

Director of Licensing Standard of Practice - Active Play

This Standard of Practice is made under the authority of section (4) (1) (e) of the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*, which provides that the Director of Licensing may specify policies and standards of practice for all community care facilities or a class of community care facilities.

“Physical inactivity and obesity among children and youth are growing problems in Canada. The prevalence of obesity has increased substantially over the last 25 years with as many as 26% of 2 to 17 year olds being overweight and obese. A lack of regular physical activity and excessive sedentary behaviour are important determinants of obesity and related chronic disease risk. In fact, many children and youth are not active enough for optimal growth and development”. - Canadian Paediatric Society

The [Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines](#) recommend that:

- Infants (less than 1 year) are physically active several times daily-particularly through interactive floor-based play.
- Toddlers and preschoolers should accumulate at least 180 minutes of physical activity spread throughout the day.
- Children (5 and older) should accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.

What is ACTIVE PLAY?

Active play is physical activity which includes moderate to vigorous bursts of high energy, raises children’s heart rate and may make them ‘huff and puff’ such as running or jumping. For an infant or toddler, active play may include reaching out for a toy, rolling over, balancing in a sitting position and crawling/walking.

Why is ACTIVE PLAY Important?

Active play helps to promote healthy growth and development and supports body control and movement. Active play can help build strong bones and muscles, improve balance, coordination and assists with the development of gross motor and fine motor skills. Active play also helps to promote children’s confidence, improves concentration and thinking and learning skills and provides opportunities to develop social skills and make friends.

STANDARD OF PRACTICE

Whenever possible, it is recommended active play and physical movement should be incorporated in the child care environment throughout daily routines and activities for a total of 120 minutes.

1. The following licensed child care programs must ensure a minimum of 60 minutes per day of outdoor active play (indoor active play is acceptable when weather is poor or outdoor physical space is limited). Active play may be accumulated through 15 minute portions of time throughout the day or continuously.

- Family Child Care
- Multi-Age Child Care
- In-Home Multi-Age Child Care
- Group Child Care (Under 36 Months)
- Group Child Care (30 Months to School Age)
- Group Child Care (School Age)

Licensed child care programs where children are in attendance for 3 hours or less must develop an active play plan acceptable to the Medical Health Officer (Licensing Officer).

2. A licensed Preschool care program must ensure the minimum outdoor active play corresponds with the length of time the Preschool program is offered, as outlined in the table below (indoor active play is acceptable when weather is poor or outdoor physical space is limited):

Length of Preschool program	Amount of Active play
1 - 2 hours	20 minutes
2 - 3 hours	30 minutes
3 - 4 hours	40 minutes

3. The Licensee must develop and implement an Active Play Policy to engage children in daily active play, consisting of un-facilitated play and facilitated games and activities. This policy should also be shared with parents/families.
4. Licensees and employees must be aware of and incorporate fundamental movement skills and injury prevention into all active play activities, which may be guided by the concepts of physical literacy. Children should have opportunities to practice fundamental movement skills as part of their indoor and outdoor daily routines.
5. All licensed child care programs must limit screen time (TV, computer, electronic games) to 30 minutes or less a day.
 - Programs where children are in attendance for 3 hours or less should not include screen time activities into the daily routine.
 - Screen time is not offered to children under two years of age.
6. The Licensee must develop and implement a Screen Use Policy to guide employees in the use of screen time activities. This policy should also be shared with parents/families.
7. Licensees and employees must limit prolonged sitting activities (in a stroller, high chair, board games, crafts) and schedule frequent short bursts of activity for one to two minutes.
8. Employees must demonstrate appropriate modelling of active play activities and screen time.

GLOSSARY

Fundamental movement skills are gross motor skills that involve different body parts such as feet, legs, trunk, head, arms and hands. These skills are important because they are the building blocks/foundation movements for more complex and specialised skills needed by children throughout their lives to competently and confidently play different games, sports and recreational activities. Fundamental movement skills include:

- Balance skills - movements where the body remains in place, but moves around its horizontal and vertical axes.
- Coordination skills – involves gross motor manipulation of objects - catching, throwing, or kicking a ball or beanbag; balloon batting; scarf tossing.
- Loco motor skills - running, jumping, hopping, galloping, skipping and leaping.

Injury prevention is the conscious and thoughtful effort to prevent or reduce injuries before they occur. Teach children how to be safe and act responsibly in the playspace and how to correctly use toys and equipment, and to be aware of potential hazards.

- Injury prevention strategies will vary depending on the age of the children, their developmental levels and the environment. For example a particular area of a play space may be made inaccessible for younger children as the toys and equipment located in that area are specifically designed for older children. Another example is the use of protective ground surfacing such as pea gravel under climbing equipment, to reduce the risk of injury from falls.
- Other injury prevention examples include seat belts and infant car seats, bicycle helmets, personal flotation devices, and poison control.

Physical literacy is motivating, building confidence and physical competence by increasing the knowledge and understanding of the value and responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life. Physically literate persons consistently develop the motivation and ability to understand, communicate, apply, and analyze different forms of movement. They are able to demonstrate a variety of movements confidently, competently, creatively and strategically across a wide range of physical activities. These skills enable individuals to make healthy, active choices that are both beneficial to and respectful of their whole self, others, and their environment.

Prolonged sitting is sitting for long periods of time without whole-body muscle movement. Activities or games which lead to long periods of sitting should be broken up with short bursts of activity for one to two minutes. For example, school age children who are engaged in reading, homework or board games should be encouraged to take breaks to stretch and walk about.

Facilitated play is play that is directed by adults/employees and has a set of rules with specific objectives. Many games fall under the category of facilitated play, such as card games and board games.

- Organized sports such as soccer, hockey, and tennis are examples of facilitated games.
- Licensee/employee led games such as Simon says, follow the leader, tag or duck duck goose are also facilitated activities.

Un-facilitated play (free play) is child chosen and self-directed, self-led movement, activity or interaction which encourages children to use their imagination, discover their interests and tap into their creativity. Un-facilitated play is open ended and not directed by an adult. Un-facilitated play does not include playing with most electronic toys (computers, tablets, automated pets or games such as LeapFrog® LeapPad® etc).

- A group of children initiating playing soccer together is free play, versus the adult/employee setting out that the activity is soccer.
- Building block towers, sand castles or other structures and knocking them down is un-facilitated free play.
- Children using their imagination to invent games with water, sand, balls, cars or any other object are un-facilitated free play activities.
- Children running, jumping and dancing around the playspace or park are un-facilitated free play activities.

APPLICABLE LEGISLATION

Community Care and Assisted Living Act

Standards to be maintained

7. (1) A licensee must operate the community care facility in a manner that will promote the health, safety and dignity of persons in care

Child Care Licensing Regulation

Opportunities for growth

43. A licensee must, in addition to care, provide children with opportunities for social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth.

Program of activities

44. (1) A licensee must provide to children a comprehensive and coordinated program of indoor and outdoor activities that (a) is designed for the development and care of children, (b) is appropriate for the age and development of children in each group in the community care facility, and (c) complies with the program standards set out in Schedule G.

(3) A licensee, other than a licensee providing a care program described as Occasional Child Care, must provide each child with daily outdoor play periods unless weather conditions would make it unreasonable to do so.

Schedule G

1. A licensee must ensure that a program of activities is provided that encourages the physical development of children, including providing (a) indoor and outdoor activities that encourage the development of large and small muscle skills appropriate to each child's level of development, (b) activities that promote the development of self-help skills, and (c) activities that encourage good health and safety habits.

RESOURCES

Canadian Pediatric Society - Active Kids, Healthy Kids

<http://www.cps.ca/en/active-actifs>

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines, Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

<https://csepguidelines.ca/>

Health Families BC

<https://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/importance-physical-activity-children>

Injury Prevention

<http://www.injuryresearch.bc.ca/about/> <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2006/1201/p1864.html>

<https://www.parachutecanada.org/en/injury-topics/>

Physical Activity for Children

http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/physical_activity

<http://canadiansportforlife.ca/fundamental-skills/fundamental-movement-skills>

Physical Literacy

Sportforlife.ca

Screen Time

[Screen time and young children | Caring for kids \(cps.ca\)](#)