



Make The Connection With Your Community Schools: Quality Daily Physical Education for Children and Youth

Did You Know?

- Schools offer an average of less than one hour of physical education per week.¹
- In 2001, only 33% of schools in Canada had formal physical education classes. In most secondary schools, physical education is an optional subject.²
- Three out of five children and youth aged 5 to 17 are not active enough to satisfy the energy expenditure guideline for optimal growth and development.³
- There appears to be a significant increase in overweight among children and youth. Reported levels of obesity among children aged 7 to 13 have nearly tripled in the past two decades.⁴
- Weight-bearing physical activity is important to building bone health. Girls achieve peak bone mass between ages 11 and 14, yet during this time only 30% to 40% of girls are active.⁵

Getting the attention of school boards and principals, developing and assessing curricula, and mobilizing people to take action is a big job. Thankfully, the Canadian Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD) ([link to www.cahperd.ca](http://www.cahperd.ca)) has made this issue its mission, and has done a lot of the work required to help you make positive changes in your schools.

The Canadian Paediatric Society is a member of the Canadian Coalition for Quality Daily Physical Education. (<http://www.cahperd.ca/e/qdpe/coalition.htm>)

WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

Quality Daily Physical Education (QDPE) (<http://www.cahperd.ca/e/qdpe/index.htm>) is CAHPERD's term for a well-planned and implemented school program of physical education learning opportunities provided to all students in the school on a daily basis throughout the school year. A quality daily physical education program includes daily curricular instruction for all students, as well as intramural activities and school sports in which all students have the opportunity to participate.

Visit www.cahperd.ca to access complete information kits designed to help you and others lobby for and implement quality daily physical education in your schools. The kits include:

www.caringforkids.cps.ca

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www.cps.ca



- draft position papers
- letters to the school or parent council, trustees and parents
- barriers and solutions
- media releases
- public service announcements
- and much more.

Perhaps most important is the School QDPE Report Card. This can be a powerful resource to raise awareness of this issue with school and community leaders. Use it to find out how your community's schools measure up!

WHAT CAN I DO?

As a paediatrician, you may well be concerned about this issue. Use CAHPERD's resources to help you address it. Why not find out how your schools rate with regard to quality daily physical education by encouraging them to complete the QDPE Report Card? Refer parents to the CAHPERD website (www.cahperd.ca) for more information about the program.

If you would like to get involved:

- Contact the physical education consultant at your school board to find out if the schools in your community already have quality daily physical education (<http://www.cahperd.ca/e/qdpe/index.htm>) programs.
- If not, introduce the idea of QDPE to your community. The chair of the school or parent council is the best place to start. Send them to the CAHPERD website (www.cahperd.ca), and offer to help out when you can.

References

1. The Canadian Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD). www.cahperd.ca
2. Canadian Paediatric Society, Advisory Committee on Healthy Active Living for Children and Youth (2002). Healthy active living for children and youth (<http://www.cps.ca/english/statements/HAL/HAL02-01.htm>). *Paediatrics & Child Health*, 75(5), 339-45.
3. Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (1999). *Physical Activity Monitor*, Ottawa: CFLRI.
4. Tremblay MS, Willms, JD. (2000). Secular trends in the body mass index of Canadian children. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 163(11), 1429-1433.
5. Canadian Paediatric Society, Advisory Committee on Healthy Active Living for Children and Youth (2002). Healthy active living for children and youth (<http://www.cps.ca/english/statements/HAL/HAL02-01.htm>). *Paediatrics & Child Health*, 75(5), 339-45.

Tell us what you think

We want to ensure that our activities are relevant to health care professionals. Please tell us what you think: What worked? What didn't? What's missing? Your feedback will help us develop and refine our activities. E-mail us at info@cps.ca, call 613-526-9397, ext 247, or fax 613-526-3332.

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