  
                  Bear  
                  Skunk

Scene: The park

**Narrator: It's an early morning at the park. The birds are chirping, the bees are buzzing, and the animals in the park are ready to start their play day.**

(Skunk wakes and stretches, then slumps and says with a sigh: What am I going to do today? I don't have anyone to play with...(sad, put's head back down and goes back to sleep)

Then Bear moves to the edge of the river and starts swatting with his big paws in an attempt to catch fish. Then Cool Cat comes on the scene surfing on a log down the Saugeen, smiling , laughing, yelling and playing. Skunk startles awake and is watching all of this from a distance, without being noticed.

Bear: Hey, what are you doing Cool Cat! (the "Hey" is very gruff and scary but the rest of the sentence is finished with a hearty belly laugh) Get away-you are scaring all my fish! Ha! Ha!

Cool Cat: Oh sorry Bear, I'm just having some fun playing in the water!

Bear: You are always playing something....what are you playing today?

Cool Cat : Well, whatever I feel like playing.....baseball, soccer, skipping....Did you know I am the fastest cat in Lobby's Park!?! Hey....do you want to play with me?

Bear: Yah! I would love to. I can fish anytime. Hey Cool Cat, you may be fast ....but I am strong!

Cool Cat: Mr. Strong Man!!!! Oh yeah? Well...YOUR IT!   Cool Cat and Bear start playing tag. Skunk is watching them from afar.

Skunk: They look like they are having so much fun. I just have to build up enough courage to ask them if I can play too. I really really really really want to play with them. It looks like they are playing tag....I LOVE that game! I don't know what to do....

Skunk says to the audience: Do you think I should go over to Cool Cat and Bear and ask them if I can play too? I'm really scared. Bear looks big and mean.....but look at the fun he's having..... Do you think I should take a chance and have some fun? Do you think I can do it? Skunk sits pensively, thinking and wondering what he should do....

Cool Cat and Bear switch to "Cool Cat says": Now lets play Cool Cat says!!!!

Cool Cat says do 5 jumping jacks, Cool Cat says touch your nose, touch your toes! Bear does all the actions with Cool Cat only Cool Cat doesn't touch his toes and says: Ha, I got you, I didn't say Cool Cat says! Then they fall to the ground laughing. They realize it would be a whole lot more fun though, if they had more friends to play with.

Cool Cat: Hey Bear, it would be even more fun playing if we had more friends to play with....Oh, where is that cool skunk that lives under the bridge? We should ask him to play.....

Bear: Good idea Cool Cat, the more friends, the more fun!

All three start walking backwards, sideways, oblivious to each other....

Skunk is building his confidence saying: By golly, I think I will ask them if I can play! I can do it! Do you think I can do it???

All 3 are backing up and they bump into each other. All three jump up and scream with laughter!

Bear: sniffing.....What's that smell?

Skunk: Oops...sorry, I got excited!

Cool Cat: That's ok Skunk! We love you just the way you are (Everyone hugs) Do you want to play Skunk?

Skunk: I would love to!

Bear: How about a game of leap frog?

Cool Cat and Skunk say in unison: Yah!

And they play a game of leap frog.

Skunk: What a cool game!

The three end with a song: If you are playing and you love it clap your hands, if you are playing and you love it clap your hands, if you are playing and you love it and you really want to show it, if your playing and you love it clap your hands!

Skunk: What was so much fun!

Cool Cat: Yeah ... We're just doing what our hearts and minds and our dancing feet are telling us ... PLAYING ALL DAY!

Cool Cat: (to audience) ... well cool cats ~ are you having fun? Have cool cat put his hands to his ears ... Would you like to play with us? And wait for the YES ... I can't hear you .... (audience) YES ... louder ....(audience) YES. Ok! Everybody stand and we will all play a game of Cool Cat Says!  
Cool Cat says raise your hands to the sky  
Cool Cat says jump up and down  
Cool Cat says touch your nose  
Touch your toes-hey , gotcha-I didn't say Cool Cat says!!!!

Bear: AHH! You got me again!

Cool Cat: One more.... Cool Cat says run on the spot!

Great job everyone, we have had so much fun with you today. Bear, Skunk and I have one more thing we want to do with you so please sit down again and put on your listening ears (put on great big ears-Cool Cat, Bear and skunk) Cool Cat, Bear and Skunk can look at each other and say:  
Are you ready, I am ready, you look ready....

Skunk says to audience:

We can see that you really like to play! You've heard some ideas from my new friends Cool Cat and Bear...Let's try and think of 10 different things you like to play and Bear will write them down for us!

Kids response

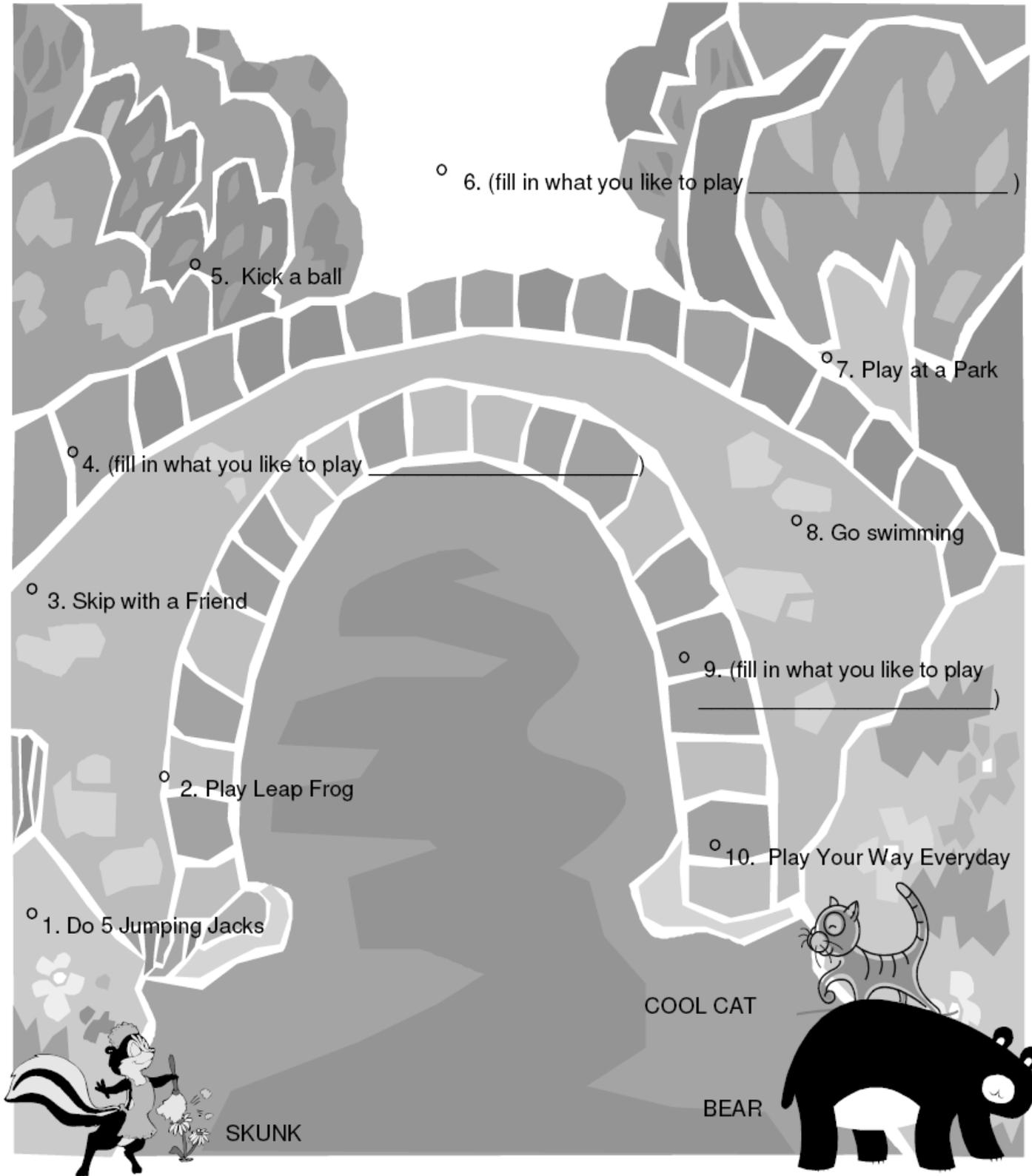
(If the kids don't come up with things like tag, red light/green light, etc say: Think about when you have friends over, what could you play outside together?)

Kids response

Wow, you really do like to play! We had a lot of fun with you today. Thank you so much for playing and sharing with us. All your ideas that bear wrote down will be in a special place in your school so everyone can read what you like to play in your free time. In a few minutes you will go back to your classroom with your teacher, and your teacher will lead you in 10 more minutes of fun! Your teacher will also give you fun activity sheet you can take home to play and show your parents. Don't forget to play everyday!!!

Bye kids, thanks for playing!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Skunk needs some help finding his friends, Cool Cat and Bear.  
Can you help Skunk get over the bridge? Connect the dots and play with Skunk along the way!



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