

F/P/T After-School Time Period Physical Activity Workshop
May 4th, 2010
Toronto, Ontario

Post-Workshop Report

Introduction

Purpose and Background of the 2010 Federal/Provincial/Territorial After-School Time Period Physical Activity Workshop

In May of 2008, Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) Ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation (SPAR) set Pan-Canadian targets to increase children and youth physical activity levels of 2015. As part of this work, Ministers directed officials to explore the after-school time period as a key opportunity to promote physical activity to children and youth since research shows this is a highly sedentary time of day for many young Canadians.

An F/P/T scan of SPAR government department involvement in after-school physical activity initiatives showed that, although a few P/Ts are highly engaged, most jurisdictions were not directly involved in after-school time period physical activity initiatives. The scan also showed that often two or more government departments outside of the SPAR sector had some form of involvement in the after-school time period but these initiatives were not collaborative for the most part.

Therefore, as a first step of the F/P/T work in this area, Deputy Ministers directed officials to hold an after-school workshop geared toward F/P/T officials with the purpose of sharing information and engaging other key stakeholder within and across jurisdictions (NGOs, other government sectors, etc.) in order to build collaboration for work on increasing after-school physical activity.

Organized and funded by the F/P/T Physical Activity and Recreation Committee, the 2010 Workshop objectives were as follows.

1. To facilitate the exchange of information among key multi-sectoral stakeholders about innovative ideas and promising practices that will increase physical activity in the after-school time period
2. To identify creative, sustainable solutions for the challenges that may impede the promotion of physical activity in the after-school time period
3. To agree the next steps for collaborative action after this workshop

Acknowledgements

Over seventy-five delegates attended the Workshop representing federal, provincial and territorial governments responsible for physical activity, health, recreation, sport and education; along with representatives from a number of

national organizations with mandates in sport, physical activity and recreation. See Appendix A for a list of organizations represented at the Workshop.

Rationale for Promoting Physical Activity in the After-School Time Period

Physical Inactivity... A Major Public Health Concern

The majority of Canadian children aged 5-19 years do not perform an adequate amount of daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity to obtain health benefits and an observed decline in physical activity has been coupled with increases in sedentary screen and computer time. Further, declines in childhood measured fitness levels have paralleled the rise in overweight and obesity in Canada.

From 1981 to 2004, the prevalence of overweight (including obesity) has increased two-fold among Canadian children 6-17 years of age. Current estimates show that just over 25% of Canadian children aged 2-17 years are overweight or obese. Obese children are more likely to be obese as adults and can develop many of the same health conditions such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and psychosocial and musculoskeletal disorders.

Physical activity can not only help combat obesity, improve overall physical and mental health, reduce stress and improve concentration, it also promotes correct physical growth and development, regardless of weight status or weight loss. For school-age children and youth, physical activity also has proven to have a positive influence on academic achievement, emotional stability and interaction with others.

Why Focus on the After-School Time Period

The after-school time period (3 – 6pm) is a critical determinant of childhood total physical activity. Approximately 50% of total daily steps taken by children and youth occur in this time period. Many children and youth left alone during the after-school time period tend to watch television, use the computer, or play video games instead of playing outdoors, both by child preference and through parental directive (safety concerns). Researchers also regularly report poor eating habits and increased juvenile crime and antisocial behaviour during this time.

As there is typically no time during regular school hours for additional physical education curricular elements, the after-school time period has the potential to extend the reach of physical activity and to ensure that children and youth receive optimal amounts for their health.

2010 Workshop Pre-Work and Agenda

Workshop participants were asked to complete a 'homework assignment' prior to the event, identifying what each viewed as the greatest barriers (or challenges) to promoting physical activity in the after-school time period and to suggest

solutions to overcome these barriers. A summary of responses can be found in Appendix B.

The Workshop attracted several speakers, both national and international. The speaker roster included: Dr. Adrian Bauman (University of Sydney, Australia), Dr. Lori Connors-Tadros (American After-School Investments Project), as well as Graham Clyne and Heather Cowie presenting the environmental analysis and policy/program recommendations work being done in Alberta, Farida Gabbani and Mike Trinacty presenting on a promising practice in Nova Scotia and Rick Beaver presenting on Ontario's efforts to promote physical activity in the after-school time period.

Throughout the day, participants engaged in small group discussions to review the information shared by these speakers and to brainstorm creative ways to overcome the challenges presented in the after-school time period.

2010 Workshop Outcomes

Workshop participants worked in small 'challenge-based' groups to agree their top three most promising solutions. These solutions were then presented back to the full group. After discussion, each participant was provided with coloured dots and asked to do individual rankings across all of the challenges indicating which 'promising practices' they considered their top priorities.

Overall, the priority direction provided by Workshop participants was as follows. A complete summary of the promising solutions suggested by all 'challenge-based' groups can be found in Appendix C.

Most Promising Solutions (in order of priority)

1. A whole/government, intersectoral approach is needed to address policy and to ensure sustainable resources for physical activity promotion in the after-school time period.

Specifically,
 - roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined...the Recreation Statement may be useful to assist with clarifying F/P/T roles;
 - desired outcomes need to be identified and aligned;
 - both vertical and horizontal relationships between governments and other stakeholders need to be defined; and
 - cost-sharing arrangements need to be developed inclusive of promising practices for cost-sharing that produce sustainable funding; and,
 - F/P/T support needs to be secured and stakeholders need to be consulted in strategic planning process in order to ensure buy-in and commitment at all levels

2. Establish a Canada-wide training standard for all adult and youth leaders involved with the promotion of physical activity in the after-school time period. It is suggested that HIGH FIVE, NCCP fundamental movement skills and first aid be included in this standardized offering. It is also suggested that potential leaders be recruited from both secondary and post-secondary institutions and may include: practicum and co-op students, youth corps, peer leaders, etc.
3. Physical activity must become a policy/funding priority for F/P/T governments.
4. Employ an 'asset based community development approach' where local communities are mapped to understand what resources exist and ensure that emerging program plans are 'child directed'. For example, conduct a 'community asset inventory' (e.g. schools, community centers, church halls, outdoor space, etc.) and make this information available on line to all community partners. Be sure to build on what already exists in the community for after-school time period use....and be more creative about the use of existing space.
5. Delay or adjust regular bus runs. Rather than 3:00 – 3:30 pm runs, keep the kids until 4:45 – 5:00 pm and do a single bus run at that time. This could be very effective with the latch key kids who would otherwise be alone. Use leadership groups and recreation leaders to supervise these programs.
6. Seek "programs" that are simple rather than complex (e.g. parent monitoring a playground) and 'de-program the programs'.

Guiding Principles Informing Strategic Directions for Promoting Physical Activity in the After-School Time Period

The Workshop, although just a first step along the path of improving the health and well-being of school-aged children, was rich in ideas, passion and commitment. Some participants made personal pledges to take action upon their return to their jurisdictions and communities. In addition to the promising solutions that were crafted of the participants, several themes or guiding principles emerged from the presentations of the speakers and from group discussions that bear repeating.

- The goal is changing whole systems...not just one school or community
- The challenge is that children and youth need to be physically active in the after-school time period and *throughout the day* in order to improve health
- Clearly define desired outcomes and set realistic, achievable targets within a given timeframe

- Establish a collective framework for action that clearly defines the requirements for physical activity but is flexible and adaptable to accommodate jurisdictional and community needs
- Align and integrate key partners at all levels so that collective expertise is mobilized
- Align and blend or braid financial resources at all levels, making sure to make the best use of existing resources as well as new
- Find a way to 'harness' community energy
- Begin the work where there is already some community capacity to provide a toe hold
- Ensure that whatever programs and activities are put into place, that they are sustainable within the community by the community
- Identify and recruit after-school physical activity 'champions' at every level
- Programs need to be evaluated and progress tracked against establish targets

Appendix A: Organizations Represented at the Workshop

Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada

Active Healthy Kids Canada

PHE Canada

Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability

ParticipACTION

Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology

Healthy Active Living & Obesity Research Group, CHEO Research Institute

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity

Canadian Child Care Federation

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

Gymnastics Canada

Canadian Association of Principals

Canadian Home and School Federation

University of Ottawa

Federal Government:

Healthy Living Unit, **Public Health Agency of Canada**

Division of Childhood and Adolescence, **Public Health Agency of Canada**

Social Marketing, **Public Health Agency of Canada**

Provincial and Territorial Representation:

Dept. of Tourism, Parks and Recreation, **Government of Alberta**

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation **University of Alberta**

Be Fit For Life Centre, **University of Calgary**

Boys and Girls Clubs - Alberta

YMCA Fitness/YMCA Calgary

Ever Active Schools (Alberta)

Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport, **Government of Manitoba**

Recreation Connections Manitoba

Dept. of Wellness, Culture and Sport, **Government of New Brunswick**

New Brunswick Gymnastics Association

Dept. of Wellness, Culture and Sport, **Government of New Brunswick**

Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador

Dept. of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, **Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**

Dept. of Health and Community Services, **Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**

Dept. of Education, **Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**

Dept. of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, **Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**

Dept. of Municipal and Community Affairs, Sport, Recreation, Youth and Volunteerism, **Government of Northwest Territories**

Dept. of Health Promotion & Protection, **Government of Nova Scotia**

Doctors Nova Scotia

Recreation Nova Scotia

Physical Activity Coordinator, Richmond County, Nova Scotia

Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, Nova Scotia

Dept. of Culture Language Elders and Youth, **Government of Nunavut**

Ministry of Health Promotion, **Government of Ontario**

Ministry of Education, **Government of Ontario**

Ministry of Children and Youth Services, **Government of Ontario**

Parks and Recreation Ontario

Boys and Girls Clubs - Ontario

YMCA Ontario

Dept. of Health and Wellness, **Government of Prince Edward Island**

Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, **Government of Saskatchewan**

Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association

Physical Literacy Wapiti Project - Saskatchewan

Recreation and Parks Association of the Yukon

Dept. of Community Services, Sport and Recreation Branch, **Government of Yukon**

Presenters:

School of Public Health, **University of Sydney**

Consultant for **Alberta Recreation and Parks Association**

The Finance Project, USA

Alberta Recreation and Parks Association

Appendix B: Summary of Challenges and Solutions to Promoting Physical Activity in the After-School Time Period (Homework assignment pre-Workshop)

Note: Thirty (30) workshop participants contributed to the summary below.

Challenge: Lack of accessible and affordable facility space in the after-school period

- Limited access to school facilities due to cost factors (including the need to pay for facility rental) and competing with minor sport and school teams for gym time
- Lack of access to facility space, especially the gym in that time period. It is mostly used by school teams and needs to be shared by all.
- Some schools are closed after hours because of the cost of keeping them open (e.g. janitorial costs, supervision, etc.)
- Lack of cooperation among those who control facilities
- Concerns about facility cost and liability/insurance costs
- People view the gym as the only space for physical activity in the school and may not consider other areas of the school and outside the school
- Weather and poverty: it is difficult in many northern remote communities to sustain outdoor winter programming in January and February

Proposed Solutions to address facility space:

- Schools and community organizations would have to collaborate to work on agreements that would give access to large spaces in the school without impeding the functions of the school programs scheduled after school
- Establish partnerships with: municipalities (in order to solve the insurance issues), government departments, local community health boards, school boards, businesses
- Do not try to implement one partnership model for all...use community development principles...be sure to address community needs
- More effort to bring PE teachers on board
- Stronger buy-in from program leaders to work more closely with the schools...not in spite of the schools

Challenge: Lack of qualified adult and youth leaders to oversee after-school activities

- Too many rules in schools preventing community volunteers from assisting (teacher sponsors are required and they are already strapped to the limit)
- Most teachers have other commitments and new staff are often needed to implement these programs
- There is not a training program for volunteers and/or funding to hire trained staff to plan and run programs/activities
- Need resources to recruit, train and sustain leadership....there is high turnover among front line staff
- Lack of volunteers or supervisors to create a safe place for children (e.g. unstructured play time at the school playground)
- No single person or organization is willing to champion this cause at the community level

Proposed Solutions to address leadership:

- Develop a strategy to recruit leaders from EAs, high school and university students, fitness leaders, parents, etc.
- Think outside the box for leadership. Do not rely on volunteers. In NS we have a model where teacher/education assistants are often hired for 2 extra hours at the end of the day to run after school...they are paid by the municipality so there are no insurance issues and funding comes from a partnership between the Municipality, Dept of Health Promotion and Protection and the School Board
- Using a staff roster where they take turns being present; rewarding participation with gifts or recognition
- Create incentives for people to become leaders, supervisors, volunteers – tax incentive, training funded, honorarium, curriculum credit to teen
- Create opportunities (conferences, seminars, webinars, distance learning) to enhance staff and volunteer knowledge and skills. Do cross-sectoral training with all stakeholders and build a more comprehensive and holistic approach
- Provide High 5 training opportunities for volunteers and all staff working with children and youth
- Training should be quality and skill based re physical activity but also pays attention to how to work well and build relationships with children
- Find ways for senior high school leadership students to work with the elementary school kids
- Pay teachers to run after-school activities

Challenge: Lack of accessible, affordable transportation for students who would like to be involved in after-school activities but rely on bus service

- There is no transportation for participants who miss the bus or a ride
- In a largely rural environment this is a barrier. Bus students leave the school at 3:30 and have either no way to return for programming opportunities or have limited ability to be driven home after the programs end
- Cost of transportation...especially for those in need

Proposed Solutions to address transportation:

- Find funding for late busses and arranging carpooling with families
- Space after school bussing on the hour until 5:00 pm...perhaps parents might pay a fee for the after school recreation opportunities
- Need to stimulate more forms of active transportation (e.g. provide dry bike storage)
- Subsidies – facility owners, programmers and participants could all be appropriate partners for financial support to make opportunities more available, given it is not likely there will be new money

Challenge: Lack of high quality, accessible, targeted programming

- In addition to removing the barriers such as money, access, etc. we need to understand how to motivate children in the after school hours. We need to work toward providing developmentally appropriate activities that ultimately not just fill the time but change lifestyle behaviours
- Youth will not engage just because adults tell them that it is good for them
- Need for age appropriate programs, girls only programs, programming for children with disabilities
- Need accessible programs for children in need
- How we define physical activity can be a barrier...most understand sport activities but this can include informal and unstructured activities as well like walking and playing at the playground
- Lack of easy access to unstructured play opportunities

Proposed Solutions to address programming:

- Provide programs at alternate sites, including the schools
- Engage youth and parents in program design
- Use private companies such as “Daily Dragons” (Taekwondo) that will pick kids up and provide activities off site
- Support of programs such as KidSport and Boys and Girls Club
- Use multi-purpose rooms as well as larger classroom depending on the activity; book well in advance
- Create approaches to “no gym – no problem” or other resources like those offered by CAHPERD
- Subsidize daycare programs

- Establish community policing programs so children are not afraid to play in the neighborhood
- Create a broader definition of physical activity and support financially and through training
- Offer unstructured (supervised) play opportunities in a variety of settings - daycare, home, school, community
- Find creative ways to sustain teens...could involve student leadership opportunities as well as 'teen choice' activities
- Programmers must be more tuned into the needs of youth
- Support the entire family to be active

Challenge: Lack of sustainable, core funding for after-school activities

- The lack of sustainable funding for training leaders, paying leaders, programming costs, transportation costs, equipment costs, facility rental, etc.
- There is often seed money available but this is not sustainable
- The cost for many families to participate in organized after-school activities is often prohibitive...kids who need it can't get it
- Lack of whole government, multi-sectoral approach....still working in silos

Proposed Solutions to funding:

Related to developing a community + school approach...

- Broader vision of the role of the school: the community school concept has begun and is working in NB
- Need a coordinated approach developed in each province and build a business case for investment
- Pilot programs that focus both on direct recreation programming but also on equipping community agencies to integrate quality recreation-based activities into after-school programs. These pilots will help to define what a province-wide approach would look like
- Development of an after-school network/consortium that is community based and supported by all involved

Related to policy development...

- Establish joint use agreements and facilitate a process to bring school and community groups together to reduce the dependency on school based facilities
- Change government legislation to integrate the community into the schools, an office in the school, additional space for recreation activities...take into consideration before building schools
- Develop FPT policies which acknowledge and financially support preventative approaches
- Develop policy that mandates that programs, leaders, training and resources be offered with after school busing. Open the gym and other facilities for safe, supervised drop in play

- Develop policies for equal access to gym space, explore options beyond the gymnasium space, increase outdoor recreation programming and non-traditional programming

Appendix C: Workshop Outcomes Regarding Promising Solutions to Challenges Facing the Promotion of Physical Activity in the After-School Time Period

Note: Workshop participants self-selected into smaller groups to discuss the challenge that most interested them. Each group then identified its top three (3) promising solutions. These solutions are summarized below.

Challenge: Need for Accessible and Affordable Facility Space

Solutions Proposed by Group:

1. Short Term: Conduct a 'community asset inventory' (e.g. schools, community centers, church halls, outdoor space, etc.) and make this information available on line to all community partners. Be sure to build on what already exists in the community for after-school time period use....and be more creative about the use of existing space
Overall Priority #4
2. Medium Term: Establish an after-school 'resource hub' and include facility information. Develop community multi-use facility agreements. Develop and/or adopt accessibility policies (by schools, municipalities, governments, etc.)
3. Long Term: Ensure that the planning for new municipal capital expenditures or retrofits on existing facilities is innovative and creative. Create multi-use facilities and community hubs.

Challenge: Need for accessible, affordable transportation

Solutions Proposed by Group:

1. Delay or adjust regular bus runs. Rather than 3:00 – 3:30 pm runs, why not keep the kids until 4:45 – 5:00 pm and do a single bus run at that time. This could be very effective with the latch key kids who would otherwise be alone. Use leadership groups and recreation leaders to supervise these programs.
Overall priority #5
2. Secure a sponsor(s) to support extra bus runs.
3. Establish partnerships with those who fund the transportation and those who run the transportation and create a bus pass system for the older children.

Challenge: Need to improve programming to ensure that it is high quality, affordable and accessible

Solutions Proposed by Group:

1. Seek “programs” that are simple rather than complex (e.g. parent monitoring a playground) and ‘de-program the programs’.
Overall priority #6
2. Employ an ‘asset based community development approach’ where local communities are mapped to understand what resources exist and ensure that emerging program plans are ‘child directed’.
Overall priority #7
3. Identify common, essential program elements such as physical activity component (30 minutes) and implement according to the local culture.
4. Target special programming for disadvantaged groups based on gender, culture, ability, etc.. However be mindful of linking participants of targeted programs to more ‘mainstream programs’ (transition) where appropriate
5. Seek experience and capacity of people and organizations where you normally do not (e.g. early childhood sector to lead other programs) and use existing resources that are already connected to children and youth. We need to access more diverse partners.
6. Ensure that we offer activities that are accessible by both self-sufficient families and by less sufficient families

Challenge: **Need for qualified adult and youth leaders**

Solutions Proposed by Group:

1. Establish a Canada-wide training standard for all adult and youth leaders involved with the promotion of physical activity in the after-school time period. It is suggested that HIGH FIVE, NCCP fundamental movement skills and first aid be included in this standardized offering. It is also suggested that potential leaders be recruited from both secondary and post-secondary institutions and may include: practicum and co-op students, youth corps, peer leaders, etc..
Overall priority #2
2. Train the current after-school service providers to deliver physical activity programs.
3. Look to the following sources for volunteer leaders: businesses, service clubs, trained experts (e.g. yoga)
4. Form a group of key stakeholders (e.g. municipal government, education, business, service clubs, police, Y, Boys and Girls Club, etc.) to assist with identification of qualified leaders

5. Develop policies to support leaders such as: use of school facility policies, union-related policies, insurance policies
6. Provide incentives to sustain and build ownership among leaders.

Challenge: **Need for policies and sustainable resources**

Solutions Proposed by Group:

1. A whole/government, intersectoral approach is needed to address policy and ensure sustainable resources for physical activity promotion in the after-school time period.

Overall priority #1

Specifically,

- Responsibilities need to be clearly defined...the Recreation Statement may be useful to assist with clarifying F/P/T roles;
- desired outcomes need to be identified and aligned;
- both vertical and horizontal relationships between governments and other stakeholders need to be defined; and
- cost-sharing arrangements need to be developed.

2. Physical activity must become a policy/funding priority for F/P/T governments.

Overall priority #3

3. Need sustainable funding versus seed money. Need to coordinate grant efforts across government departments (amalgamation) and make it easier for community organizations to access. Consider braided funding and value-added evaluation.
4. Create/support community use of schools and joint-use agreements/policies
5. Identify a 'champion' for this entire initiative. It is suggested that this might be an integrated federal/national leadership group or ISRC or CPRA.