

Implementation of Active Play Standards with capacity-building supports physical activity policies and practices in childcare centers in BC

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Purpose

Childcare centers are key settings to implement physical activity (PA) supportive policies and practices. In 2017 the government of British Columbia (BC) enacted the Director of Licensing Standard of Practice – Active Play (AP standards). Appetite to Play (ATP) is a capacity-building initiative formed to support the enactment of these standards.

The objectives of this study were to examine **changes in PA policies and practices** before and after implementation of AP standards and **explore the factors that predicted changes in PA policies and practices**.

Methods

Childcare providers were surveyed before (2015-16) (n=651) and following (2018-19) (n=583) implementation of the AP Standards. Mixed effect models were used to assess changes over time in PA policies & practices. Multivariable regression models with the matched sub-sample (n=210 centers) were used to identify predictors of change in PA policies and practices related to Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS), amount of AP & outdoor play.

Results

In 2018-19, childcare providers had **greater odds** of having a **written policy on FMS** (OR: 5.9, 95% CI: 3.7,9.4), **amount of active play** (OR: 7.7, 95% CI 4.9, 12.1) and **outdoor active play** (OR: 4.9, 95% CI 3.1, 7.5).

Compared to baseline, children also engaged more frequently in FMS-related activities ($\beta=0.2$), at least 120 min of AP ($\beta=0.3$) and 60 min of outdoor AP daily ($\beta=0.2$) ($p<0.01$ for all 3 PA practices).

Characteristics of childcare settings

- PA culture
- PA capacity (instructional materials)
- Institutionalization of PA policies

Characteristics of childcare providers

- Self-efficacy
- Use of ATP resources
- Past physical literacy training

Attribute of the AP Standards

- Flexibility & triability

Characteristics of childcare settings

- PA culture
- PA capacity (time)
- Organizational climate

Characteristics of childcare providers

- Motivation of the staff

Predictors of PA policy change

Predictors of PA practice change

Implications

Our findings suggest that the implementation of AP standard with capacity-building supported changed in PA policies and practices in childcare centers in BC. Organizational-, intervention- and individual-level factors predicted the positive changes.

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