



Why do we invest in Active People?

People who are active lead longer, happier and healthier lives

Active lifestyles lead to healthy growth, improved school performance and social development in children, reduced risk of chronic disease, and improved mental health. Active people are also more productive, more connected in their communities, and more likely to avoid illness and injury.¹

That said, for the first time in recorded history, younger generations of Canadians are expected to live shorter lives than their parents² due to obesity and the chronic diseases that often accompany it, such as type 2 diabetes, some cancers, stroke and cardiovascular disease. Sustained physical activity can combat these problems, while also improving musculoskeletal health and reducing the symptoms of depression.³

Most of us aren't reaping those benefits ...

- Only 15% of adults and 5% of Canadian children engage in enough physical activity to derive health benefits. Adults need 150 minutes per week of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, and children need at least 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity⁴
- 84% of kids aged 3-4 are active enough to meet the guidelines, but this falls to only 7% at ages 5-11, and just 4% at ages 12-17. Even when they do engage in physical activity, the level of that activity often isn't high enough. Active Healthy Kids Canada rates Canada's overall physical activity levels at a D-, or 12th in a list of 15 countries.⁵
- Even though 75% of Canadian kids aged 5-19 participate in organized sport, few are meeting recommended activity levels. Because most children and youth are driven to

¹ Active Canada 20/20, (2015). *The Benefits of Physical Activity*.

High Five/Parks and Recreation Ontario. *Benefits, Barriers and Quality in Children's Recreation and Sport* (2005); *Resiliency & Recreation* (2014).

Canadian Sport for Life (2011). *Physical Activity, Sport and Youth: Knowing and Acting*. Kino-Quebec Scientific Committee Position Statement.

² Standing Committee on Health, (2007). *Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids*. Government of Canada.

³ World Health Organization, (2009). *Global health risks: mortality and burden of disease attributable to selected major risks*.

⁴ Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, (2014). *Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines*.

⁵ Active Healthy Kids Canada, (2014). *Is Canada in the Running? How Canada Stacks Up Against 14 Other Countries on Physical Activity for Children and Youth*

school and sports programs, they also miss out on the physical activity inherent in day-to-day living and simply getting around, which is just as important.

- People's social networks (friends and family), their environment (home, work, school) and/or their socio-economic status all contribute to how successful they will be in becoming or remaining physically active.

Quality programming and facilities matter to participation rates

Higher-quality programming – programming that is inclusive, fun, fair, safe, age- and ability appropriate, and supported by trained coaches and officials – builds confidence. That confidence in turn increases participation and lifelong retention.^{6 7} However, while 92% of Canadians believe community-based sport can be a positive influence in the lives of children and youth, only 19% believe it is living up to its full potential.⁸

- Participants with an untrained coach have an attrition rate of 26% compared to 5% for children coached by trained individuals.⁹
- Ontario's estimated recreation infrastructure deficit is greater than \$5 billion.¹⁰

There is also a direct link between physical activity levels and the availability of appropriate places and spaces in which to be active.

- According to the latest Alberta Survey of Physical Activity, respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they had “easy access to quality places where I can get physical activity” were 1.94 times more likely to be sufficiently active than those who disagreed or strongly disagreed.¹¹
- Reduced availability of recreational facilities has been associated with lower levels of physical activity and increased prevalence of overweight among U.S. adolescents.¹²

⁶ Higgs, et al. (2008). *Developing physical literacy: A guide for parents of children ages 0 to 12*. A supplement to *Sport for Life*. Vancouver, British Columbia: Canadian Sport Centres.

⁷ Mandigo et al. *Physical Literacy Concept Paper, Ages 0-12*. Canadian Sport for Life.

⁸ Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, (2002). *Canadian Public Opinion Survey on Youth and Sport*. Prepared by Decima.

⁹ Barnett, N. P., Smoll, F. L., & Smith, R. E. (1992). *Effects of enhancing coach-athlete relationships on youth sport attrition*. *The Sport Psychologist*, 6, 111-127.

¹⁰ Parks and Recreation Ontario, (2007). *Investing in Health and Active Ontarians through Recreation and Parks Infrastructure*.

¹¹ Alberta Centre for Active Living, (2005). *Alberta Survey of Physical Activity*.

¹² Gordon-Larsen P., et al, (2006). *Inequalities in the built environment underlie key health disparities in physical activity and obesity*. *Pediatrics* 117(2):417-24; Tucker P. et al, (2009). *Environmental influences on physical activity levels in youth*. *Health & Place* 15(1): 357-363.

So what's our strategy?

Through its Active People action area, OTF aims to foster lifelong physical activity by making it easy, enjoyable and relevant for everyone. We will invest in opportunities to participate in high quality programs that are responsive to the unique needs of participants, led by skilled leaders and coaches, and delivered in accessible, well-equipped facilities. The goal is to deliver positive experiences to fuel ongoing interest and involvement, and to increase levels of physical activity by ensuring that Ontarians participate in both organized sport programs and less structured activities, such as walking, cycling, running, skating and active play.

Priority Outcome: Higher quality programming and infrastructure to support physical activity

OTF seeks to fund initiatives that achieve the following results:

1. Trained and certified coaches, officials and volunteers

The most effective active living programs are professionally delivered by certified experts equipped with a body of knowledge and experience. These guides ensure that participants emerge competent and confident, which increases the likelihood of lifelong engagement. At their best, coaches play many roles – instructor, motivator, disciplinarian, mentor, friend, manager and fundraiser. They understand the developmental stages and limits of their athletes, as well as basic kinesiology, sport psychology, nutrition and basic first aid. And they help players improve their skills, develop strong character, and gain confidence.

Project or Grant Examples:

- More than 2,000 coaches, officials and volunteers are trained on the Long Term Athlete Development model for tennis, helping clubs to integrate age and ability-appropriate physical literacy, fitness and competition activities into their programming.
- Female volunteers aged 16 to 29 are trained to engage girls aged 12 to 15 in recreational activities that increase fitness and self-defense skills.

2. Programs are safe, inclusive, fair, and age- or ability-appropriate

The success of physical activity programming is determined by two key factors. The first is an understanding of the unique characteristics and skill level of participants, to ensure that programming is relevant and responsive. The second is a commitment to positive values, such as respect and encouragement on the part of coaches, officials, parents and volunteers. Programs that exhibit fairness, excellence, inclusion and fun contribute to positive development, the gaining of critical life skills, and lifelong enjoyment of physical activity.¹³

Project or Grant Examples:

To tackle the high rates of drowning and unsafe water practices among youth, a swimming program reaches 30,000 grade 7 students with instruction in the pool and in the classroom.

Newcomer children enjoy one of their first Canadian after-school physical activity programs delivered in a culturally and socially inclusive format.

¹³ Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, (2008). *What Sport Can Do: The True Sport Report*.

3. Infrastructure for unstructured and structured physical activities

Facilities and equipment play an essential role in increasing physical activity levels. Access to welcoming, accessible, well-maintained and safe spaces – from recreational facilities and parks to public transit and active transportation routes -- is essential to generating positive physical activity experiences.

Project or Grant Examples:

- A community centre is updated to meet public health and safety requirements in an effort to increase access to the facility by physical activity programs.
- A state-of-the-art irrigation system enhances the quality, safety and consistency of a sports field for soccer and baseball leagues.

Priority Outcome: More people become active

OTF seeks to fund initiatives that achieve the following results:

1. Infrastructure is accessible and available for physical activity

When facilities are close to home and work, available for free or at an affordable rate, and open to potential participants at the right times and in the right ways, people will come. When equipment is designed with the ages, cultural identities and levels of ability of participants in mind, they will be used.

Project or Grant Examples:

- A new skateboard park creates affordable physical and recreational opportunities for youth.
- Energy efficient lighting is added to a soccer field to increase the field time available to players.
- Retrofits to a hockey rink and the purchase of adaptive equipment expand opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in winter sports.

2. Ontarians participate in an active lifestyle

For some people, the barriers to physical activity can be immense. Initiatives that remove those barriers will result in greater uptake and increased likelihood of lifelong physical activity. This is true for both formal and informal modes of physical activity.

Project or Grant Examples:

- 6,000 inactive teenage girls join FitClub, a program to promote a healthy self-image through food, confidence-building and physical activity.
- To mitigate the impact of Alzheimer's disease, 700 seniors and their caregivers participate in a pilot program combining an hour of physical activity with an hour of meaningful activity, such as puzzles, music, art or memory games.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are we going to only invest in recruitment of new participants or is retention eligible?

We will support improvements to existing programs if they result in incremental change.

2. Do you still fund leisure?

We may fund leisure activities that support outcomes and grant results in other areas, but we no longer fund leisure for its own sake.

3. Do you support events?

Yes, as long as the event meets one or more of the Active People Grant Results. We may also fund events that support outcomes and grant results in other action areas.

4. What is 'higher quality programming'?

Higher quality programming provides positive experiences, enabling participants to be more confident, competent, and more likely to remain physically active throughout their lives. Higher quality programs are safe, accessible, age and level of ability appropriate, and supported by trained coaches and officials.

5. What does 'values-based' mean?

Programs and initiatives that exhibit fairness, excellence, inclusion and fun are built on values.

6. How are physical activity and an active lifestyle different?

An active lifestyle depends on physical activity, but only if that physical activity is frequent and sustained over a reasonable period. Playing tennis just once a year, for example, would not represent an active lifestyle. An active lifestyle also covers a mix of physical activities, from structured programs to the informal activities of daily life at home, at work, at school, and in transit.

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