Connecting to Urban Youth: 
Play, Physical Activity, and Schools 

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Overview

• Children’s urban play spaces

• Sport opportunities for low-income youth

• Critical hours programs

• Back to play
## Physical Activity and Inactivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Grades</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Activity Levels</td>
<td>• Proportion of children and youth meeting Canada’s physical activity guidelines</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Screen Time</td>
<td>• Proportion of children and youth meeting Canada’s screen time guidelines</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organized Sport Participation</td>
<td>• Rates of Participation Disparities in participation and access to sport</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Play</td>
<td>• Adequate opportunities for active play available at home, at school, and in the community</td>
<td>INC</td>
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## Preferences for Play Spaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Splashpads</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shade</td>
<td>Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swings</td>
<td>Independence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
<td>Social Opportunities</td>
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(Veitch et al., 2006)  
(Tucker et al., 2007)
Play in the City of Edmonton  
(Holt et al., 2009)

• **Neighborhoods:**  
  – Highly walkable & multiple play spaces  
  – Safety concerns restricted access.

• **Families:**  
  – Children rarely allowed out alone, but family accompaniment facilitated PA.

• **Programs:**  
  – Organized programs provided adult supervised PA, but programs faced staffing problems.
Safety Concerns

• “There’s actually a lot of poor people, there’s some drunks… it’s not really safe during the night time.”

—“It’s kind of a bad neighborhood. Oh yah, at night time… the prostitutes… a lot of people just walking around… I usually hear people getting beat.”
Sport Participation Study

- 12 parents, 13 children interviewed
- All had received KidSport funding

FINDINGS

- Making friends with ‘different types’ of children and other adults were main PYD outcomes
- Financial and logistical barriers still impeded children’s continued participation in sport.
- More access to sustain participation, and engage in a variety of different programs (to promote PYD)
Critical Hours Study

• Critical hours are the “time period after school when children and youth are most vulnerable to be facing critical choices on their own” (City of Calgary, 2008, p. 5).

Program

• Critical hours program delivered in 2 low-income elementary schools
• 2 days per week for 3 months
• 35 children grade 2-3
Need for Partnerships

Critical Hours Program

- EPSB
- KidSport
- U of A
- Tennis Alberta
- Alberta Team Handball
- Alberta Soccer Association
- Alberta Amateur Wrestling Association
- Athletics Alberta

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
PlayScapes Study
Take Home Messages

① Make playgrounds more suited to children’s needs and then consider how PYD may be promoted.

② Sustained, high quality sport programs needed to promote PYD.

③ University-community collaborations.
Funding Agencies

CIHR IRSC

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada

KidSport

SSAA

Sports Science Association Alberta

Alberta Centre for Child, Family & Community Research
Child & Adolescent Sport & Activity Lab

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