Revitalized neighbourhood playgrounds and social gathering spaces as catalysts for youth resilience.

Nicole Yantzi PhD, Melanie S. Hood RKin, MSc, Nastassia McNair MPH, Kelsey Ettinger BA
Playgrounds, public health, and research (oh my!)

- Public health promotion of playgrounds and neighbourhood parks for physical activity (PA)

- Traditional research focus
  - MVPA/Steps
  - Sedentary time
  - Injury prevention

Photo: www.PlayGreaterSudbury.ca
From advocacy to research

• Ridgecrest Playground is 1 of 5 fully accessible playgrounds in Greater Sudbury.

Photo: Courtesy of Nicole Yantzi, 2014
Purpose

• Objective: Examine the impact of a new accessible playground on the wellbeing of youth and families.

• Areas of focus included:
  • Perceptions of the park’s impact on residents’ health (physical, mental and social); and
  • Community connectedness and neighbourhood cohesion.
Methods

Research design:
- Ethics review & approval
- Key Informant Interviews
- Questionnaire development
- Preliminary analysis of questionnaires
- Park intercept survey development
- Analysis

Timeline:
- Jan
- Apr
- Jul
- Oct
- Jan
- Apr
- Jul
- Oct

2014
2015
Recruitment

• Household questionnaires
  • Adult/Youth; FR/EN
  • 1321 Households
  • 12% response rate

• Park intercept surveys
  • Mid-week/weekend
  • a.m./p.m
Participants

Age Distributions

- Youth age categories
  - 62% 9 to 14 years
  - 28% 15 to 19 years

*Statistics Canada, % of total aged 10+; Ridgecrest Study n=199
Visiting Ridgecrest

Youth
• 62% visit at least once a week
• 75% stay for up to 2 hours
• 59% visit more since 2008
• Rating: 8/10
Visiting Ridgecrest con’t

• Visit with
  - Friends 39%
  - Family 39%
  - Alone 14%
  - Other 8%

• “Hangout with friends, playing grounder right now.”

• “[With my friends], I played tag, grounder, soccer, playing in the water park.”
Reasons for visiting Ridgecrest

- Spend time outside
- Time with family
- Meet people/friends
- Get in shape/exercise
- Develop new skills
- Independence/do things by myself

Youth 9-19  Adults 20-59  Older adults 60+
## Ridgecrest benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Youth spending time with parents and grandparents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Families playing together</td>
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<td>• Healthy role modelling (youth ⇔ adults)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peers</th>
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<td>• Youth engage in play and outdoor activities with friends</td>
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<td>• Peer learning</td>
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<tr>
<th>Community</th>
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<td>• Trust other adults and youth at the playground</td>
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<td>• Interact and socialise with people they know</td>
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<td>• Meet new friends</td>
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<td>• Adults get to know youth in their community</td>
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Building assets

Caring family • Family support
Family communications
Adult family role models

Neighbourhood boundaries
Adult relationships
Caring community • Values youth

Peer relationships
Positive peer influence

Safety
Acceptance
Self-esteem • Self-efficacy

Image: Resiliency Initiatives
Can playgrounds contribute to resiliency?

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

EXPERIENCE
Hang out
Meet
Play

Accessibility
Usability
Inclusion

OUTCOMES
Health
Relationships
Conclusions

• Ridgecrest Playground offers opportunities for development, beyond physical health.

• Youth described the playground as a community asset that is inclusive, safe, and welcoming.

• Inclusive and accessible playgrounds may promote the development of youth resilience.
Acknowledgements

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References


• Laxer RE, Janssen I (2013). The proportion of youth’s physical inactivity attributable to neighbourhood built environment features. International Journal of Health Geographics, 12:31


Contact

**Melanie Hood, RKin, MSc**
Health Promoter, Health Promotion Division
Sudbury & District Health Unit
705.522.9200, ext. 524 | hoodm@sdhu.com

**Nicole Yantzi, PhD**
Associate Professor, School of the Environment
Laurentian University
705.675.1151, ext. 3355 | nyantzi@laurentian.ca
Limitations

• Comparison
  • Accessible vs. Not/partially accessible
  • Pre-post

• Self-report
  • Social desirability bias

• Sample sizes