

Healthy, Complete Outdoor Playspaces: A Journey from Problem to Policy



Purpose of Presentation

- **A little about Peterborough Public Health**
- **From playground injury data to healthy, complete outdoor playspaces for children**
 - **Identifying the issue**
 - **Understanding the issue**
 - **Engaging others in addressing the issue**
 - **Leading the way in taking a position**

About Peterborough

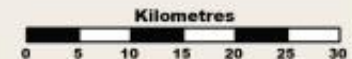
Peterborough Region

County of Peterborough Townships,
City of Peterborough, and First Nations

LEGEND

- County of Peterborough
- City of Peterborough
- First Nations

Ontario, Canada



What is Public Health?

Public Health is defined as “the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society” (WHO).



What is Health Promotion?

**Ottawa
Charter for
Health
Promotion
(WHO, 1986)**



Advancing Healthy Public Policy Roadmap*



Identify and Define Issue

Identify & Define Issue

- Identify Problem
- Define scope of policy options
- Conduct brief stakeholder scan
- Assess readiness for policy development

1. Policy Agenda Setting & Influencing



Identify the problem

High injury rates from playground equipment falls

	Children (0 – 4)	Children (5 – 9)	Children (10 – 14)
ER Visits Peterborough	424	839	356
ER Visits Ontario	251	587	207
Hospitalizations Peterborough	<5	55	<5
Hospitalizations Ontario	14	43	9

Ontario Injury Data Report, 2012

Situational Assessment

2. Situational Assessment

Review & Synthesize Evidence

- Review grey and published literature
 - Consider systematic reviews and hierarchy of evidence
- Integrate epidemiological and health data
- Consider health equity issues

Assess Applicability & Transferability of Findings

- Consider how the evidence interacts with the local implementation context

Scan of Stakeholders and Influencers

- Explore stakeholder and political context:
 - Integrate stakeholder engagement strategy

Communicate Findings

- Consider using formats such as briefing notes or discussion papers



Review & Synthesize Evidence

- Literature review on playground equipment and injuries (Fall 2013)
- Best practice:
 - equipment properly maintained
 - appropriate fall surface
 - adequate supervision
 - age-appropriate use
- Development of a playground checklist based on research evidence



Assess Applicability & Transferability of Findings

Playground checklist used in six locations:

→ 2 outside the City:

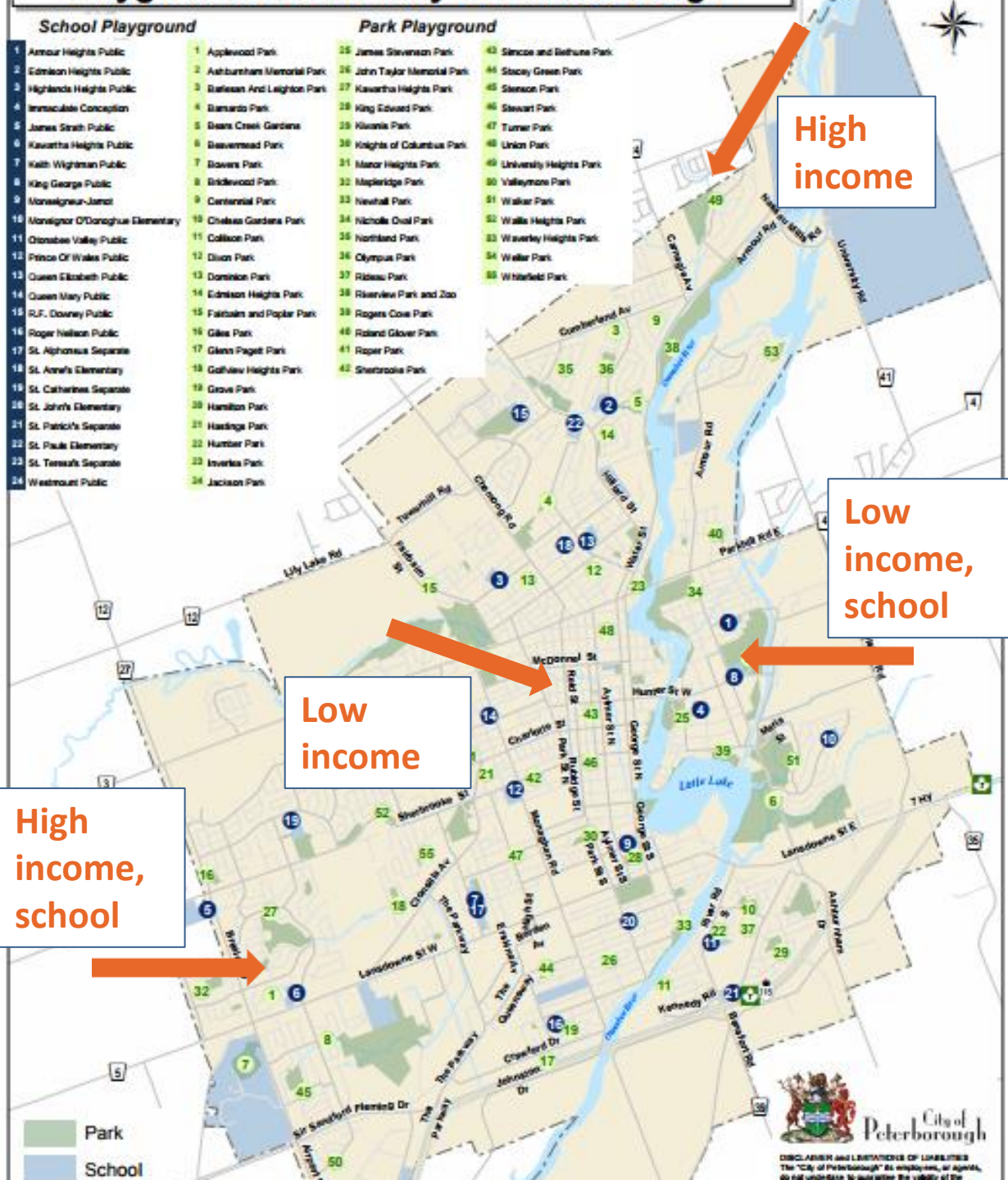
~ Rural municipality

~ First Nations community

→ 4 inside the City



Mapping playgrounds in the City



What the Checklist Told Us



**Public School,
Peterborough**
(October 17, 2013)

City Park
(October 17, 2013)



**Peterborough
Public Health**





First Nation Park
(October 18, 2013)

Township Park
(October 18, 2013)



Scan of Stakeholders and Influencers & Communicate Findings

- Presented findings to Municipal Access to Recreation Group (MATRG) – May 2014
 - Playground inspection training (Oct. 2014)
- Met with MATRG (Nov. 2014)
 - checklist development
 - accessible playgrounds training



Scan of Stakeholders and Influencers & Communicate Findings

- **Hired consultant (Dec. 2014)**
 - telephone survey with municipal and school board representatives
- **Met with MATRG to share results (Mar. 2015)**
- **Met with school board representatives to share results (Apr. 2015)**
 - = playground vs play “experience”

Circling back...Situational Assessment

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Review & Synthesize Evidence

- Expanded literature search (Summer and Fall of 2014)
- Search topics included: **play, natural playspaces, risky play, risk management, built environment, school playgrounds and more**
- Reviewed over 100 articles (from peer-reviewed journals to grey literature)
- Synthesized key findings into technical report.

Synthesize Evidence

Outdoor Playspaces for Children: An Evidence Review

August 2017



Evidence Review

- Play, types of play and child development
- Traditional and natural playspaces
- Risk and play
- Injuries and playground safety
- Risk-benefit assessment
- Built environment and playspaces

Evidence Highlights

- Play is a human right
- Many, diverse features meeting universal design principles to encourage different types of play for all abilities and interests
- Natural playspaces = more inclusive, gender neutral and accessible
- Simple adaptations – enhance play experience



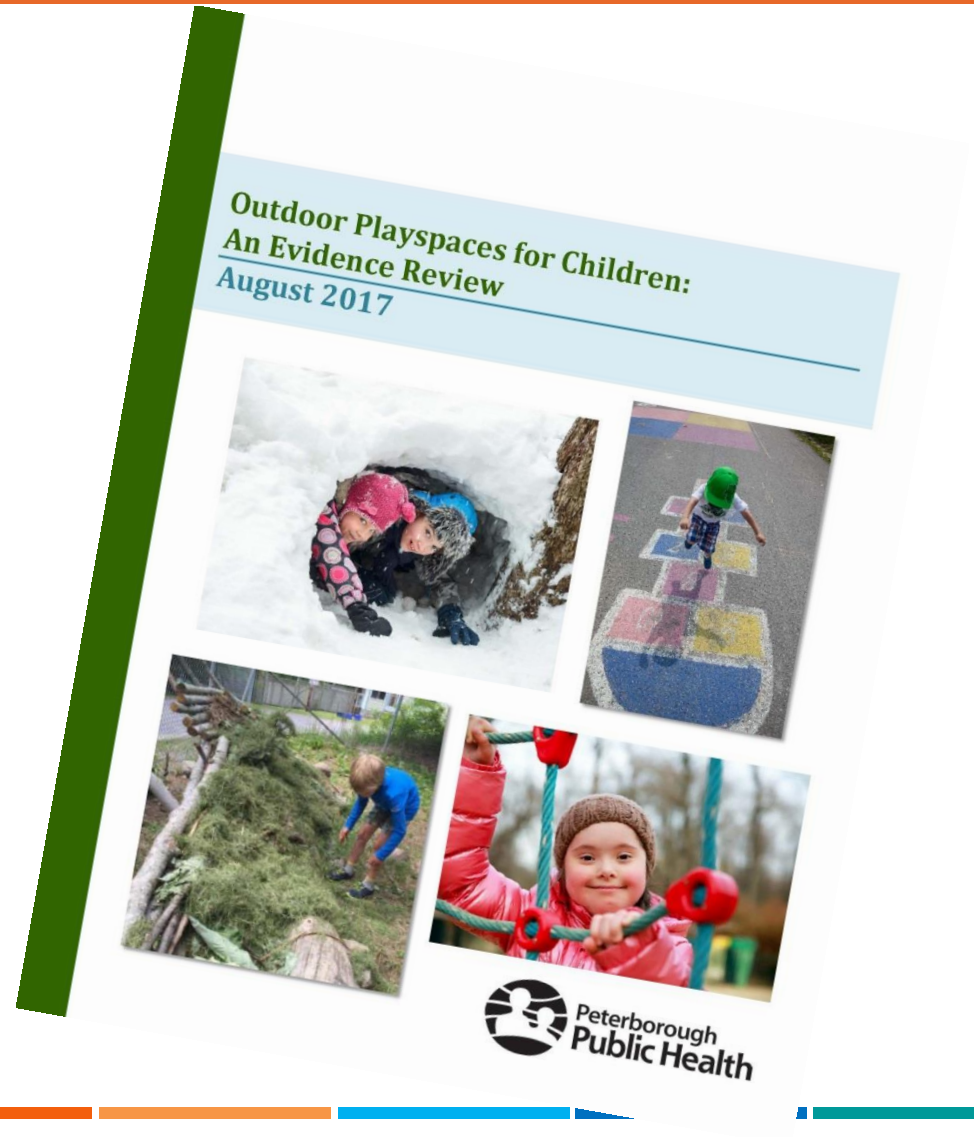
Evidence Highlights

- Risky play is essential to healthy child development
- Injuries happen; “as safe as necessary”
- Restricting access to playspaces for fear of injuries invites other risks (physical and mental)
- Risk-benefit assessments are essential
- Design of spaces needs to be a collaborative exercise



Synthesize Evidence

- Internal document – guiding planning and future work
- Vetted document – internally and externally



Scan of Stakeholders and Influencers

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

- **Municipal sector** (recreation*, parks*, public works*, planning)
- **Education sector** (school boards, principal, early learning experts)
- **Community sector** (accessibility advocates, nature stewards, landscape architect)

* MATRG members

Scan of Stakeholders and Influencers

1. What are your **initial thoughts** of this report?
2. What do you **like** about this report?
3. Are there any **areas** that need to be **strengthened**?



Policy Agenda Setting & Influencing

1. What are the **opportunities** given the evidence?
2. Does this research present any **barriers** to you in your sector?
3. How can you **use this report** in your sector?
4. What would you **need to move this forward**?



Policy Agenda Setting & Influencing

Assessing the level of **readiness**...

Internally

- Briefing Note for Executive Committee – go-ahead to create a position statement

Externally

- Consultations (municipalities, environmental group)
- Riding a wave



Peterborough
Public Health

are you
ready?

Alignment with Other Initiatives

NATIONAL

- National Position Statement on Active, Outdoor Play (2015)
- A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing
- Lawson Foundation's Outdoor Play Strategy



Policy Formulation

3. Policy Formulation

Develop/Assess Policy Options & Recommend Policy Decision

- Analyze effectiveness, unintended effects, equity, costs, feasibility, acceptability of policies
- Consider public health ethics and equity perspectives
- Engage stakeholders to inform policy advice, build allies, understand constraints and inform successful implementation
- Communicate findings through products such as policy options paper with public health perspectives and/or recommended alternative



Policy Formulation



Active Outdoor Play Position Statement from the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health (Draft 2017)



Healthy, Complete
Outdoor Playspaces
for Children



Conclusion

My secret wish...

Play policies all around!



QUESTIONS?

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**Presentation slides and Evidence Review:
www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/play**

