



Earth Day®  
Jour de la Terre®  
CANADA

EarthPLAY

POSITION STATEMENT ON ACTIVE OUTDOOR PLAY

# Position



**Access to active play in nature and outdoors—with its risks—is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children’s opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings—at home, at school, in child care, the community and nature.**



**Old Mission:** To foster and celebrate environmental respect, action and behaviour change that lessens our impact on the Earth.



**New Mission:** Get outside on Earth Day and every day.  
How can we be motivated or skilled to protect the Earth if we spend less than 1 hour outside per day?  
Earth Day Canada believes people should spend quality time outdoors every day to support health, happiness and the planet.



**Outdoor play changes everything**

Outdoor self-directed, open-ended free play is the best way to connect children to their outdoor environment and community; to nurture their ingenuity, independence and sense of agency; to facilitate inclusion, and to support their mental and physical well-being.





EarthPLAY is a new program addressing outdoor play provision in schools, parks, streets and communities.

For Earth Day Canada, outdoor play is the foundational pillar of environmental education and action.





We're working toward a new model  
for parks in Canada with:



## POP-UPS

Loose-parts based  
self-directed outdoor  
play programs



## ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS

Curated spaces,  
offering loose parts  
and tools, supported  
by play-work staff



## PLAYWORKERS

Training recreation staff  
in playwork principles  
to re-frame the risks  
and benefits of play







"Only 5% of school age children are active enough during the school day to meet minimum guidelines"

ParticiP ACTION Report Card



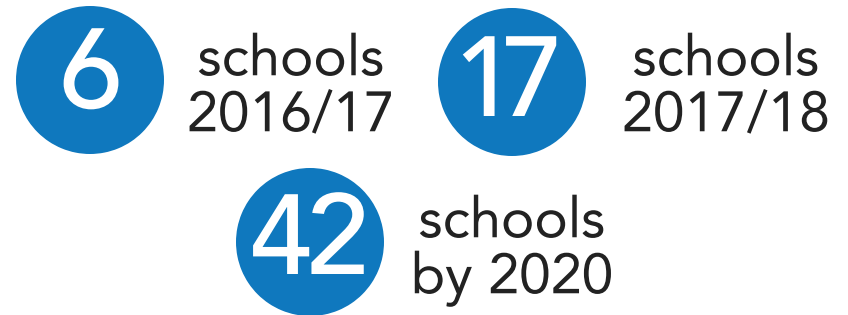




## Outdoor Play and Learning for schools

Outdoor play has been disappearing from schools for decades. OPAL aims to prioritize and facilitate outdoor play before school, during recess, at lunch hour and after school. (Some schools are also using the OPAL program during school hours).

### Pilot project



### Policy change

Earth Day Canada is working with the TDSB Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee to develop a board-wide play policy to support enriched outdoor play.



# Ontario invests in student well-being

The Premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne, has announced that the province will invest

# \$49-million

over the next three years into a new curriculum strategy to ensure that young people can reach their full potential and thrive inside and outside of the classroom.

This refresh is perfect timing for programs like OPAL that support student well-being by improving mental and physical health at school through outdoor, child-directed play.





## Outdoor play community hub

**ENGOS**

**Loose parts library**

**Playwork training**

**Knowledge hub**

**OPAL school**

**Discovery centre**

indoor greenhouse

community kitchen

outdoor cafe

**Market  
garden**

## Adventure Playground

Establishing a new playground standard for schools, parks,  
recreation centres and community housing



Expanding opportunities for outdoor, self-directed play through regularly scheduled street closures in neighbourhoods - starting in Toronto

**Pilot project** 7 streets in Seaton Village, Toronto, 2017

Ryerson University is studying the effectiveness of the StreetPLAY program to evaluate:

Quality  
of play

Sense of  
community

Areas to  
improve

Response of  
commuters

**Goal** to activate, facilitate, and roll out StreetPLAY in neighbourhoods across the country



Earth Day Canada would like to thank the following sponsors  
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# SONY

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