

# Public Policy

Those public issues that are identified for attention by government and courses of action that are taken to address them.

(Nutbeam, D. 2003)

## International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity



Review

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### Do attributes in the physical environment influence children's physical activity? A review of the literature

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#### Abstract

**Background:** Many youth today are physically inactive. Recent attention linking the physical or built environment to physical activity in adults suggests an investigation into the relationship between the built environment and physical activity in children could guide appropriate intervention strategies.

**Method:** Thirty three quantitative studies that assessed associations between the physical environment (perceived or objectively measured) and physical activity among children (ages 3 to 18-years) and fulfilled selection criteria were reviewed. Findings were categorized and discussed according to three dimensions of the physical environment including recreational infrastructure, transport infrastructure, and local conditions.

**Results:** Results across the various studies showed that children's participation in physical activity is positively associated with publicly provided recreational infrastructure (access to recreational facilities and schools) and transport infrastructure (presence of sidewalks and controlled intersections, access to destinations and public transportation). At the same time, transport infrastructure (number of roads to cross and traffic density/speed) and local conditions (crime, area deprivation) are negatively associated with children's participation in physical activity.

**Conclusion:** Results highlight links between the physical environment and children's physical activity. Additional research using a transdisciplinary approach and assessing moderating and mediating variables is necessary to appropriately inform policy efforts.

#### Background

Many youth today are physically inactive. Considerable evidence documents that nearly 35% of youth in the US fail to meet the minimum physical activity guidelines, and another 14% are completely inactive [1,2]. Low levels of physical activity and the failure to meet physical activity recommendations have notable health consequences among children including increased risk of obesity [3],

low bone density [4], and low physical fitness [5]. Furthermore, children who are not physically active are denied the positive social and emotional benefits of physical activity including higher self-esteem, lower anxiety, and lower stress [6]. A comprehensive understanding of the determinants of physical activity among youth is essential for the identification of appropriate points of intervention to promote active lifestyles and their associated health



### Child care centre physical environments

Jane Beach and Martha Friendly

#### Context and overview

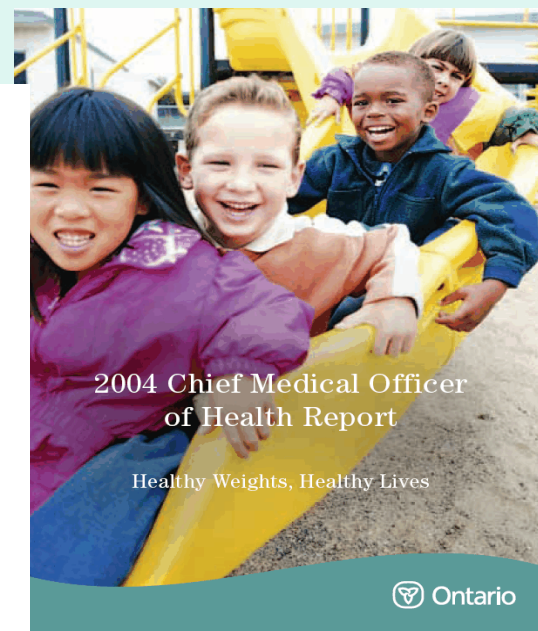
This overview of physical requirements in child care centres in Canada is one of the working documents prepared for Quality by Design, an exploratory project intended to contribute to strategies for improving quality in early learning and child care (ELCC) at the policy level. Part of the project involves identifying, consolidating and transforming information derived from research and other sources into tools that can help improve the quality of early learning and child care. This document summarizes comparable regulatory information from provinces/territories to help inform discussion and strategies for improving the quality of physical environments of ELCC programs.

The physical environment is one element of a high quality ELCC system. The physical characteristics of an ELCC program have an impact on the children, staff, parents and the broader community. These are many aspects of the physical environment that are important, for example, the location of the building, the type and amount of space, how the space is organized, the type and arrangement of furnishings and equipment, availability of natural light and views

Quality by Design is a project of the Children's Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto. It is funded by the Social Development Partnership Program, Social Development Canada.

For a fuller description of these elements, see *Elements of a High Quality ELCC System* in print or on the Quality by Design website at [www.childcarequality.ca](http://www.childcarequality.ca).

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2004 Chief Medical Officer of Health Report

Healthy Weights, Healthy Lives

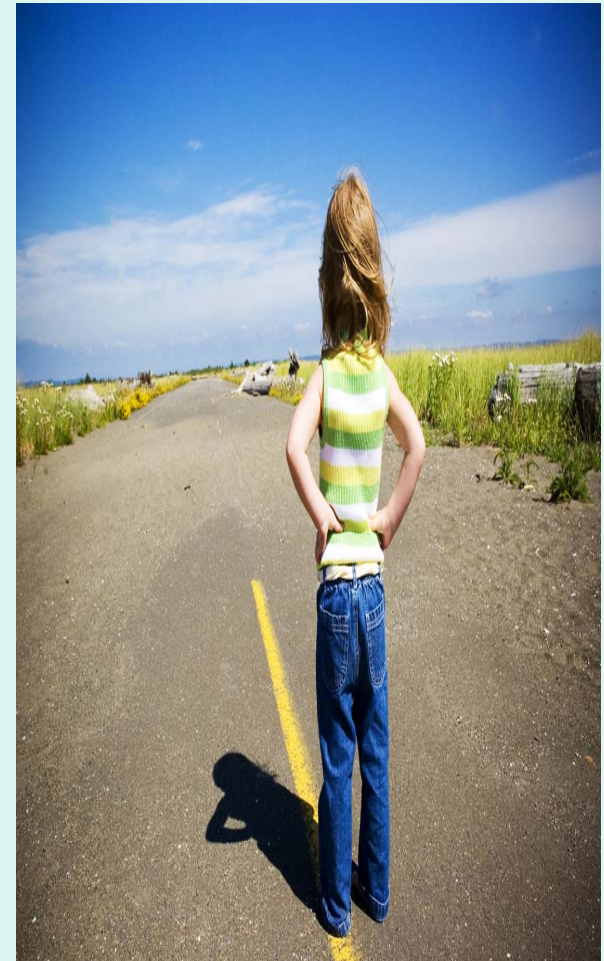


# Key Principles for Policy Development and Adoption

- Population health perspective and healthy public policy
- Multi-sectoral and integrated environmental strategies
- Scientific Research and evidence
- Political will and feasibility

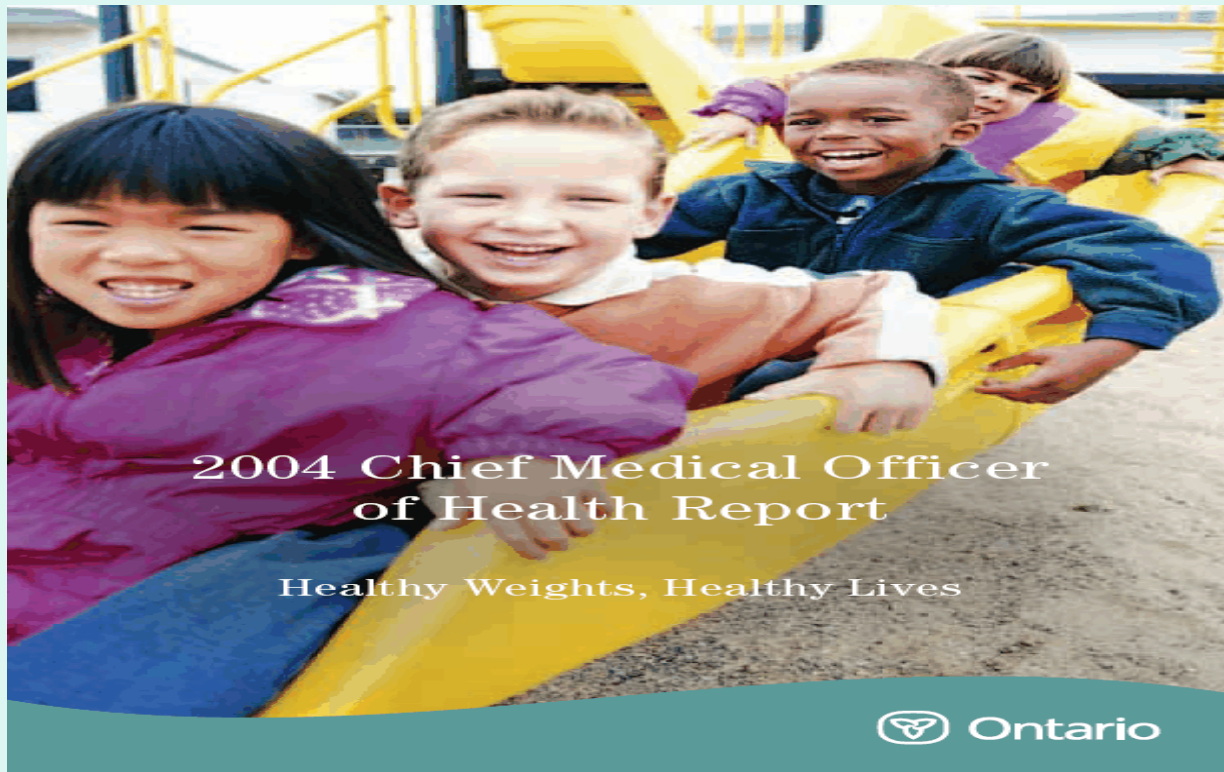
# Policy emerges from what is.....

- Scientifically plausible
- Politically acceptable
- Practical for implementation



# Healthy Weights and Policy

- 2004 Chief Medical Officer of Health Report  
“Healthy Weight Healthy Lives”



# Healthy Weights and Policy

- Promote Healthy Eating:
  - Policy options to control food advertising to children
  - Potential impact of food pricing options
  - Promotion of ‘home grown’ fruits and vegetables



# Healthy Weights and Policy

- Physical Activity:
  - User fees for recreational facilities – barrier
  - Supporting public transport and infrastructure to encourage safe, active transportation options
  - Training and support to professionals that support physical activity in their work



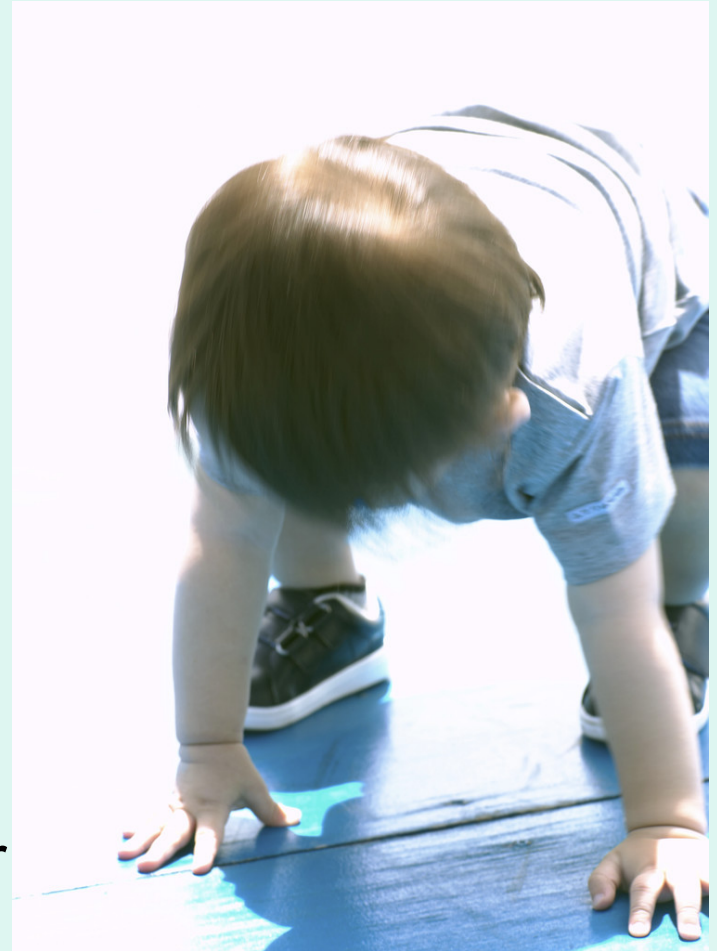
# Guidelines for Young Children

- Currently no guidelines in Canada – for under 6 years of age
- **NASPE position statement:** All children birth to age five should engage in daily physical activity that promotes health-related fitness and movement skills.

# Guidelines for Young Children

NASPE recommends

- Children not be still for more than 60 minutes at a time
  - 60 minutes daily structured physical activity
  - 60 minutes and up to several hours per day of unstructured physical activity
  - should develop movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks



# Provincial Policies

- PEI – Healthy Living Policy.

Developing a new Healthy Living (healthy eating and active living) Policy for Early Childhood Education Programs (preschool and kindergarten children).

Revision of the Child Care Facilities Act.

# Day Nurseries Act - Ontario

- The daily program plan of activities must be varied and flexible. It must include the following:
  - activities appropriate for the development levels of the enrolled children:
  - group and individual activities;
  - activities designed to promote gross and fine motor skills, language and cognitive, social and emotional development;
  - active and quiet play;

# Day Nurseries Act - Ontario

## Outdoor play

Each child under 30 months of age that is in attendance for six hours or more in a day must spend up to two hours each day outdoors for play or walk in a stroller or both, weather permitting,

unless a physician or parent of the child advises otherwise in writing.



# Federal/Provincial Policies

## Ontario's DPA Policy

Requires that all students in grades 1-8 including students with special needs be provided with opportunity to participate in a minimum of 20 minutes of sustained moderate to vigorous PA each school day during instructional times

**Active 2010:** The Government of Ontario's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, Active 2010 is a comprehensive strategy to increase participation in sport and physical activity throughout Ontario. Its goal is to achieve higher physical activity rates and increased sport participation in order to improve the quality of life in the province.

# Federal/Provincial Policies

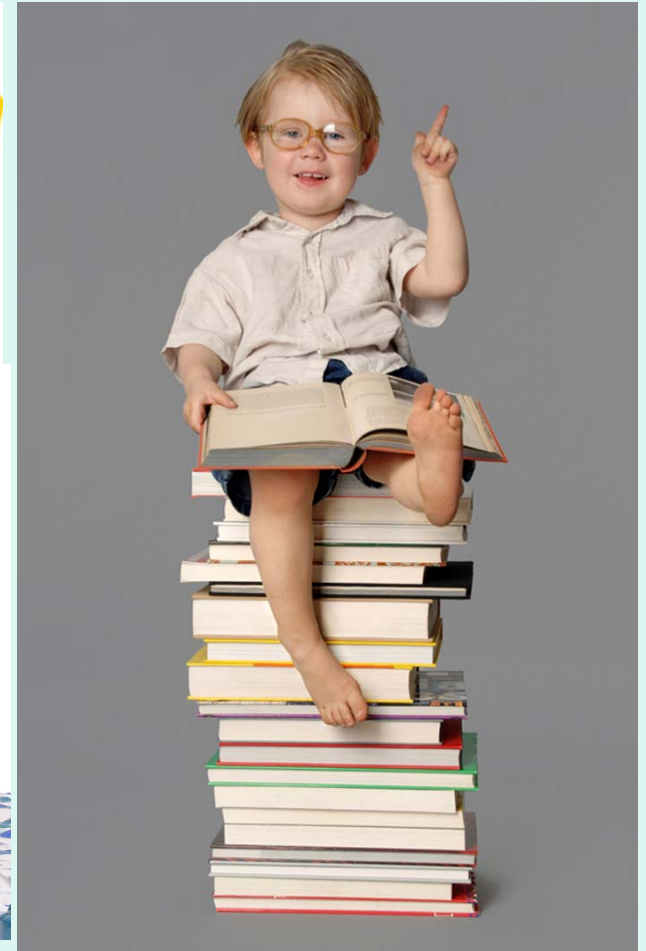
- **Student Nutrition Program:** The Provincial student nutrition program has more than doubled its investment to \$8.5 million annually. More than 315,000 elementary and secondary students receive healthy breakfasts, lunches or snacks to help them be ready to learn and succeed
- **Bill 8 - Trans Fat**

# Federal/Provincial Policies

- **Fitness Tax Credit**

On January 1, 2007, a tax credit to promote physical fitness among children began for each child under 16 years of age. The credit will be provided on up to \$500 in eligible fees for programs of physical activity.

# Full Day Learning For Four and Five Year Olds





Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

## Dr. Charles Pascal Appointed As Special Advisor To Recommend Strategy, Report To Premier

OCBCC Note: Over the years, our Coalition has worked closely with Charles Pascal and we are very excited about his new appointment!

TORONTO — The government has appointed Dr. Charles Pascal to recommend the best way to implement full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, said Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty.

“Research tells us that early learning helps children get off to the best possible start in school — so it’s important that we get it right,” said Premier McGuinty.

“That’s why we’ve appointed one of Canada’s leading experts in early childhood education, Dr. Charles Pascal, to get our plan for full-day learning for four- and five-year olds off to the best possible start.”

Dr. Pascal is the executive director of the Atkinson Foundation, a charitable foundation dedicated to economic and social justice and Chair of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). He has extensive experience in the education sector as a former president of Sir Sandford Fleming College and in taking on significant roles in different provincial governments.

In 1987, he was appointed Chair of the Ontario Council of Regents, the government’s chief policy and planning body for the colleges of applied arts and technology. In 1991, he became the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Community and Social Services and later the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Education and Training.

A recent Rutgers University study showed that four-year-olds in full-time learning programs scored consistently higher in math and language skills. It found that full-time learning has dramatic and lasting effects on children’s learning across a broad range of knowledge and skills.

The McGuinty government has committed to spending \$200 million in year three of its mandate and \$300 million in year four to make progress on full-time learning for Ontario children.

“We need everyone at their best for Ontario to prosper — and our government will continue building opportunity for parents and investing in the success of children,” said Premier McGuinty. “Together, we’ll move forward the Ontario way — by working, building and dreaming together.”

# Thank-You

