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Connected by Nature

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Get Outside & Play



Highlights 2015 – 2018

Professional Learning

- 26 sessions
- 900 individuals

Get Outside and Play Week

- 113 events
- 30 different communities

Recommendation paper

- In progress





Theory of Change – Fall 2018

All young children, 0-6 years old, their families, caregivers and educators in Alberta engage in more active, outdoor play and nature connection. Active outdoor play in the early years:

- Builds a foundation of nature connection that develops life-long environmental literacy and stewardship
- Sparks natural curiosity, exploration and learning.
- Connects young children and their families with their communities, contributing to a sense of place and belonging
- Improves physical literacy and general health outcomes

Early Learning and Care

Children in early learning and care settings have engaging outdoor spaces that encourage nature connection and outdoor play. Educators are trained and confident, able to facilitate and support children in their learning outdoors.

Families and Communities

Outdoor play is widely celebrated and valued in Alberta. Children and families spend more time connecting with nature and participating in outdoor play because engaging spaces and supportive programs are in place.



Professional learning. Early childhood educators are trained on the benefits of outdoor play, how to set up engaging spaces for learning and exploration, and are supported in developing the practical skills needed to work with children in outdoor environments.

Engaging spaces. Early learning and care centres provide engaging spaces that spark children's curiosity through connection with nature, use of loose parts and child-led exploration.

Policy and Practice Alignment. Licensing, Accreditation, Alberta Health Services and other agencies have policies about outdoor play and nature connection that are clear and informed by research. Early learning and care centres are supported in their delivery of outdoor play programs by regulatory agencies.



Promote and support. Families and communities have access to a suite of programs and initiatives offered by a diversity of organizations that help them get outside and play.

Public narrative. A significant public narrative supports the benefits and value of outdoor play in early childhood. This public narrative results in more families and communities getting outside to play.

Community Planning. Municipal planners, landscape architects and others involved in designing public places create spaces that support nature connection and engaging outdoor play for families and communities.

Comments? Contact Christina Pickles at
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DRAFT OUTDOOR PLAY AND EARLY LEARNING ECOSYSTEM



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Our Vision (draft)

Outdoor play is an essential element of healthy child development. Children in early learning and care settings in Alberta will have access to:

- **Engaging outdoor spaces** created with care and attention that incorporate nature, permit a variety of physical activity and support children in their sense of place and community.
- **Abundant time** outside that allows children to play deeply, sparking curiosity, exploration and learning.
- **Early childhood educators** who guide children's learning outdoors and approach outdoor play experiences with enthusiasm, skill and wonder.

Four Working Groups

1. Regulations (Licensing, Health, Accreditation)
2. Post secondary/Professional Learning/Resources
3. Children's Stories and Experiences
4. Research



Regulation

If we were to advocate for one change to childcare licensing regulations which of the following would you suggest and why?

1. **Time.** Regulations should indicate a specific amount of time children are outdoors.
2. **Space.** Regulations should increase the amount of space required per child.
3. **Materials.** Regulations should be more specific about the types of materials available in an outdoor space.
4. **Other?**



Professional Learning

What type of professional learning is needed to support educators in becoming confident at taking children outdoors?



Resources

What resources (guides, funding, clothing etc.) do early childhood educators need to support more outdoor play?



Research

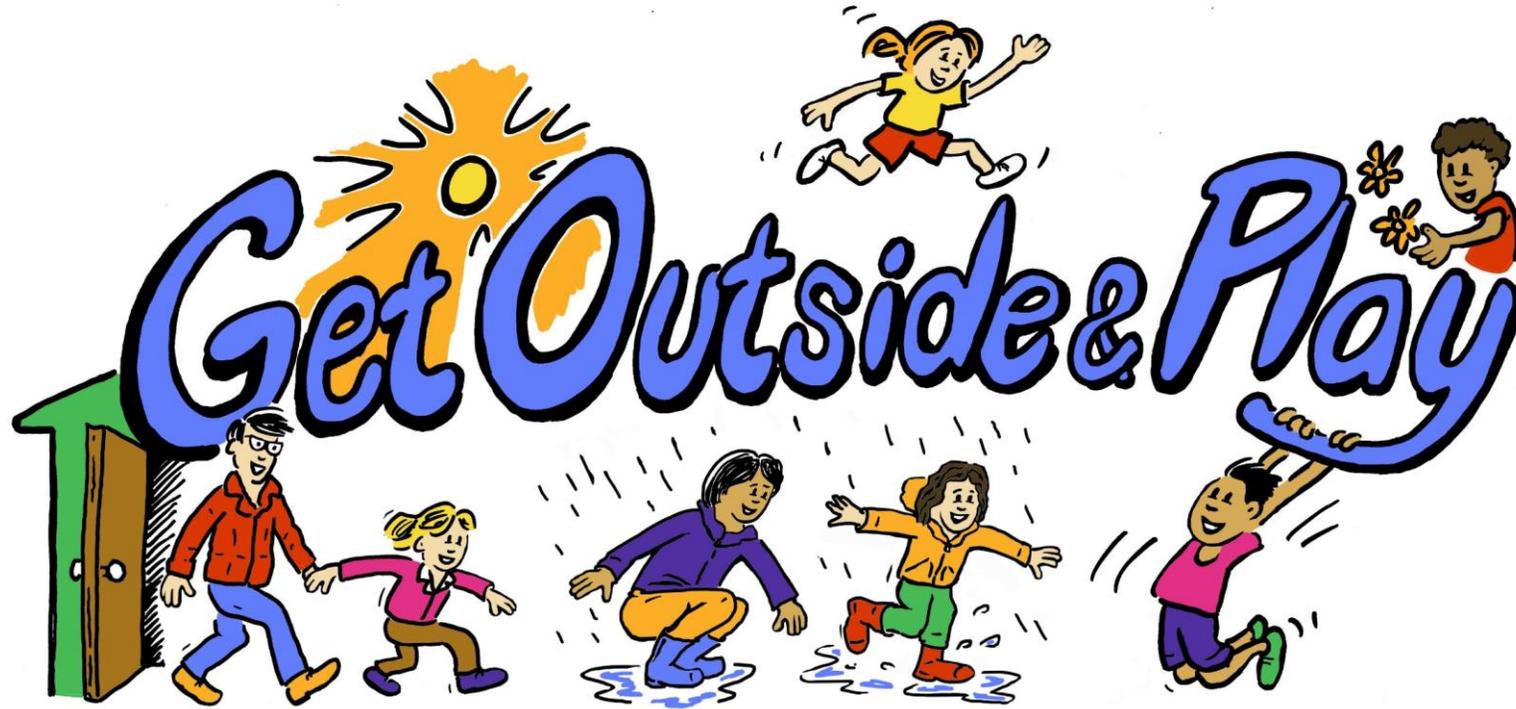


What type of research and on what topics would help us continue to make the case for the importance of outdoor play in early learning and care settings?

Children's Stories and Experiences

How do we bring children's voice into this work? How do we highlight their stories and experiences of outdoor play?





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