

Parent Lobbying Kit (Photocopy as required)

Parents and care-givers should encourage pre-schools, schools, community recreation and sport organizations to offer quality physical activity programs. One way to do this is by asking appropriate questions. While not exhaustive, the following questions should provide a good starting point for discussions.

Questions to Ask: Preschool and School Programs

Building/Facility/Grounds

1. Is there sufficient outdoor space available for children to safely run and play vigorously, including ball-kicking and throwing games?

Yes No

2. Is there sufficient indoor space available for children to safely run and play vigorously, including ball-kicking and throwing games?

Yes No

3. Are the spaces available only at restricted times for organized activities, or are they available both for organized activities and for free play?

Yes No

4. Is there climbing equipment on which children can climb, hang by their arms, hang upside-down, and otherwise explore?

Yes No

Equipment

5. Is there enough equipment for all the children to be able to play at the same time?

Yes No

6. Do they have balls of different colours, sizes and textures?

Yes No

7. Do they have scoops, hoops and appropriately sized bats?

Yes No

8. Do they have mats for children to roll and tumble on?

Yes No

9. Do they have scooters and other wheeled toys for children to ride on?

Yes No

10. Is the equipment available for free play – or only available during specific times?

Yes No

11. Is the equipment brightly coloured and in good condition?

Yes No

Programs and Personnel

12. For pre-toddlers, is at least 30 minutes per day, every day, set aside for structured (adult led) play?

Yes No

13. For toddlers and older, is at least 60 minutes per day, every day, set aside for structured (adult led) play?

Yes No

14. Are fundamental movement skills (0-8/9 year olds) or fundamental sport skills (8/9 year olds to start of adolescence) encouraged and taught by the program leaders?

Yes No

15. Are program leaders trained in helping children develop fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills?

Yes No

16. Are children encouraged to engage in vigorous physical play during unstructured play times?

Yes No

17. Are children given the opportunity to complete small challenges that expand their range of movement skills (for example jumping onto a soft mat from slightly higher than their comfort zone)?

Yes No

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18. Do the caregivers engage in physical activities with the children to model the importance of being active?

Yes No

19. Are girls encouraged to be as physically active as the boys?

Yes No

20. Are children with a disability included in all physical activities?

Yes No

Total number of “Yes” answers:

17-20: This program encourages maximum development of physical literacy. Stay with the program and encourage other parents to sign up their children.

13-16: A good program that needs a little help to make it great. Talk to the organizers about what they can do to improve the program. They are likely to be responsive as they obviously care about physical literacy.

9-12: Not a good program for the development of physical literacy, but at least there is some opportunity for physical activity. You need to have a serious talk with the program organizers to help them improve their program. If they are not willing to make changes, start looking at alternative programs.

Under 9: If there are other programs available in your community, run, don’t walk to them, check them out, and sign up your child for a program that does more to develop physical literacy.

Questions to Ask: Minor Sport Programs

Building/Facility/Grounds

1. Is there sufficient space available for children to learn the skills of the sport and also safely run and play vigorously?

Yes No

2. Is there sufficient space available for children to play the sport and also safely run and play vigorously?

Yes No

3. Is the space used suitable for the sport being practiced?

Yes No

4. Is there non sport specific space that children can use for free play?

Yes No

Equipment

5. Is there enough equipment for all the children to be able to learn the sport at the same time?

Yes No

6. Do they have sport equipment of suitable size and weight for the size and strength of the children?

Yes No

7. Is there appropriate sport safety equipment, and is it used consistently?

Yes No

8. Is non-sport specific equipment available to permit children to learn a wide range of fundamental sport skills?

Yes No

9. Is equipment in good condition?

Yes No

10. Is the sports equipment available for safe free play – or only available during instruction?

Yes No

Programs and Personnel

11. Are fundamental movement skills taught, refined and practiced?

Yes No

12. Are fundamental sport skills taught, refined and practiced?

Yes No

13. Do all children get to learn and practice equally?

Yes No

14. Do all children get to play equal amounts of time?

Yes No

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15. Do all children get to play different positions, and/or try different events?

Yes No

16. Is the ratio of practice to competition appropriate (at least 70% practice to no more than 30% competition)?

Yes No

17. Do adult leaders emphasize learning and skill rather than winning?

Yes No

18. Are the sport leaders/coaches trained and/or certified?

Yes No

19. If present, are children with a disability included in all physical activities?

Yes No

20. Do the sport leaders/coaches make learning the sport fun?

Yes No

Total number of "Yes" answers:

17-20: This program encourages maximum development of physical literacy. Stay with the program and encourage other parents to sign up their children.

13-16: A good program that needs a little help to make it great. Talk to the organizers about what they can do to improve the program. They are likely to be responsive as they obviously care about physical literacy.

9-12: Not a good program for the development of physical literacy, but at least there is some opportunity for physical activity. You need to have a serious talk with the program organizers to help them improve their program. If they are not willing to make changes, start looking at alternative programs.

Under 9: If there are other programs available in your community, run, don't walk to them, check them out, and sign up your child for a program that does more to develop physical literacy.

Parent Action Steps

To get programs changed parents need to educate themselves about physical literacy and Long-Term Athlete Development, gather information about the programs in their schools and communities, and be prepared to speak out at parent-teacher meetings and minor sport organizational meetings to get the changes they want to see.

Step 1: Read and understand this document and Canadian Sport for Life. Visit www.ltad.ca for more information, as well as www.coach.ca, and www.cahperd.ca.

Step 2: Use the "Questions to Ask" sheets to gather information about the program in your child's pre-school, school, community recreation program, or minor sport program.

Step 3: Recruit other concerned parents so that you are not alone. Meet as a group and go over the information you have gathered – discuss what might need to be changed.

Step 4: As a group, decide what needs to be changed – focus on no more than 2 or 3 key issues (for example: allocating a specific time each day for fundamental movement skill development in a pre-school, spending more time on skill development and practice for a minor sport program, ensuring equal playing time for all participants in a recreation program, etc.)

Step 5: Make an appointment to meet with the Principal, Coach or program leader. Try to avoid meeting before or after a practice or when there are lots of children around, since you want the undivided attention of the person you are meeting with.

Step 6: Make sure the leader you are meeting with understands that you want to help him or her do what is best for the children – that you want to work together for improvement.

Step 7: Clearly articulate what you want to happen – focus on what you want to see done, not on what you think might be wrong.

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Step 8: Leave the meeting with a clear understanding of the next steps the leader will take, and the time-frame in which the changes will be made. Set up a future appointment to review the changes that everyone agrees will be made. Offer to help, and follow-up on that offer!

Step 9: If no agreement can be reached – then it might be time to consider moving your child to another program. If you want more information:

There are excellent programs across the country, and around the world, and you are encouraged to visit the following web-sites where you can find details of programs and activities that can help your child.

www.ltad.ca

Canada's web-site dedicated to Long-term athlete development and related topics. An excellent place to start.

www.quebecenforme.org

A Quebec site with information on physical activity and health promotion - with a special emphasis on children aged 4-12.

www.cahperd.ca

The web-site of Canada's physical educators - useful information for parents, teachers, and anyone interested in physical literacy. Has interesting and age appropriate resources for sale.

www.2010legaciesnow.com/221

This is where you can find the excellent HOP (Healthy Opportunities for Preschoolers) activity booklet for download.

www.kino-quebec.qc.ca

Information about Quebec's programs to promote physical activity.

www.reginainmotion.org

Information about community programs that encourage physical activity - including active pre-schools.

www.sparc.org.nz

This New Zealand web-site has a series of pamphlets on activities for young children that can be downloaded. The "Eyes' need to move too" is particularly interesting. Covers children in the Active Start stage of LTAD.

www.sportfitcanada.com

This is the link for the SportFit program, that suggests activities children might be good at based on the results of some simple physical tests.

www.cpra.ca

Canadian Parks and Recreation Association - Organization promoting parks and recreation services for community health.

www.pacificsport.com

Canadian Sport Centres - Network of training centres for high performance athletes, including those with a disability.

www.coach.ca

Coaches Association of Canada - Information on coaching and certification programs available to your child's coach.

www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/federations/index_e.cfm

National Sport Organizations - The National Sport Organizations that are supported, in part, by contributions from Sport Canada.