



March 10, 2014

Child Care Modernization  
c/o Early Years Division  
Ministry of Education  
900 Bay Street, 24th floor Mowat Block  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

To whom it may concern:

OSPAPPH's mission is to elevate physical activity as a public health priority in Ontario through engagement, education, advocacy and strategic alliances. We aim to be the unified voice representing public health practitioners with the mandate of promoting physical activity in our respective communities. The society builds on the strengths of an established infrastructure and mandate within the public health system, as well as the partnerships formed at the community, provincial and national levels, with the ultimate purpose of increasing physical activity levels in Ontario. We welcome the opportunity to provide input to the Government of Ontario's proposed regulatory changes under the Day Nurseries Act (DNA) and the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007 (ECEA) to support the child care modernization agenda.

Physical literacy is an important public health issue. Only 7% of Canadian children and youth and 15% of adults get the minimal requirement of daily physical activity to achieve health benefits. Physical inactivity is attributed to 15-39% of the seven chronic diseases (Heart disease, stroke, colon cancer, breast cancer, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis) while the total economic burden of physical inactivity in Canada is estimated at \$6.8 billion. Many children today lack the basic skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to live healthy, active lifestyles as shown by the startling rates of inactivity, obesity, and decreased fitness. Therefore physical literacy must be made a priority to reverse the trend of chronic disease and other issues related to physical inactivity.

Definition of Physical Literacy:

Individuals who are physically literate move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person;

- Physically literate individuals consistently develop the motivation and ability to understand, communicate, apply, and analyze different forms of movement.
- They are able to demonstrate a variety of movements confidently, competently, creatively and strategically across a wide range of health-related physical activities.

- These skills enable individuals to make healthy, active choices that are both beneficial to and respectful of their whole self, others, and their environment.

Physical literacy and the acquisition of fundamental movement skills, knowledge, and physical activity behaviour is essential for optimal growth and development and lays the foundation for an active life. There is the assumption that children naturally develop fundamental movement skills but research has shown this is not the case. Not competently being able to perform just one fundamental movement skill can seriously restrict future opportunities in physical activity, sport, and recreation. Furthermore, without physical literacy, many children and youth avoid or withdraw from physical activity and sport and may turn to sedentary or unhealthy lifestyle choices.

Aside from the physical health benefits, physical literacy and participation in regular physical activity have been directly correlated to improved academic performance, positive self-concept, psychological well-being, and reduced anxiety, depression and behavioural issues.

The physical development of children, learning the fundamental movement skills and physical literacy, should be given the same attention that is currently focused on their cognitive development. Given the time children spend in childcare and educational settings, physical literacy must be a priority as these are ideal environments to deliver the activities and quality programs to foster the learning and development of physical literacy from birth to adolescence.

In addition, the Healthy Kids Panel report *No Time to Wait: The Healthy Kids Strategy* to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care contains a set of recommendations, which if followed, will enable the Ontario Government to reduce childhood obesity by 20 per cent over five years. This report specifically recommends that the Ontario government create healthy environments for preschool children, and develop the knowledge and skills of key professions to support parents in raising healthy kids. Childcare settings are ideal environments to deliver activities and quality programs to foster the learning and development of physical literacy and reducing sedentary behaviours in the early years.

### **OSPAPPH Recommendations**

The proposed amendments state that provincial policy statements to guide program content and educator practice will be developed. The policy statement will also be accompanied by proposed complementary regulatory amendments. OSPAPPH has provided recommendation(s) and supporting evidence for consideration.



Replacing the requirement in Regulation 262 to have a program of activities with a requirement to have a **program that focuses on positive, responsive interactions; incorporates active exploration, play and inquiry; provides engaging materials/environments; and supports development in a holistic manner.**

### OSPAPPH Recommendations

- The new regulations must meet the recommendations from the Canadian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for the early years (0 to 4 years) and for children (5 to 11 years) - [www.csep.ca](http://www.csep.ca)
- The new regulations must support the physical literacy development
- The new regulations must ensure ongoing training related to physical activity and physical literacy for all licensed childcare providers. Training should include as a minimum: enhancing childcare providers' knowledge and skills regarding the promotion and delivery of physical activity and physical literacy. To support training, ECEs need to have access to updated curriculum and training materials, including enhanced pre-service training.
- The new regulations must support child care centres in creating supportive environments for physically active behaviours. This can include, but is not limited to support for the development and implementation of policies and for improvements in infrastructure and design of child care centres to maximize physical activity opportunities and behaviours.

OSPAPPH continues to support collaboration between the Early Learning Division of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to coordinate efforts in addressing childhood healthy weights particularly as it affects the childcare environment, physical activity and physical literacy.

In closing, OSPAPPH acknowledges that the modernization of childcare in Ontario is a long term process. We welcome the opportunity for continued consultation on matters related to physical activity and physical literacy development. We look forward to hearing more about the next steps in this endeavour.

Sincerely,

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