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*Factors associated with physical activity policy and practice implementation in British Columbia early years group childcare settings: A longitudinal study*

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**Purpose.** Childcare centres are key settings to implement physical activity (PA) supportive policies and practices. In 2016-17, the government of British Columbia (BC) enacted a mandatory policy outlining Active Play Standards (AP Standards) alongside a capacity building initiative focused on implementing policies and practices supporting physical activity (PA) in the early years. The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics of the centre environment, providers and attributes of the new licensing standards associated with policy and practices changes in a cohort of centres surveyed before and after enforcement of the AP Standards.

**Methods.** We conducted surveys to determine changes in PA and screen time policies and practices in licensed group childcare centres across BC before (2016-2017) and after (2018-2019) enforcement of the AP Standards. The surveys measured 10 and 8 centre- and provider-characteristics, respectively, and 4 attributes of the AP Standards hypothesized to play a role in policy and practice changes. Characteristics that showed evidence of an association ( $p < 0.10$ ) in simple regression models were entered in multivariable models to identify predictors of policy and practice changes related to fundamental movement skills, screen time, total amount of AP and total amount of outdoor AP.

**Results.** Managers and staff ( $n=286$  and  $n=263$  individuals at baseline and follow-up, respectively) from 167 facilities were included in these analyses. Centres were more likely to report written policies at follow-up compared to baseline ( $P < 0.05$  for all 4 policies). Centres reported more frequently providing at least 120 min of PA and AP daily, at least 60 min of outdoor AP, and limiting screen time at follow-up compared to baseline ( $P < 0.05$  for all 3 practices). In simple regression models, 6 centre-level characteristics, 4 provider-level characteristics, and 3 attributes of the Standards were associated with odds of having written PA policies at follow-up. However, multivariable regression analyses indicated that only 3 centre-level characteristics (PA culture, capacity (time) and staff commitment to the AP Standards) predicted having written policies at follow-up. In simple regression models, 3 centre-level and 2 provider-level characteristics were associated with positive PA practice changes from baseline to follow-up. Multivariate regression analyses indicated that organizational climate and overall staff commitment to the AP Standards predicted positive practice changes related to fundamental movement skills and amount of outdoor AP offered daily to children, respectively.

**Conclusions.** Factors within centre settings such as organizational climate, culture, capacity and commitment to support change predicted positive changes in policies and practices among early year group childcare providers. Future research should test the feasibility of modifying centre-level factors to improve the implementation of PA policy and practice interventions in these settings.

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