

# CHILDREN'S ACTIVE PLAY IN YORK REGION

York Region Public Health wanted to find out:

- How much active play are children getting in York Region?
- When and where is active play happening?
- What are the barriers to active play?

In 2017, surveys were completed by parents and school board staff related to active play in the home and school settings. The results show that we need more active play happening.

The survey showed only 40 per cent of students had opportunities to engage in active play during class time. This type of active play would involve learning that occurs outdoors, activity is incorporated into learning or having in class activity breaks. In the home setting, the survey showed that almost half (49 per cent) of children's active play happened indoors and only a quarter (26 per cent) of children engaged in active play every day.

The barriers to children's active play found in the school setting survey included:

- inclement weather and environmental risks such as heat, snow, ice and air quality (74 per cent)
- teachers are concerned for injury (40 per cent)
- teachers not incorporating active play into class time (32 per cent)
- students spending their time on media devices (30 per cent)

The barriers for active play in the home setting survey included:

- inclement weather and environmental risks such as heat, snow, ice and air quality (60 per cent)
- children being too busy with scheduled activities and having no free time (27 per cent)
- children spending too much time on media devices (23 per cent)
- children having no one to play with (22 per cent)

The recommendations from the survey included:

1. Investigate and identify interventions to overcome the barrier of inclement weather at school and at home
2. Support teachers to incorporate more active play during class time
3. Raise parents/caregivers and school staff awareness of the benefits versus the risks of outdoor play
4. Encourage parents/caregivers to limit scheduled activities and provide more free time for children to play
5. Implement interventions to reduce children's use of media devices

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