

Rethinking (dis)Ability in Recreation: The Experiences of Families Raising Children With Developmental Disorders

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Every 5th child in Ontario has a mental health challenge, which includes developmental disorders (DDs). Many concerns associated with DDs can be addressed through physical activity:

- Social** →  Physical activity provides opportunities for social development
- Motor** →  Physical activity improves fundamental movement skills and leads to more play
- Learning** →  Physical activity improves learning, memory, and focus
- Family** →  Physical activity affects family life: respite for parents and bonding with siblings

Children with DDs need more time to practice fundamental movement skills



Fundamental movement skill proficiency can lead to more active play and physical activity



Increased active play is associated with improved skills for daily living



Movin' and Groovin'

- Inclusive program for young people aged 6-12 & 13-25 years
- Run by graduate and undergraduate students at Laurier
- Fundamental movement skills developed via: sports, dance, fitness, yoga, and mindfulness 
- Registration fee: \$50 for 10 weeks
- 4-6 children registered per class, offered 3 nights per week

"This program is unique and very much needed in our community!" – Parent 1



"I think she's found her groove!" – Parent 2

"I think he enjoys most parts of the program, especially having 1:1 assistance. He likes the high level of energy and engagement of the instructors. He also likes the end routine of the group coming together in the middle and yelling 'Movin' & Groovin'!!!" – Parent 3

Policy around physical activity can take many forms, including:

- funding for physical activity registration fees (e.g., camps, clubs, extracurricular activities, etc.); 
- increased time for, and frequency of activity breaks in school (for all age groups, not just young children); 
- mandatory adapted physical education for Canadian teachers (e.g., a credit earned in teachers college);
- tax incentives for inclusive and adapted community programming (e.g., for program coordinators); 
- healthcare coverage of physical activity for therapeutic purposes (e.g., occupational therapy) 
- continued support physical activity research and knowledge translation 

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