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**Engaging Newcomers in Physical Activity to Support
Healthy Early Childhood Development**

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Executive Summary

The importance of physical activity on our well-being and health is well understood. So too is our understanding of the importance of a healthy early childhood development. A third area of extensive research revolves around newcomer engagement and settlement. However, little is known about the compound effect of all of these issues together. This study explores the following: 1) What physical activity programs and services exist for newcomer children; 2) What limits the participation of newcomer children in physical activity; 3) What encourages their participation and; 4) What additional supports could stem from strong guiding policy and initiatives on physical activity for newcomer children.

There is limited direct research related to physical activity and newcomer children. Thus, extrapolation of related literature which stresses the importance of physical activity in early childhood development leads to the conclusion that the same must be true for newcomer populations. A review of programs and services in Canada suggests there are many supports for newcomer youth who wish to be physically active, but very limited programming for younger children under the age of five, in other words, pre-school aged children.

This study consisted of structured interviews of five key informants from organizations across Canada that work with newcomer children and youth. The interviews explored the types of programs offered, the barriers faced by the newcomers that impede their participation in physical activity, the availability of political backing, funding and policy to support their initiatives, and whether these programs and services were useful tools with regards to a positive settlement experience for newcomer families. Information obtained from the key informants consisted of their accounts of their own experiences, their opinions, as well as some primary data from their internal research.

The results of these surveys suggest that physical activity initiatives are well-appreciated services by newcomers. Additionally, they suggest that organized physical activity provides a great opportunity for organizations to address many additional issues facing new Canadians. Physical activity programs for newcomer children have the capacity to not only contribute to positive early childhood development, but to help newcomer children settle into their new communities.

Introduction

In her 2012 Mandate Letter, Premier Alison Redford identified Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a key initiative for the Alberta Government. (Redford 2012) Specifically, it stated: “[Early Childhood Development] sets the course for a child’s future. It determines how well children will do in school, their physical and mental health, behaviour, relationships and general well-being.” The government aims to “improve measures of child and infant health and development by age 5, e.g. Infant mortality, birth weight, prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, language skills and physical health.”

Government of Alberta ECD material states that a healthy lifestyle (Including physical activity) at early ages impacts positive health outcomes later in life (Government of Alberta 2012). However, in the 2012 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, the authors suggest further research is needed on the benefits of physical activity in the early years (Active Healthy Kids Canada 2012).

Engaging newcomers in physical activity and sport is an emerging subject in Canada. There is considerable research in the area, albeit all quite recent, as well as numerous organizations offering programs and services to meet this niche. Amidst the search for participants for this study, it was apparent that there are certain municipalities in Canada in which engaging newcomer children in physical activity is a priority. These local governments are implementing innovative programs or funding organizations that offer these programs. The literature shows, as this field emerges, programs to engage newcomers in physical activity can play an even larger role in their lives, facilitating settlement and acting as a catalyst for greater community engagement.

Definitions

Newcomers: Defined as anyone who has relocated to Canada within the past five years. This is opposed to the definition of immigrant described below. The study will also focus on racialized communities defined as a group with: “Shared characteristics that are unique to, and recognized by, the group. Characteristics may include: cultural traditions; ancestry; language; national identity; country of origin; or physical traits. A group may have its origins in many countries or link its distinct identity to a geographic region within a country. Religion may also be a defining characteristic because, in some cases, it may be completely tied into a group’s racial or cultural identity.” (Canada Revenue Agency 2012)

Immigrant: Persons residing in Canada who were born outside of Canada, excluding temporary foreign workers, Canadian citizens born outside Canada and those with student or working visas. (Statistics Canada 2010)

Early Childhood Development: “The period from prenatal development to eight years of age. What a child experiences during the early years sets a critical foundation for the entire life course. This is because early child development (ECD), including health, physical, social/emotional and language/cognitive domains strongly influences basic learning, school success, economic participation, social citizenry and health.” (World Health Organization 2007)

For the purpose of this study, the emphasis will be placed on children up to five years of age. This is in part because in Canada, children tend to begin school at this time. It was evident through this research that the support networks and opportunities for children to engage in physical activity increase drastically once they reach school age.

Literature Review

Importance of Active Healthy Lifestyles

The Canadian Medical Association highlights “the effectiveness of regular physical activity in the primary and secondary prevention of several chronic diseases (e.g., cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression and osteoporosis) and premature death.” (Warburton, Nicol and Bredin 2006, 801) Further, the report states that the prevalence of physical inactivity in Canada is higher than all other modifiable risk factors. Physical inactivity and obesity pose significant risk to public health in Canada. Recent figures show that 52% of Canadians are either overweight or obese; 60% for males or 44% for females. (Government of Canada 2012) Colley *et al.* estimate that as many as 85% of adults do not meet Canada’s recommended physical activity guidelines. (2011)

The economic burden of physical inactivity on the Canadian health care system is significant, and estimated to rise. A study by Ian Janssen from Queen’s University estimates that “direct, indirect, and total health care costs of physical inactivity in Canada in 2009 were \$2.4 billion, \$4.3 billion, and \$6.8 billion, respectively. These values represented 3.8%, 3.6%, and 3.7% of the overall health care costs.” (Janssen 2012)

Early Childhood Development

Early Childhood Development (ECD) research has advanced rapidly in the past decade. Early Childhood Development is multi-dimensional; understood within physical, emotional, intellectual (cognitive), social, and creative domains. (Torkildsen 1999) Torkildsen defines Early Childhood Development as: “a multifaceted concept from an ecological framework that focuses

on the child's outcome (development), which depends on characteristics of the child and the context, such as health, nutrition, protection, care and/or education. (1999, 5) Irwin, Siddiqi and Hertzman (2007) describe some of the many impacts of healthy versus unhealthy development. Positive impacts of healthy ECD include: well-being, positive mental health, competence in literacy and numeracy and lifelong participation in the economy. Negative impacts related to unhealthy early childhood development include: obesity, stunting, poor mental health and criminality (5). Irwin, Siddiqi and Hertzman (2007) also state: "What happens to the child in the early years is critical for the child's development trajectory and lifecourse." (15)

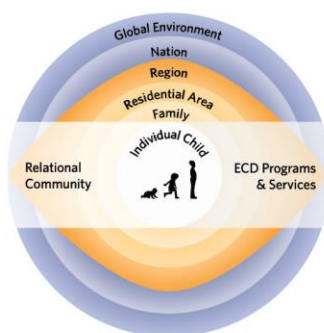
Considering the amount of quality ECD research, and the global appetite for improving health and psychosocial outcomes, there is currently an opportunity to re-shape policy and improve the effectiveness of early intervention programs. Britto, Cerezo and Ogbunugafor (2008) assert that although the scientific community clearly supports early childhood intervention global outcomes for children remain poor. They suggest using evidence-based policy as a means to "improve the lives and well-being of children." (101)

A healthy, positive childhood plays a significant role in the development of children to ensure they are able to achieve their full potential. A report published by The Royal Society of Canada and The Canadian Academy of Health Sciences asserts that "when children face enduring obstacles to healthy development, such as poverty, inappropriate care, or violence, environment and biology may route them on a course to emotional, physical and mental health problems." (Boivin and Hertzman 2012) The report also finds that there may be evidence to suggest that developmental influences in early childhood alter gene expression and may lead to

lifelong changes in individual biology and health outcomes. (Boivin and Hertzman, 2012, 2) The report goes on to hypothesize that as a community we can ensure that these developmental influences are positive by reducing barriers to healthy development, providing opportunities for healthy development and re-shaping the environment in which children are raised.

The breadth of societal and environmental influences that contribute to a healthy childhood environment is significant. It encompasses the fields of education, health, science, neuroscience, genetics, social services, and political climate among many other disciplines. Early childhood is a period when children may be more susceptible to both negative and positive experiences. As such, it is imperative that each of the spheres described above develop policies that foster healthy environments. Irwin, Siddiqi and Hertzman describe the influences on Early Childhood Development as spheres of influence (See Figure 1).

Figure 1.



According to the schema presented above there are a variety of “interacting and interdependent” influences that play a role in the development of children. These influences encompass the entire social environment of the child, from the individual and family all the way to the global environment in which the child lives. Services and policies at all levels play an

important role in nurturing the development of the child. (Irwin, Siddiqi and Hertzman 2007, 17)

Torkildsen (1999) provides a framework that similarly includes broad spheres of influence, described as “actors” and “stakeholders” in the child’s development. These include: government, civil society, communities, the private sector, and families. (11) Considering the range of influences and the inter-disciplinary nature of early childhood development, it is evident that there is no easy solution to ensuring a positive environment in which children develop. In the author’s opinion, physical activity is one area in which we as a society can influence to order to facilitate positive outcomes such as health, inclusion and sense of community specifically for newcomer communities.

Physical Activity and Early Childhood Development

i. Benefits of Physical Activity

The benefits of physical activity to health are widely understood. The Canadian Medical Association (Warburton, Nicol and Bredin 2006, 801) reports that physical inactivity is a modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease and a widening variety of other chronic diseases, including diabetes mellitus, cancer (colon and breast), obesity, hypertension, bone and joint diseases (osteoporosis and osteoarthritis), and depression.

Tremblay, Boudreau-Lariviere and Cimon-Lambert suggest that our current structure for caring for many young children outside the home is an opportunity to engage them in physical activity at an early age: “ Given that over half of Canadian children are in some form of child care and that one quarter of these children attend day care centre, there is great potential to

implement physical activity interventions aimed at developing healthy behaviours in early childhood, thereby enhancing children's health in the short term and fostering lifelong healthy [physical activity] behaviours to curtail the prevalence of chronic disease in later life." (2012, 280)

The benefits of physical activity in our youngest populace are understood with regards to motor skill, socio-emotional, cognitive and physical development. (Stork and Sanders, 2008, 197) Stork and Sanders (2008, 198) describe the benefits of physical activity in early childhood development as serving three primary purposes: (a) stimulating physiological development, (b) creating functional motor abilities, and (c) organizing the brain for subsequent cognitive processing in all three domains of learning (physical, social-emotional, cognitive"). Tremblay, Boudreau-Lariviere and Cimon-Lambert find that physical activity plays a critical role in the development of motor skills (2012, 281), particularly gross-motor skills that are critical for subsequently developing fine-motor skills. With regards to socio-emotional development they state that: "Being physically active in groups and in games provides children the opportunity to learn new skills such as solving conflicts and cooperating and to develop friendships, which in turn increase socio-emotional adjustment and self-esteem." Conversely, they assert that childhood obesity secondary to inactivity negatively impacts psychosocial functioning by propagating negative stereotypes, peer rejection and negative self-image. (281)

Not surprisingly, the greatest connection between physical activity and healthy early childhood development is physical development. The obvious benefit is that increasing physical activity maintains a balance between energy intake and expenditures, enabling the maintenance of a healthy weight (Tremblay, Boudreau-Lariviere and Cimon-Lambert 2012,

282). “In Canada and around the world, preschoolers are not immune to trends in obesity. Canadian studies estimate the prevalence of obesity among 2-5-year-old children to be -8% - 11%, depending on geographical location, and the World Health Organization estimated that in 2010 more than 42 million children under the age of 5 years were overweight worldwide.” (Timmons, et al. 2012) In the same report the authors, through a systematic review, found evidence to support a “positive relationship between increased or higher physical activity and favourable measures of adiposity, bone and skeletal health, motor skill development, psychosocial health, cognitive development, and aspects of cardiometabolic health.” (785)

In addition to weight control, physical activity in children improves blood pressure, increases lean muscle mass and bone mineral density, increases cardio-respiratory functioning, and lowers blood cholesterol. (282) The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Years (aged 0-4 years) states: “Following these physical activity guidelines may improve motor skills, body composition, and aspects of metabolic health and social development. These potential benefits far exceed the potential risks associated with physical activity.” (2012)

ii. Barriers to Physical Activity in Early Childhood

Recognizing the benefits of physical activity is only part of the equation to encourage healthy, active, lifestyles. Reducing barriers to participation also plays a key role in ensuring greater involvement in physical activity opportunities.

One of the greatest barriers to increasing physical activity among young children is the widespread perception that children are already getting enough exercise. Tremblay, Boudreau-Lariviere and Cimon-Lambert (2012) state that 55-75% of parents believe that their children are

getting at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day. However, the report cites formal, observational research which finds otherwise - most of the unstructured play in which children take part is sedentary. As such they suggest that children fall well short of suggested physical activity levels. (Tremblay, Boudreau-Lariviere and Cimon-Lambert, 2012)

Grantham-McGregor *et al.* note challenges that may limit physical activity, such as “under-nutrition, poor health, environmental toxins, and lack of stable, loving, and responsive care.” (2007) Other barriers to physical activity in young children include: season or weather, absence of a sibling, financial cost, time, scheduling, society, safety and parent’s impact among other common barriers to children’s involvement. (Irwin, et al. 2005) Moore *et al.* (2010) found that distance from recreation facilities, lack of culturally appropriate programming, cost, school policies and crime, or danger, are barriers to physical activity among young children.

Reducing barriers to promote greater involvement in physical activity is paramount to ensure a healthier community. There are certain barriers, such as financial cost, in which simple policy can affect major change in recreation patterns. However, some barriers identified in the research are systemic and entrenched in society, and as such would be very difficult to address in isolation. For example, trying to reduce crime as a barrier to physical activity could not likely be achieved by a single policy. Nevertheless, understanding the barriers to physical activity in young children provides an opportunity to create effective ECD strategies in the area of physical activity designed to engage as many individuals as possible.

Physical Activity and Newcomer Health

i. Health of Newcomer Populations in Canada

Research pertaining to the health of newcomers tends to focus on the broader group of immigrants. It is interesting to note that immigrant health is apt to be above the Canadian average upon arrival in Canada. This is described by Beiser:

“Immigrants are, on average, in better health than Native-born Canadians, and have lower mortality rates. However, shortcomings in immigration and resettlement policy jeopardizes immigrants health advantage. Canada selects immigrants on the basis of attributes such as education, job skills, and youth, all of which are grouped under the rubric of Human Capital. Screening helps ensure they are healthy as well. After immigrants enter the country, responsibility for ensuring they stay healthy devolves to the provinces. However, aside from defining a mandatory waiting period before becoming eligible for health-care coverage, and arranging surveillance for immigrants with a history of tuberculosis, provincial health policies have little to say about immigrants. “

Newbold and Danfourth also find that the superior health status of immigrants quickly converges toward the Canadian average, and suggest that socioeconomic or socio-demographic issues may explain the change, particularly: “if immigrants are disadvantaged with respect to income or education.” (2003) And finally, the Canadian Institute for Health Research notes that groups having higher than average rates of obesity in Canada include many immigrant communities, those living in rural areas, and those with a lower socio-economic status. (Canadian Institution for Health Research 2003) Developing our understanding of the underlying issues that underscore these trends is key to developing appropriate policies and services targeted and improving outcomes for newcomer groups.

ii. Role of Physical Activity in Inclusion/Settlement

While it is still an emerging field of research, many researchers are exploring the role physical activity and recreation play in the health and inclusion of new Canadians. (Tirone 2009; Omidvar and Richmand 2003; Paraschak and Tirone 2008). Tirone (2009) suggests that leisure, sport and recreation have the potential to contribute to healthy lifestyles, alleviate stress, build social capital, create the space for friendships to develop, foster positive youth development, and provide opportunities for sharing traditional cultural practices such as ethnic foods, cultural and religious celebrations, dance, music and games. Similar findings are presented by Omidvar and Richmand (2003) and Paraschak and Tirone (2008), who conclude that sports and recreation play an important role in the settlement of, and in the fostering of a sense of belonging for, newcomers in Canadian society. Frisbee (2011) finds that organized sport offers a venue in which to provide opportunities for increased intercultural communication and understanding, as well as reduced instances of racism and other forms of discrimination, exclusion, and resentment; and diversification and enrichment of Canada's physical culture. (2011, 137)

Conversely, Pathways to Prosperity: Canada states that: "little research has directly addressed this assertion, examining how municipalities, sports associations, and other organizations can use sports and recreation to promote newcomer integration into the local community, promote community connections, and facilitate host community understanding of immigrants and their contributions." (2013)

iii. Barriers to Involvement in Recreation by Newcomers

Considerable research (Donnelly and Nakamura, 2006; Stanec, 2011) focuses on the barriers newcomers face when moving to Canada, including participation in physical activity and recreation. Donnelly and Nakamura state: “Such participation may also yield physical health benefits, yet the positive benefits must not be overemphasized given the multitude of barriers (e.g. language, finances, transportation) that newcomers encounter in gaining entry into the sports system.” (2006) Some of these barriers identified by the City of Toronto

Newcomer Strategy include:

Cost is a significant barrier to newcomer use of cultural institutions and recreational facilities. Museums, galleries and historic centres often charge entrance fees that may be too expensive for newcomer families. Even within their own neighbourhoods, newcomers sometimes struggle to find culturally inclusive recreation programs and activities. Many free or low-cost activities and programs in recreation centres and libraries have long waiting lists or do not provide language and child care supports. (City of Toronto 2013, 45)

In addition to the barriers described above, there appears to be a systematic lack of awareness of the needs of newcomers by Canadians that confounds the issue. Physical and Health Education Canada highlights the fact that many mainstream organizations lack: “i. Knowledge about issues facing immigrants; ii. Activities that are respectful of immigrant and refugee beliefs and culture; iii. Appreciation for other cultures; iv. Participant, family, and community support for programs; v. Knowledge and experience on how to train staff; vi. Coordination between collaborators; and, vii. The capability to meet the increasing demands for services.” (Stanec 2011, 13)

Government of Alberta Legislation and Policy

Before proceeding to describe the results of this study it is important to understand the context, and current practices of the province. The following section explores which legislation and policy shape early childhood development and physical activity initiatives in Alberta. This will include presenting pertinent information from the Family & Community Support Services Act to understand what laws govern family and children support services; the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act for governance of sport and recreation; and the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act for information regarding newcomer policy.

In a review of government policy, there is a program called the *Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Initiative*. This partnership includes the Government of Alberta's Culture and Community Spirit department, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the Alberta Municipal Services Corporation (a subsidiary of AUMA), and the Alberta Human Rights Commission. The goals of this initiative are:

- To work with municipalities to help build their capacity to become more welcoming and inclusive.
- To create and support a provincial network of welcoming and inclusive communities as a means to facilitate the sharing of best practices and capacity-building opportunities.
- Serve as a source of information and support for municipalities implementing welcoming and inclusive initiatives.
- To expand and update relevant tools and resources.

- To engage in communication and outreach activities to promote welcoming and inclusive initiatives in an effort to increase the number of municipalities actively engaged on these issues. (Alberta Urban Municipalities Association 2013)

The website for this initiative provides many helpful links and toolkits to assist newcomers in settling in Alberta. The partnership has also created the *Welcoming and Inclusive Committee* to assist municipalities in achieving a more welcoming community. Within these initiatives, there is little to no emphasis placed on physical activity, sport or recreation as an engagement tool.

i. Family & Community Support Services Act

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is a partnership between the Government of Alberta and the provincial municipalities. It receives its mandate from the Family and Community Support Services Act and subsequent regulations. This Act supports communities in offering social programs that are “preventative in nature to promote and enhance well-being amongst individuals, families and communities” which contribute to a “sense of integrity, self-worth and independence.” (Alberta Human Services 2012) The programs also “help individuals in their community to adopt healthy lifestyles, thereby improving the quality of life and building the capacity to prevent and/or deal with crisis situations.” (Alberta Human Services 2012)

ii. *Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act*

The mission of the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation is to “facilitate and enhance activities, lifestyles and legacies by developing active partnerships in sport, recreation, active living, parks and wildlife programs.” (Alberta Sport, Recreation and Wildlife Foundation 2012) The objectives outlined in the Act are:

- To develop and maintain sport programs, facilities, and services
- To develop and maintain recreation programs, facilities, and services
- To develop and maintain parks programs, facilities, and services
- To support the preservation and use of acquired natural areas
- To raise funds to assist the ASRPWF in carrying out its objectives (Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act, RSA 2000, c A-34 n.d.)

This is the guiding document for provision of physical activity in Alberta. The Act itself is relatively short, simply outlining jurisdiction, giving authority to the Foundation, and addressing funding priorities. While it funds many initiatives, several key highlights from their 2012 Annual Report are: Funding 256 Municipal Recreation/Tourism areas with grants totalling \$1,472,800 and dispersing \$8.2 Million to 103 provincial sport and recreation associations. As such, the specific policy related to physical activity involvement does not stem from the Act itself, but from the individual programs funded by the Foundation. The Foundation oversees a variety of programs and services including: The Active Living Program, Future Leaders Program, Development Initiatives Program, Podium Alberta, the Alberta Summer and Winter Games, and oversees operating grants to municipalities.

The most pertinent of these in relation to this study is the Active Living Program. The program itself has a policy document outlining the purpose and framework of the program. It also starts with a list of guiding principles:

- Active Albertans: More Albertans are more active, more often.

- Active Communities: Alberta communities are more active, creative, safe and inclusive.
- Active Outdoors: Albertans are connected to nature and able to explore the outdoors.
- Active Engagement: Albertans are engaged in activity and in their communities.
- Active Coordinated System: All partners involved in providing recreation, active living and sport opportunities to Albertans work together in a coordinated system.
- Active Pursuit of Excellence: Albertans have opportunities to achieve athletic excellence.

(Active Alberta 2011)

Each of these objectives is broken down into strategic priorities as well as what success will look like in ten years. For example, under the first objective to get “more Albertans more active, more often”, key strategic priorities include “working with partners, encouraging and improving opportunities for children and families to engage in high quality, unstructured, and creative play” and “encouraging school communities to adopt a comprehensive school health approach to promote healthy, active living.” The ten year goal of these priorities is to have more Albertans active in a variety of ways, improved physical and mental health, affordable and accessible opportunities, and increased participation.

Under the objective to “Actively Engage” one strategic priority is to “work with partners to reduce barriers to participation for populations that are often less active, including families living in poverty, girls and women, Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, recent immigrants and older citizens.” (Active Alberta 2011, 21) And the goal is that ten years down the road we will see much greater involvement in physical activity by these groups.

Another one of the key policies discussed is defining the roles of the different levels of government when it comes to governing recreation in Alberta. Key responsibilities of the Government of Alberta include:

- Provide leadership by setting direction through policy development and establish priorities through legislation, regulation, standards, grant funding, and communicating with Albertans;
- Provide programs and services that build an integrated delivery system;
- Plan and support recreation research;
- Encourage and support provincial recreation, sport and active living organizations;
- Enable and support recreational opportunities on public lands;
- Build, operate and maintain facilities and infrastructure;
- Encourage and facilitate intersectoral collaboration and community engagement. (Active Alberta 2011, 13)

Finally, the policy document ends by linking to other policies and initiatives which are related to these outcomes. These include the Plan for Parks, Land-Use Framework, Safe Communities Initiative, Vision 2020, Tourism Development Strategy, The Spirit of Alberta: Alberta's Cultural Policy, the Healthy Kids Alberta Strategy, and the Healthy Alberta School Communities. The final two are particularly pertinent to the engagement of children in physical activity. The Healthy Kids Alberta strategy recognizes four key areas of wellness, one of which is "Achieving healthy weights by encouraging healthy eating and promoting active living", and another to "Enhance early childhood development". (Active Alberta 2011, 27)

iii. Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act

In the preamble to the Human Rights Act there is a strong message on multiculturalism in Alberta which reads: “Whereas multiculturalism describes the diverse racial and cultural composition of Alberta society and its importance is recognized in Alberta as a fundamental principle and a matter of public policy” (Alberta Human Rights Act, RSA 2000, c A-25.5 n.d.) The Act then goes on to discuss matters pertaining mostly to human rights such as rules around discrimination and equality. The only other mention of multiculturalism is with regards to a multiculturalism fund. As such, information pertaining to engaging newcomers is not found within this document, or in any of its regulations.

iv. The Spirit of Alberta: Alberta’s Cultural Policy

Engaging newcomers is however part of Alberta’s Cultural Policy, launched in 2008 to provide “a framework for decision-making related to the support, growth and development of culture”. (Government of Alberta n.d.) In this document, one of the core values is diversity. Under the diversity section it states: “It is by celebrating the diversity of our cultural heritage and creative expression, building on the values and experiences that we share, and welcoming newcomers to our province that we will be able to know each other better, and make Alberta an even more attractive place to live, where all citizens can feel a sense of pride and belonging.” This policy is a framework and does not appear to be giving any legal authority by a particular act. However, Premier Redford re-established the “Premiers Council on Culture” in 2013 which is a government-appointed body that “directly advises the Minister on innovative

approaches, partnerships and solutions to support sustainable growth within the province's diverse culture sector.” (Premier's Council on Culture 2013)

v. *Social Policy Framework*

The Social Policy Framework presented by the Government of Alberta in February of 2013 proposes to:

Direct the future of Alberta’s social policy and programs, and it will guide how we come together to ensure that everyone has an opportunity for fulfillment and well-being. This framework is for all Albertans—it is a vision for Alberta and its people, and it is a call to action for everyone to work together to achieve the spirit and goals of the framework. (Government of Alberta 2013, 10)

The goals in this framework include: reducing inequality, protecting vulnerable people, creating a person-centered system of high-quality services and enabling collaboration and partnerships. The framework also outlines the outcomes expected and the ones that relate to children, newcomers and physical activity include: “achieving the highest attainable standards of health and well-being, feeling welcomed in the communities in which they live, learn and work, and exploring opportunities to participate in recreational activities and cultural experiences, and to engage in Albertan society”. (Government of Alberta 2013, 11) Unlike the previous legislation and policies discussed, the Social Policy Framework does recognize key action areas in which the Government is looking for “Priority transformational initiatives”, and the first one noted on that list is Early Childhood Development. Transitioning now from the literature to the interview findings, this study explores major themes experienced by programs and service delivery agencies who are working to encourage physical activity in newcomer communities.

Methodology

The first phase of the study included a review of literature in the areas of physical activity and health, newcomer engagement, early childhood development, and pertinent legislation and policies in relation to the topic area. Information was gathered through i. academic search engines (including PubMed, Google Scholar, Academic Search Complete, JSTOR) and ii. searches of government websites and policy documents. The literature review grounded the design of the interview questions and the ability to use grounded theory to pull out relevant themes from the research participants.

The second phase of the study identified organizations and key individuals doing innovative work in the area of newcomer and childhood engagement in physical activity throughout Canada. Searches were done online using key words (Early Childhood Development; Recreation; Physical Activity; Canada; Engaging Newcomers; Programs) to narrow in on organizations offering physical activity to newcomer populations. In addition, there was some unanticipated snowball sampling as several of the initial participants recommended additional organizations and individuals that would also be able to contribute to the study. Participants all worked at non-profit organizations working with newcomers; all of these organizations also had aspects that included physical activity. These individuals were asked to participate in a short interview, probing for information on how to effectively design and implement these policies and programs (see Appendix B for interview questions). A total of five interviews were completed from organizations across Canada. The information collected was then analyzed using grounded theory as a means to pull out and sort relevant data into common themes and

approaches. It is these themes that guided the interpretation and subsequent policy framework.

This study was approved through the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory involves the discovery of theory through primary data collection. Rather than a thesis guiding the research, themes develop organically through commonalities in the data collected. In the current context, key informants who have been instrumental in developing inclusive physical activity and recreation opportunities within their communities were questioned and common themes were extrapolated.

Grounded theory has its roots in the social sciences and is a good fit with exploratory research within the realm of physical activity and recreation. As Henderson *et al.* note:

The use of grounded theory approaches combined with emerging qualitative data offered ways to understand the context of leisure research regardless of the subject. As noted in the literature review, this grounded theory method enables researchers to find formal theory or substantive theory uncovered in data. The acceptance of these methods and their growth, albeit slow, opens the door for greater leisure theory development as long as the grounded theory is analyzed and described. (Henderson, Presley and Bialeschki 2004, 422)

This approach is appropriate in the current context as rather than assuming best practices, grounded theory will delve through innovative practices, and assist in pulling out relevant themes identified by the research participants.

Interview Findings

Four major themes materialized from the interview data, with a range of sub-themes emerging in each category. The categories included: 1) Cultural understanding (barriers, awareness and increased need for education for both policy makers and service providers on newcomers and relationship with physical activity); 2) Newcomers struggling with keeping a balance between their desire to keep home culture and desire to adapt/learn about Canadian culture; 3) Physical activity can be a platform for offering other services and partnerships to newcomers and; 4) Lack of physical activity opportunities for pre-school aged newcomer children. Each of these themes was highlighted by at least three of the five participants.

Limitations

During the initial search phase for selecting the research participants, it became clear that many of the programs targeting newcomer children focused on school-aged children. Many of the recruitment tactics were done through school systems and guidance counsellors, and programs offered as after-school programs. Programs that addressed the pre-school aged children had a greater emphasis on family settlement than on engaging children in physical activity. As such, the scope of the participants was expanded to include programs and organizations that programmed for children of all ages. This will be discussed further in the discussion section.

Cultural Understanding

Interview participants made many references to the importance of cultural understanding and misunderstanding. From the perspective of newcomers this arose with regards to barriers they faced while adjusting to a new culture. For non-newcomers it was discussed with regards to respecting the cultures of the newcomers to their communities. Regardless of the perspective, it was apparent from all interview participants that cultural education for newcomers and service providers was a critical strategy to ensuring that newcomers felt welcomed in their new communities. Within the theme of cultural understanding I will begin by presenting the barriers the interview participants shared, followed by a more detailed look at the role of cultural awareness. Finally I will present the participants views on the need for better education to improve cultural understanding by both newcomers and Canadians.

i. Barriers

As previously noted, there are many barriers that newcomers face when acclimatizing to Canadian culture. In particular, with regards to involvement in physical activity and sport, common barriers included financial constraints, distance from facilities and language barriers in addition to cultural norms. The participants in this study noted very similar barriers as reported from participants in their programs. Participant One had an interesting experience when taking newcomers to Banff for a field trip:

It was also an eye opener because some of the families said that they were unaware that it was safe to leave city limits, and that is the background that they come from. In their country they wouldn't leave city limits because of mines or whatnot and here in Canada there is that sense of freedom. It was very eye

opening for them. That you can come to Banff and have a picnic with your family on your own time and that is welcomed and encouraged.

Participant Two noted that participants weren't taking advantage of physical activity programs offered because of the cost of registration fees and equipment. Also, they felt that transportation played a significant role as a barrier as well.

After we studied the program another big issue that we realized was transport. Most of the populations that we work with, newcomers to Canada, for 5 years or less. Most of them were newly in Canada. Most of them don't have any car at home. The whole family depends on public transportation.

Participant Five described weather as a barrier and how many newcomers did not know the numerous physical and outdoor activity opportunities available to them during winter months.

Some of the more successful programs recognized these barriers and created ways to address them. For example, Participant Two discussed how language continues to play a role in limiting newcomer engagement in physical activity. This participant then stated that there were tremendous resources, all in English, and that the cost to translate the resources and share them with participants was extremely limiting. Participant Three agreed noting that newcomers often felt uncomfortable going up to a front desk, in particular if there was a line-up of people. Participant Three described one means of addressing the language barriers, should there be funding opportunities available to do so:

We operate tours for newcomers of recreation centres. The tours are in multiple languages. We have multiple volunteer translators who speak different languages as well as a slideshow in different languages. We will actually walk them around the recreation centres and talk about all the programs that they can be involved in.

Participant Five also identified the language barrier, but through a key partnership was able to address this issue by translating materials: “Partnered with new funding sources. For example, [NAME OF BUSINESS] donated money towards printing cycling handbooks in 16 different languages.”

The organizations involved in this study all noted barriers that newcomers continue to face with regards to engaging in physical activity. Given sufficient resources, they are finding ways to address these barriers. Other programs or services targeted to overcome barriers to physical activity among newcomers mentioned by the participants included offering women only swim times, offering family programs to allow parents to participate and develop their own understanding of the programs, and find funding sources to help finance our expensive North American sports.

One innovative program offered by one of the organizations interviewed involved a leisure access program that for a small fee offered low income families free access to recreation centres and 75% off all recreation programs. For many newcomer families that face the financial strains of resettlement, this greatly reduced the financial barriers to involvement in physical activity, and subsequently raised enrollment by newcomer families

ii. Awareness

While newcomers have an overwhelming amount of new traditions and cultures to discover in Canada, Canadians (staff and volunteers in recreation centres, community members) play an integral role to ensure they offer a welcoming community that does not create any additional difficulties for newcomers. As Participant Three noted:

People are getting to know each other and all the different people that are within their community. It breaks down barriers because having these programs allows newcomers to participate and attend the facilities. And allows the mainstream people who are already here the opportunity to get to know all these people. Helps the city get to know all the new unique people who are arriving each day.

Participant Three showed even more awareness noting that “depending on what is happening worldwide we have different refugees arriving and we continually have to adapt our programs to make sure we are being as innovative as possible when creating our programs.”

Participant Two noted that in addition to non-newcomers playing an integral role in creating a welcoming community that they also began to see more established newcomers who had gone through their programs give back by volunteering their time:

There is a big change that we see in the newcomer community who are now getting to know exactly what the challenges that this new population are facing. Because while we are doing these programs we have volunteers from newcomer communities come and help. And they get to understand and know what the newcomers are dealing with. So that helps as a way of welcoming them to the communities.

Regardless of whether the awareness involved newcomers understanding of Canadian culture, or conversely non-newcomer understanding of different cultures, the participants spoke to the importance of programs and policies to help educate one another to break down these barriers.

iii. Need for Education

Participants spoke to the importance of education in ensuring newcomers knew about opportunities and were aware of resources to help navigate their new reality. They also spoke about the importance of educating non-newcomers to ensure that communities were

welcoming and service delivered appropriately. Participant Four noted that “what was really missing was the education piece. That teachers and after school instructors weren’t really aware of all the different cultures, religions, what was different.” Participant Three offers diversity training to its entire staff:

Diversity training with all recreation centre staff. All staff goes, front counter staff and program staff go through diversity training where they learn how to use clear language when speaking with people. Identifying their biases they may have. We go beyond cultural competency. We believe in diversity as a whole, not just cultural. That was a barrier at first. Staff didn’t know how to approach people. They would speak the same speed to everyone.

Participant Three also spoke about their programs that offered physical activity for newcomer children as a great way for the children to learn about physical literacy. They would take the participants on tours of the recreation as part of their programs, so that the children could learn about the recreation facilities and all the different programs that were offered.

The results of these initiatives were that introducing sport and physical activity and reducing barriers to participation acted as channels to create more welcoming and stronger communities. As Participant Four noted: “Physical activity and sport is so key. So to hear how other people in the community are using it as a key to connect people to Canadian culture or make them feel comfortable in a new situation is really exciting. And getting people more active is a bonus.” Participant Three shared some data collected through their programs and noticed that they had witnessed:

Increased enrollment in classes in which newcomers are attending. People used to attend a recreation centre about once a year, but through our focus groups we know, that 87% of newcomers are attending programs weekly. Attending much more frequently, so their health is improving as a result.

In counterbalance to the positive statements shared above, several participants also noted the difficulty newcomer families had in balancing their desire to integrate and learn about Canadian culture, while maintaining their original culture and identity.

Balancing Cultures

For newcomers to Canada it is important to strike a balance between maintaining their culture, while adapting and integrating to Canadian customs. This is not different in the area of physical activity. As previously mentioned, the onus is on both physical activity providers and participants to ensure that these goals are squared. An example that has already been discussed is the number of swimming pools now offering women's only swim times. This allows women for whom it would not be culturally acceptable to attend a regular public swim with both genders the opportunity to get involved. However, Participant Two notes there is also an appetite to not only experience, but to get involved in more Canadian activities:

Something that came up which was really surprising to us was that when we were offering programs we were focusing on soccer and sports that we thought they would love. And they told us that they didn't need programs that they already knew, they wanted to try new sports like Canadian football, skating, swimming and sports that they never had a chance to try. So that was eye opening. We thought by offering what they were accustomed to would be more helpful but it wasn't. At least most of them wanted to feel like they belong. And learn the sports that were mostly Canadian. We want to be considered as any other youth, not just newcomer youth. After attending once or twice they would often move on and we help them transition from our programs to regular programs. That's what they want, they want to be part of the community as a whole, not just stay in this particular stream of newcomer programs.

Participant Five spoke directly about cultural differences in bicycling:

But so many people come from cultures that have more established cycling traditions than we do here in Canada. Utilitarian cycling. So we want to encourage people from those cycling cultures to check out cycling in our city. See that as something viable for them. And for people who don't come from cycling

cultures to realize that it is here. Ability to connect with a part of the city that they might not find out about right away if they aren't shown it.

The participants also discussed how cultural differences also play a role in how children are involved in sport. In some cases, there were parents whose cultures did not value physical activity as much, which could put pressure on children as they contend with balancing two cultures. Participant One noted:

There is also a struggle with self-identity, so the students are under pressure from parents to follow their own cultural etiquette and traditions, but yet they are in a school system that is so multi-cultural and they want to fit in and they want to be Canadian Kids. So there is that dilemma that they struggle with on an ongoing basis about who am I really. There is a role I play at home and a role I play at school and we try to empower them to be proud of their culture and really conducive to learning about other cultures.

Newcomers will ultimately strike this balance in a manner that is appropriate to their individual circumstances. It is however, the responsibility of service providers in Canada to ensure that they are not involuntarily creating any additional barriers. By developing our understanding of the needs of different cultures, we can adapt our services to address some of the cultural differences.

Physical Activity as a Platform for Launching Other Services and Partnerships

A central theme that emerged from the data, that could benefit program development, is that physical activity can be used as a tool to address other issues faced by newcomers; or to introduce additional support services. At one level, as previously mentioned, programs targeted at newcomer children often opened the doors for these children to then participate in mainstream programs. As Participant Two stated: "To see how they integrate with the community through the programs that we offer. It allows the youth to be able to participate in

other programs that are not organized by us because now they feel comfortable to and they have the skill to do it.” But in addition to launching participation in other sport, Participant Two discussed how these programs also served to address broader societal inclusion and settlement goals.

Especially with the youth who may be coming with negative baggage from the life that they have lived, say if they are coming from refugee camps. And they get to access other services that we don't offer because we have noticed that they may have an emotional issue or a psychological problem, and then we connect them to the right people who can help them with that issue as well. And now we have also seen parents starting to participate which we didn't see at first. They feel more comfortable and trusting of us that we can help them now in physical activity and sport, but also in connecting them to other supports in the community.

Participant Four agreed noting “And what that also means beyond sport. Networking in the community and connecting family members to other services within the community.

Encouraging a sense of belonging” Also, participants spoke of programs that targeted children, yet offered parent information sessions where they not only introduced that program, but also used that time to introduce other family and settlement services. The idea that physical activity was a way to encourage community engagement and ease settlement came up frequently as suggested by Participant Five:

Offers opportunities for connecting with established Canadians and others outside their ethnic group. Community engagement, volunteer skill building, opportunities for hands on cycling demonstrations. 90% of people surveyed conveyed that they became more friendly with more people outside of their ethnic group.

It was evident through the interviews that physical activity often offered the means and venue for newcomers to engage with others and learn about other opportunities.

Partnerships

A related theme discussed by several participants was the importance of partnerships. In many cases these partnerships played an integral role in the funding of the agencies. But also, organizations were able to partner with other service providers and inform participants of all the different opportunities. This was expressed by Participant One who stated both:

Collaboration is really important. At the end of the day all the agencies working with new Canadians or youth in general, we are all here to support youth in the most positive ways that we can. We want them to be successful and positive contributors to our city and country. The more we can collaborate together the better. It's about working smarter not harder.

And:

Whether we offer it or not is irrelevant. For us if we can bridge the journey to Canadian life for them in an efficient manner, and quickly help them settle and be successful than we have succeeded. We do not want to be a crutch that they need all the time. When our clients or students don't need our services anymore that's a feather in our cap, and we've done our job.

Partnerships arose not only with regards to service provision and funding, but also as a ways to pool ideas and expertise. Several participants discussed recognizing great work being done by other organizations and making referrals rather than duplicating services.

Lack of Services for Younger Children

When initially performing a search for participants for this study it became apparent that there was a lack of physical activity programs for young children. There are programs that involve physical activity for youth, in particularly tying in to school age. There are also settlement programs for families with really young children. However these don't place much emphasis on physical activity. Several of the participants alluded to this gap in their interviews.

Participant One, when asked about the future direction of their organization stated “We are also looking at the possible gaps we see for new immigrant families, and that might be the 0-6 year age group.” Participant Two confirmed this stating that they often hear this request from newcomer families:

Working harder to get new funding and not limiting the programs just to youth. But even younger children. Opening it up to younger children, because we have had parents asking that question over and over. Can we have our young ones participate. So with our limited funding we couldn't do that, but if we could we could open up opportunities for younger children. Allowing them to start young.”

Given the support in the literature for healthy active lifestyles in early childhood, this appears to be an excellent opportunity to fill a gap in service.

Policy Implications and Implementation

Childhood Development and Physical Activity Newcomer Policy

Discussions with the study participants made it clear that there are some innovative programs and services supporting newcomer youth (school aged) in Canada. However, when it comes to engaging younger newcomer children in physical activity, opportunities are much more limited. Many of the physically active programs offered to children were done through the school systems in after-school programs, targeting only school-age children over 5 years-old. Those programs that do exist and target children under five were most often done through family programs aimed more at settlement than at being physically active. As such, there appears to be a gap in services in this area. While the field of Early Childhood Development is still developing, there is irrefutable evidence as to the importance of physical activity within this age group. Programs and services to facilitate physical activity among young newcomers under 5 years-old would therefore be expected to provide long-term health and well-being benefits, and should be included in future policy discussions.

Newcomers face a variety of challenges as they settle into their new communities. They note significant barriers that impede their participant in physical activity. Some of these can include cost, distance, equipment, awareness and cultural sensitivity. As shown by our participants in this study, there are lots of programs that attempts to address these barriers to encourage engaging newcomers in physical activity. Again, not many of these programs target young children.

As previously noted, Britto, Cerezo and Ogbunugafor (2008) assert that although the scientific community clearly supports early childhood intervention global outcomes for children

remain poor. They suggest using evidence-based policy as a means to “improve the lives and well-being of children.” (101) To ensure that programs and services are successful, they must be supported by strong, evidence-based policy. Currently, this exists in the form of related policies as demonstrated in the review of provincial laws and regulations. But targeted policy that addresses engaging newcomer children in physical activity would foster the attitude that it is a priority and subsequently offer greater support to organizations pursuing these objectives.

Determining Responsibility

Why does engaging young newcomer children in physical activity not a priority of governments? It may be in large part to the absence of an authoritative body on the issue. According to our findings, there are recreation programs offered to older children, and newcomer services for families with younger children, but little that take both into account. Regardless of whether this issue is addressed by newcomer services, FCSS, sporting organizations or grassroots community groups, it would benefit the newcomer community if one of the groups took a leading role on the issue. The majority of the organizations we contacted were community/grassroots groups that did obtain some funding from the government to provide services to newcomers. While these programs seemed successful, a more concerted and intentional approach would encourage increased programs and services to support the newcomer community.

The policy and legislation presented earlier in this study could be interpreted to support increased opportunity and funding for physical activity programs for pre-school aged children. For instance, the Family and Support Services Act, which states that it supports programs that

are preventative in nature to promote and enhance well-being amongst individuals, families and communities. The Family and Community Support Services Act does not specifically focus on early childhood development programs or in physical activity. However, it does focus on promoting the development of stronger communities and public participation to achieve this. It also stipulates jurisdiction responsibilities and funding for these programs as a shared responsibility between the Province and the municipalities. FCSS is not mandated to offer recreation/sport funding, however one could argue that physical activity would facilitate community engagement and may mitigate other social ills. Similarly the Alberta Sports, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act allots recreation grants and \$8.2 Million to 103 provincial sport and recreation associations which could be allocated to include this initiative. Or most notably in this Act, the strategic priority listed to “work with partners to reduce barriers to participation for populations that are often less active, including recent immigrants” directly supports these initiatives but doesn’t mentioned young children specifically. (Active Alberta 2011, 21). What is missing is policy that directly suggests the importance of physical activity for newcomer children, and ultimately where the responsibility to provide this lies.

Ensuring Reliable Funding

It will be important for sport and recreation organizations to recognize this gap in both policy and services, and use the tools and resources learned in similar programs to develop new, innovative services to meet the need in the community. As the literature review also explored, there is currently a window of opportunity in Alberta with the current government prioritizing early childhood development as a core policy and investment area. With the backing of the Social Policy Framework, organizations could make a case for the need for these services.

In addition to the Provincial Government, many of the participants in this study have received support and financial aid through Citizenship and Immigration Canada at the Federal level to deliver these types of programs. And finally, participants also talked about the private sector and creating partnerships in the corporate realm as a potential funding source moving forward.

Offering Cultural Education Opportunities

Several of the participants noted that educating their staff by providing diversity training had proved very effective in creating a more welcoming environment for newcomers. Others offered programs for the newcomers themselves explaining Canadian customs and traditions. While there are isolated cases in which organizations are recognizing this need, there is perhaps a broader opportunity for policy makers to build in supports that further entrench diversity training and cultural awareness into physical activity settings and recreation centres.

Conclusion

This is an exciting time for organizations that work with newcomers in the area of physical activity. There are lots of innovative, successful programs and services, in addition to emerging support from political bodies. This also coincides with the growing field of early childhood development and the noticeable gap in services for younger children (5 years of age and younger). Now seems like a window of opportunity to prioritize getting younger children engaged in physical activity and recreation.

The benefits of doing this extend far beyond improving newcomer health. The success stories described throughout this study support physical activity as a settlement tool, one that promotes community engagement. What also became apparent in the interviews is the lack of stability for many of the organizations and the need for sound political support, policies and financial backing to ensure their programs success, viability and sustainability.

The role policy makers can play with regards to this issue is critical. Considering the support, understanding and political will associated to the components of this issue (newcomer engagement, physical activity, early childhood development), it is less a matter of convincing governing bodies of the importance of this issue, but connecting the dots. Policy makers have the ability to see the broader landscape and thus the best means to initiate these ideas. They can recognize the benefits of promoting physical activity to newcomers in early childhood, and support the organizations offering these programs and services.

Relocating to a new country cannot be an easy task. To be in a completely new environment, dealing with the pressures of finding employment, a home, and learning a whole new set of customs seems can be overwhelming. In Alberta, there is a solid foundation of

newcomer services and programs that facilitate settlement. Physical activity as a settlement tool, however, seems underutilized. Sport and physical activity can play a unifying role in Canadian culture-whether at the corner rink, in a running group, or at the gym. Physical activity creates natural networks, all while promoting healthy living. It is only natural that this extends into the world of newcomers.

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Appendix A- Consent Form

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

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Supervisor:

Lana Wells, Brenda Strafford Chair
Faculty of Social Work

Title of Project:

Engaging Newcomers in Recreation to support Early Childhood Development

Sponsor: Government of Alberta, Human Services

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study is to explore the notion that building social supports through physical activity and recreation in newcomer families with children between ages 0-6 is an effective strategy to promote healthy, engaged citizens. The study aims to identify innovative programs and services that cater directly to newcomer children.

You have been selected because of your involvement in one of these programs. We want to develop an understanding of how the program was developed, challenges faced, positive outcomes, and lessons learned that would benefit the Government of Alberta were they to adopt similar programs.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

Involvement in this study will include a short interview. The interview should last no longer than half an hour, and will be conducted by the co-investigator, Jordan Miller. The interview will involve a series of questions exploring what led to the success of your program. Interviews will be conducted by phone. Phone interviews will be recorded using an audio recorder. These interviews will then be transcribed by Jordan Miller. Interviews are recorded to ensure that research team is able to capture all of the content of the interviews. The transcripts of these interviews will be stored in a locked cabinet, available only to the research team. Data will be

stored for three years at which point it will be permanently erased.

Your participation in the study is voluntary, and you may refuse to participate altogether, or refuse to participate in parts of the study. You may also withdraw from the study at any time.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Your personal information including your name and contact information will be collected to facilitate communication throughout the duration of the study. No personal names will be used in the final report of the study. Organization names will be used unless otherwise requested.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some or none of them. Please put a check mark on the corresponding line(s) that grants me your permission to:

I grant permission to have my company's name used:	Yes: ___ No: ___
I wish to remain anonymous:	Yes: ___ No: ___
You may quote me and use my name:	Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

There are no foreseeable risks, harms, or inconveniences with regards to participation in this study. If you feel as though information you provide may be providing a competitive advantage that would be detrimental to your organization, you are more than welcome to withhold that information, or request that it not be used in the study. However, data collected cannot be rescinded once the final paper is submitted.

There is no remuneration for participating in this study. Nor should there be any costs associated with your participation.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. No one except the researcher and his supervisor will be allowed to see or hear any of the answers to the interview. The data collected will be kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researcher and his supervisor. This will be stored in the office of Jordan Miller, the co-investigator. The data will be stored for three years on a USB, at which time, it will be permanently erased.

Signatures (written consent)

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) agree to participate as a research subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Mr. Jordan Miller

Masters of Public Policy Candidate, School of Public Policy

Telephone: 403.608.0086 Email: milleraj@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor: Lana Wells, Brenda Strafford Chair

Faculty of Social Work

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Senior Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-3782; email rburrows@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form

Appendix B- Interview Questions

Briefly describe your organization's mandate?

What is your role in the organization?

Please describe innovative programs or services your organization offers that directly affect engaging newcomer children in physical activity?

What led to the development of this program or service?

Was there a recognized gap in service provision that this program was addressing?

Have your participants expressed any barriers to involvement that they faced prior to engaging in the program?

Were there any challenges you faced in developing this program?

What sort of political backing or funding was involved in the creation of this program or service?

What have been the main outcomes of this program or service?

Has the program or service had an impact in your community?

Do you believe that your program or service has had an overall positive effect on engaging newcomer children in physical activity?

Where do you see your organization going next?

Appendix C-Initial Contact Letter

Dear (name of organization or responsible person)

My name is Jordan Miller and I am conducting a study entitled “Engaging Newcomers in Recreation to Support Early Childhood Development” for my University of Calgary Masters Capstone Paper. I would like to recruit five individuals for this study who are interested in being part of a research that will explore if building social supports through physical activity and recreation in newcomer families with children between 0-6 an effective strategy to promote healthy, engaged citizens. Some of the questions that we will be discussing in this study include:

Please describe innovative programs or services your organization offers that directly affect engaging newcomer children in physical activity?

What led to the development of this program or service?

Have your participants expressed any barriers to involvement that they faced prior to engaging in the program?

What have been the main outcomes of this program or service?

Has the program or service had an impact in your community?

Do you believe that your program or service has had an overall positive effect on engaging newcomer children in physical activity?

The study will begin July 1, 2013 and will collection of data will be completed by July 12, 2013. I would like to interview participants for half an hour. Research participants will explore successes of their programs and they will be offered an opportunity to share this information and disseminate it through this research project as well as impact further policy development in this area

If you are willing to share this email and recruitment notice with your members and/or post it electronically or physically at your agency, I would really appreciate your collaboration. If you have any questions or would like more information about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone, listed below. Lana Wells is supervising this study and she can be reached at lmwells@ucalgary.ca

Sincerely,

Jordan Miller
403.608.0086
milleraj@ucalgary.ca

Appendix D- Telephone Script

Hello, my name is Jordan Miller and I am a graduate student in the School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary. With the help of Lana Wells, a professor of Social Policy at the School, I am conducting a research study to understand successful programs that engage newcomers in recreation to support Early Childhood Development.

If you agree to participate, I will ask you questions about your program, it's successes, challenges, and view of the role of recreation programming in your participants lives. This interview will take about 30 minutes of your time.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study. Also, there will be no benefits for people participating in this study but we hope to learn more about successful tools to engage New Canadian children in recreation opportunities.

It is completely up to you whether to participate. You may withdraw at any time and you may skip questions you would prefer not to answer.

There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

"Do you have any questions about me, my research, or our interview before we begin?"

Should you need to contact me, my phone number is 403 608 0086, or I can be reached via my email address at milleraj@calgary.ca. My supervisor may also be contacted at the address lmwells@calgary.ca.