

Supporting Physical Activity in Our Playgrounds through York Region's PLAY Program: Curriculum Links for Student Success

York Region's **PLAY Program** (Peer Leadership for Active Youth) supports the development of positive climates for learning in our schools and increased inclusion in our playgrounds. It provides students with an opportunity for improved mental health outcomes through regular physical activity and an increased sense of community during peer led interactive play. The PLAY Program training gives students in grades 5 and 6 opportunities to enhance and develop leadership skills and knowledge through a half day training and hands-on learning in the playground.

Benefits to primary students include:

- Opportunities for increased social inclusion between grades on the playground
- Increased engagement in daily physical activity
- Improved conflict resolution between students
- Enhanced feeling of connectedness in the school
- Mental health benefits through regular physical activity and cooperative play
- Development of new skills and abilities through group games and active play during recess

Benefits to junior students include:

- Enhancement and awareness of current leadership skills
- Development of age appropriate conflict resolution strategies
- Opportunities to role model effective communication and problem solving
- Skill development in learning to teach and engage younger students in new games
- Being role models in creating a positive climate in the playground

The PLAY Program meets curriculum expectations

The PLAY program supports multiple areas of grade 5 and 6 curriculum. The *Ontario Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* was reviewed to identify links. The PLAY Program can enhance learning in the Active Living, Movement Competence, and Healthy Living strands. Specific expectations with relevant examples from the ministry document have been identified below for grades 5 and 6.

In addition, students' *Living Skills* are enhanced through development of their *Personal Skills* (self-awareness and self-monitoring in their roles), *Interpersonal Skills* (improved communication skills and interpretation of information), and *Critical and Creative Thinking skills* as they apply their learning to real life scenarios in the playground as part of the PLAY team. Students will make decisions, set goals, evaluate choices, and problem solve as they deliver the program.

Fully Alive-Family Life Education

The PLAY program also supports the *Fully Alive-Family Life Education* offered to students in the York Catholic District School Board. As identified in the *Fully Alive* curriculum, the themes 'Created and Loved by God', 'Living in Relationship', 'Growing in Commitment', and 'Living in the World' are reflected in the teaching-learning process and in hands on playground activities. Students have the opportunity to develop healthy attitudes and character attributes that benefit personal relationships. We know these are central to students' identity and overall health and development.



Curriculum Expectations¹ for Grade 5

Grade 5 students who actively participate in the PLAY Program training and its delivery will have opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in the following areas:

Active Participation:

A1.1 actively participate in a wide variety of program activities (*e.g., games, recreational activities*) while applying behaviours that enhance their readiness and ability to take part (*e.g., encouraging others with positive comments, displaying fair play by respecting the decisions of others*) [PS, IS]²

A1.2 demonstrate an understanding of factors contributing to their personal enjoyment of being active (*e.g., having the opportunity to modify games to make them more inclusive and to increase opportunities for participation, being exposed to new and different activities, having access to play spaces that are clean and attractive*), as they participate in a wide variety of individual and small-group activities and lead-up games [PS]

A3.1 demonstrate behaviours and apply procedures maximizing their safety and that of others during physical activity (*e.g., demonstrating personal responsibility for safety, ensuring their actions promote a positive emotional experience for themselves and others, reporting any equipment that is not in good working condition*) [PS, IS]

Movement Competence: Skills, Concepts and Strategies:

B2.1 demonstrate an understanding of the components of physical activities (*e.g., movement skills, game structures, rules and guidelines, conventions of fair play and etiquette*), and apply this understanding as they participate cooperative games. [IS, CT]

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

C2.2 demonstrate the ability to deal with threatening situations by applying appropriate living skills (*e.g., interpersonal skills, conflict resolution skills; communication skills, assertiveness skills*) and safety strategies (*e.g., having a plan and thinking before acting; seeking help*) [PS, IS, CT]

C3.2 explain how a person's actions (*e.g., negative actions such as name calling, making homophobic or racist remarks, mocking appearance or ability, excluding, bullying, sexual harassment; positive actions such as praising, supporting, including*) can affect the feelings, self-concept, emotional well-being, and reputation of themselves and others [PS, IS]

Curriculum Expectations for Grade 6

Grade 6 students, who actively participate in the PLAY Program training, and its delivery, will have opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in the following areas:

Active Participation

A1.1 actively participate in a wide variety of program activities while applying behaviours that enhance their readiness and ability to take part (*e.g., using time effectively, being open to new activities, displaying fair play by taking turns and sharing, listening to others, not blaming or taking advantage of others*) [PS, IS]

¹ Specific Curriculum expectations identified from “The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Health” grades Interim Edition, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/healthcurr18.pdf>

² Personal Skills (PS) Interpersonal skills (IS), Critical and Creative thinking skills (CT)



A1.2 demonstrate an understanding of factors that contribute to their personal enjoyment of being active (*e.g., having the opportunity to participate in activities in various sizes of groups and using various types of equipment, having a choice of activities*), as they participate in a wide variety of individual and small-group activities and lead-up games [PS]

A3.1 demonstrate behaviours and apply procedures that maximize their safety and that of others during physical activity (*e.g., demonstrating personal responsibility; checking that equipment is in good working order*) [PS, IS].

Movement Competence: Skills, Concepts and Strategies:

B1.3 send and receive a variety of objects (*e.g., rubber chickens, beanbags, tennis balls*), adjusting for speed and distance, while applying basic principles of movement* [PS, IS]

B2.1 demonstrate an understanding of the basic components of physical activities (*e.g., movement skills, game structures, basic rules and guidelines, conventions of fair play and etiquette*), and apply this understanding as they participate in a variety of physical activities. [IS, CT]

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

C2.3 apply personal skills and interpersonal skills (*e.g., self-awareness and self-management skills*), to promote positive interaction and avoid or manage conflict in social situations [PS, IS].

