



Curriculum Frameworks and Legislative Oversight of Outdoor Play in Early Childhood Settings in the Provinces and Territories

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#OPSymposium2018

THE STUDY





- Literature and document review
- Review ECE curriculum frameworks that guide practice in licensed child care and kindergarten settings
- Review legislative oversight in licensed child care and kindergarten
- Assess potential conflicts faced by educators as they strive to meet pedagogical and legislative requirements in promoting outdoor play
- Identify examples of promising outdoor play environments and practices in early childhood settings
- Next steps in the research

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MIND YOUR STEP



OUTDOOR PLAY DEFINED



- **Purpose: “allows for ...louder and bigger actions, greater sensory stimulation, risk taking, testing of physical limits, and exploration in a more meaningful way than in a controlled indoor setting.”**
- **Includes “running, climbing and imaginative and creative play including constructive, symbolic, self-focused/looking on, and talking.”**

(Peterborough Public Health, Outdoor Playspaces: An Evidence Review, 2017)

Types of outdoor play

Nature play: Play within the diversity of the natural environment offering biodiversity, topographical diversity, and playscape habitat diversity. (Louv, 2005)

Free outdoor or unstructured play:
“Unfettered play ..”

Structured play: “Organized activities including sport”.
(Peterborough Public Health, 2017)

Risky play: Excitement, exhilaration, a desire to overcome fear and to feel “out of control”.



Elements of risky play

- Great heights
- Great speed
- With tools
- Near dangerous elements
- Rough and tumble
- Where a child could ‘get lost’

**Risky Play Versus Hazardous Play:
Adults manage the hazards.**

Children manage the risks ...

Sandseter 2007



Stakeholder Descriptions of Outdoor Play

Governments	“Active”
Educators, academics	“Natural”, “Active”, “Big Body”, Risky
Playground architects, contractors	“Natural”, “Active”, “Managed Risk”
City planners	Play with “Perceived Risk”, “Scalability” or “Scalable Risk”

Outdoor spaces
vary







Share rooftop space





**LICENSED CHILD CARE
AND KINDERGARTEN**

Two ECE Delivery Streams

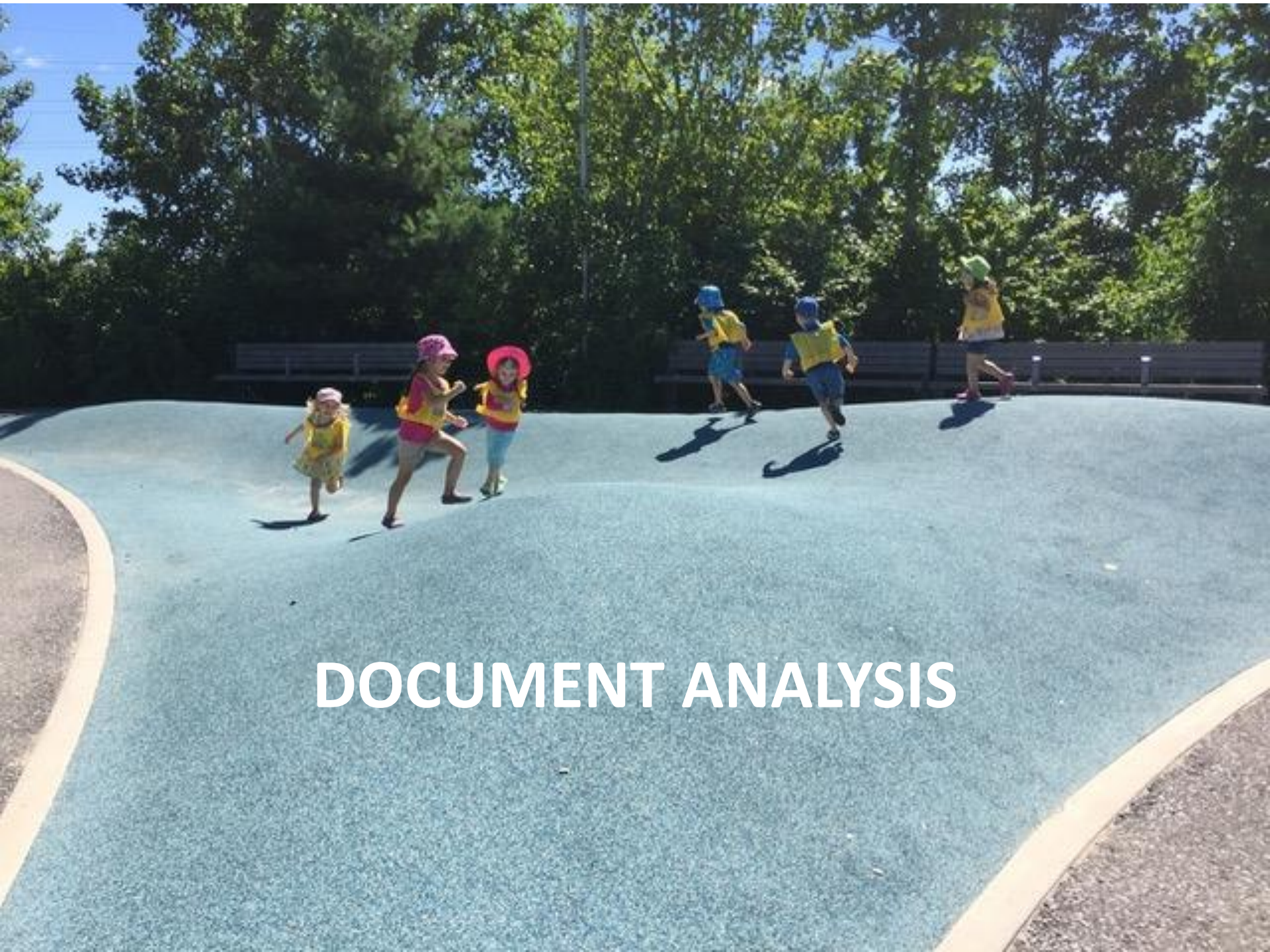
	KINDERGARTEN	LICENSED CHILD CARE
Auspice	Public delivery	Private (Profit/non-profit)
Ages served	2.5 – 5 years (Varies by P/T)	Infants to 11 years
Legislation	Education acts	Child care acts
Curriculum guide use	Required	Varies by jurisdiction and program
Entitlement	By age and sometimes neighbourhood	No
Fees	No	Yes

Guiding Outdoor Play in Licensed Child Care Curricula Frameworks

	NB	ON	AB
Role of play	Play is central to the child's quality of life	Play promotes children's natural curiosity and exuberance to learn	Play is essential for children to explore and participate with others and engage in the world
Importance of outdoor play	Supports well-being in open, flexible and creative environments	Creates opportunities with a reasonable degree of risk-taking, giving interesting and unpredictable opportunities Emphasis on physical health and children challenging their physical capabilities
Role of the educator	... challenge children's physical limits by providing opportunities for vigorous daily physical activity. ... actively promotes children to engage in risky play	.. helps in facilitating children's efforts to take reasonable risks, test their limits and gain increasing competence	.. a co-learner, co-researcher, co-imaginator of possibilities alongside children ...

Guiding Outdoor Play in Kindergarten Curricula

	NL	MB	SK
Role of play	Play is the foundation of all learning ...by which children can work through scenarios, take risks, and solve problems ..	Children's natural curiosity and desire to learn are stimulated through organized activities and play	As children engage in meaningful play and inquiry, they become more knowledgeable, confident, and creative learners
Importance of outdoor play	Movement experiences are essential ... and should not be limited to the classroom or contained within discrete subject areas.	Important to living an active and healthy lifestyle, becoming independent, and recognizing unsafe situations	Recognize that physical movement is good for personal well-being.
Role of the educator	Through teacher's guidance children are encouraged to take appropriate risks and learn the important rules of working and playing together.	N/A	Offers an environment that facilitates play, exploration, and discovery

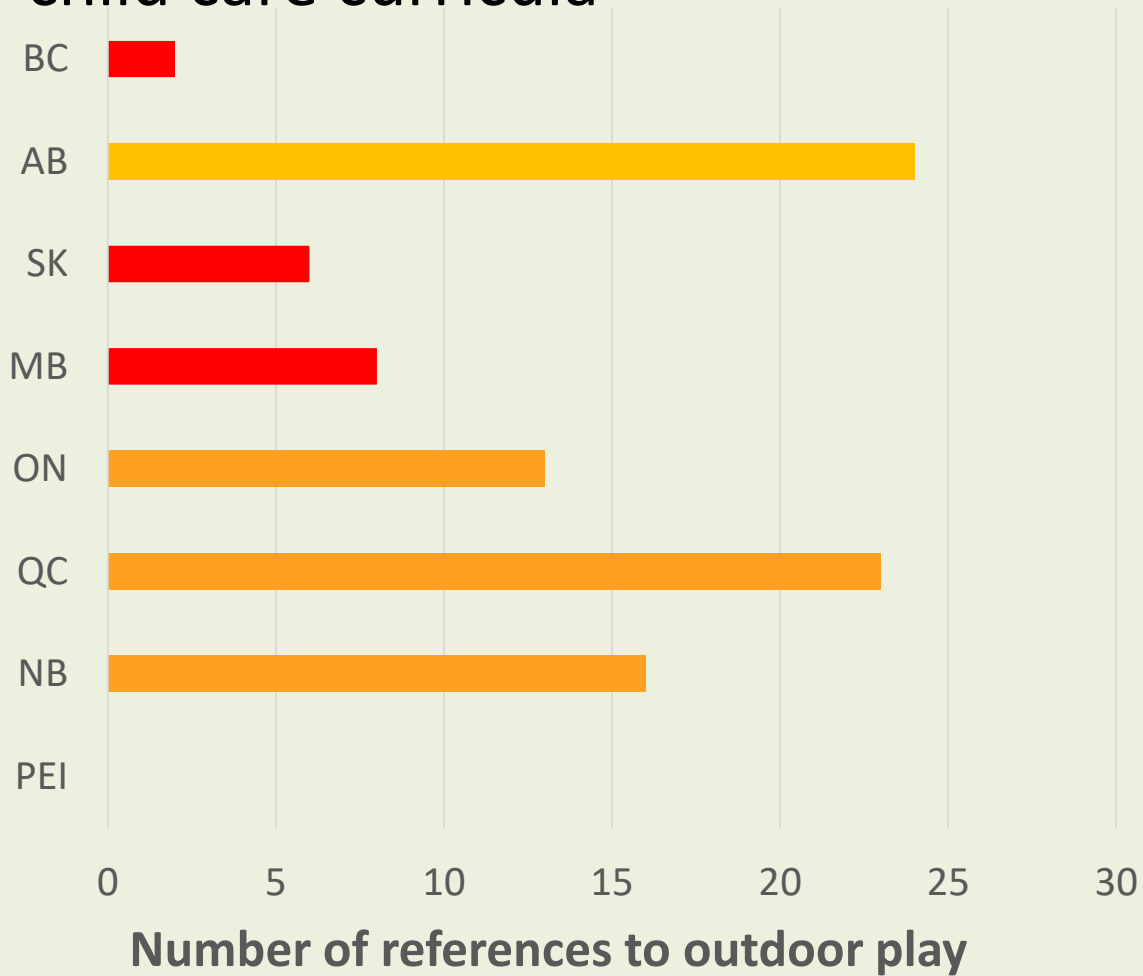


DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

- Identified references to outdoor play in ECE & Kindergarten curricula
- Identified references to active play activities and play verbs including:
active, physical, large motor, rough and tumble, dizzy play, energetic play, risk/risk-taking, that include crawl, walk, march, run, leap, jump, hop, climb, slide, slither, skip, gallop, dig, swing, twirl, stroll, roll, spin
- Identified references to safety in child care and school legislation, including:
safety, unsafe, risk, injury, hazard, first aid, fall zones, shade, temperature, wind chill, weather, UV index, sunscreen, insect repellent



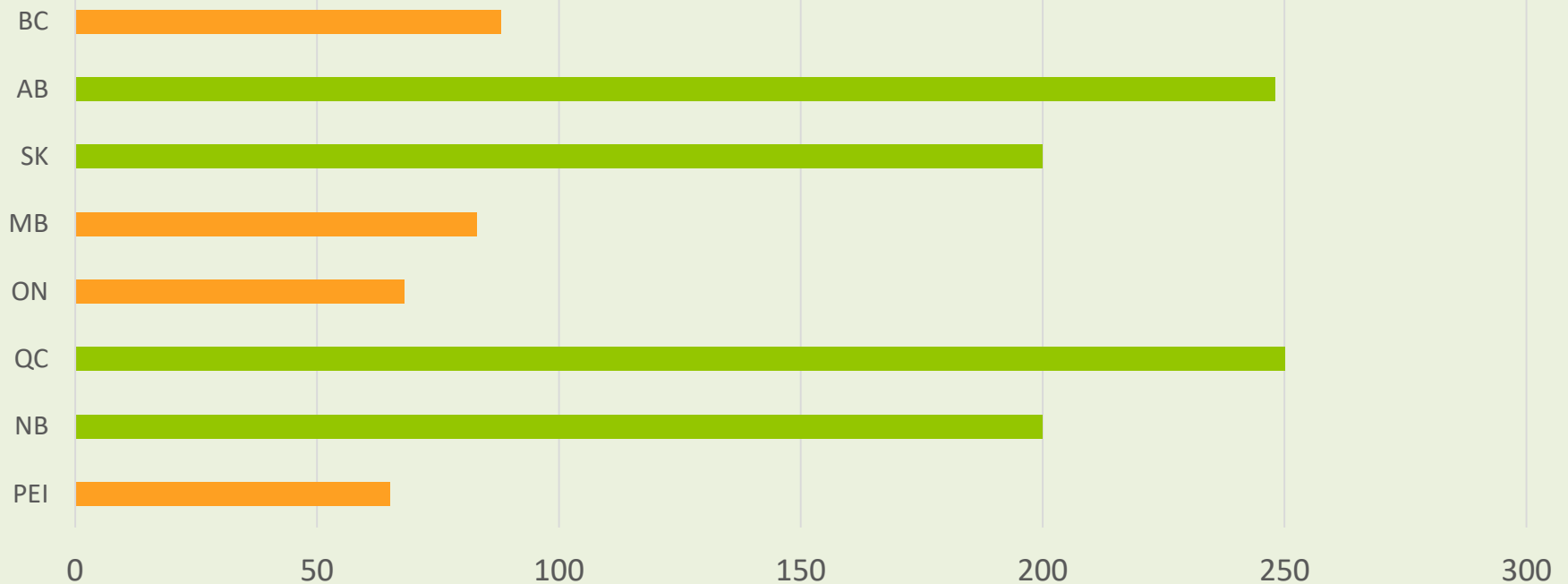
References to outdoor play in child care curricula



Supplementary curriculum guides were not included in the study.

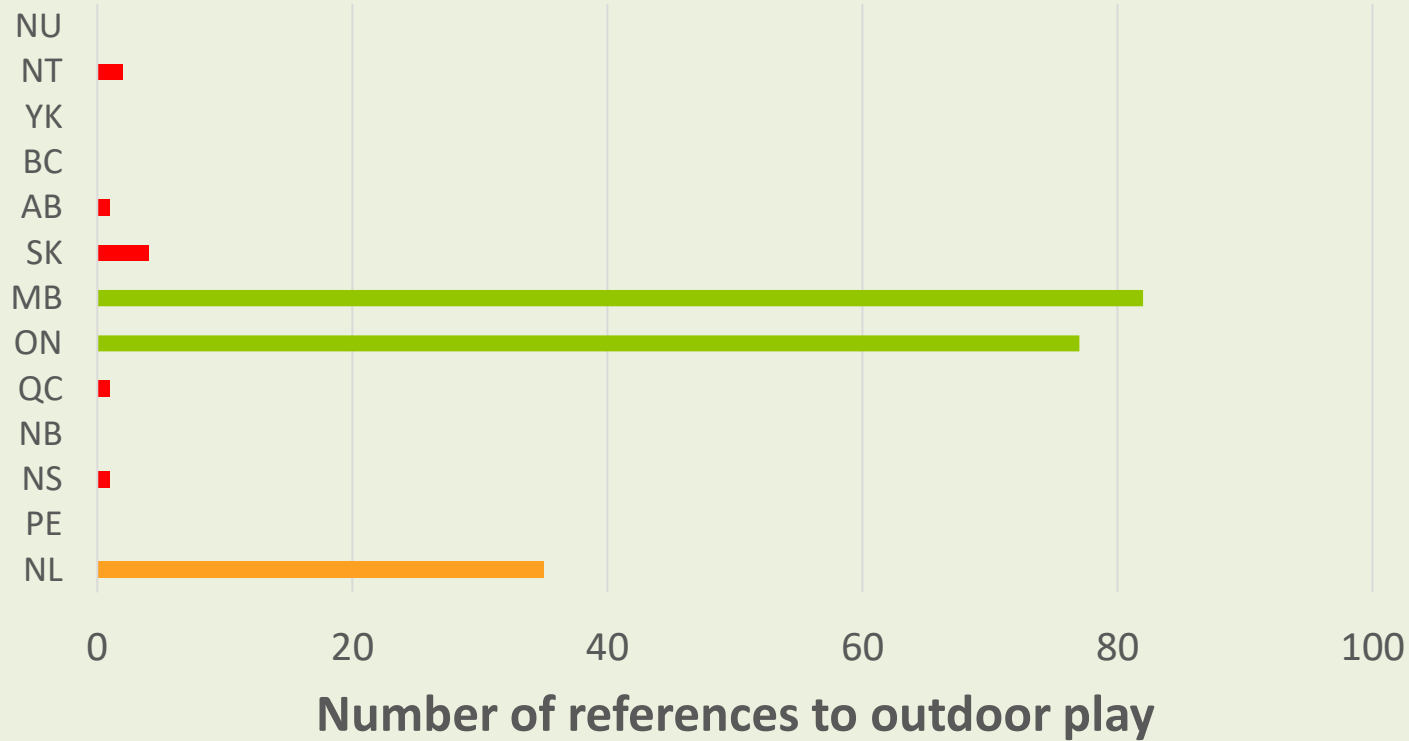


References to active play in child care curricula



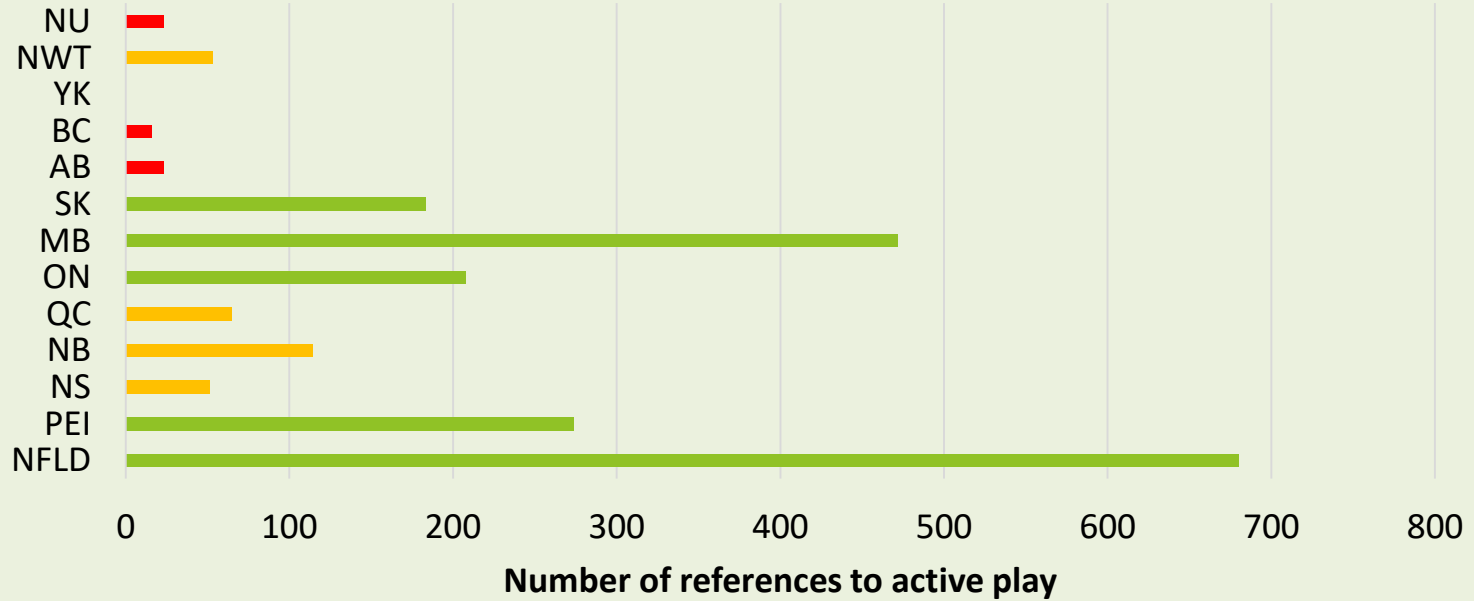
Supplementary curriculum guides were not included in the study.

References to outdoor play in Kindergarten curricula



Supplementary curriculum guides were not included in the study.

Reference to active play in Kindergarten curricula

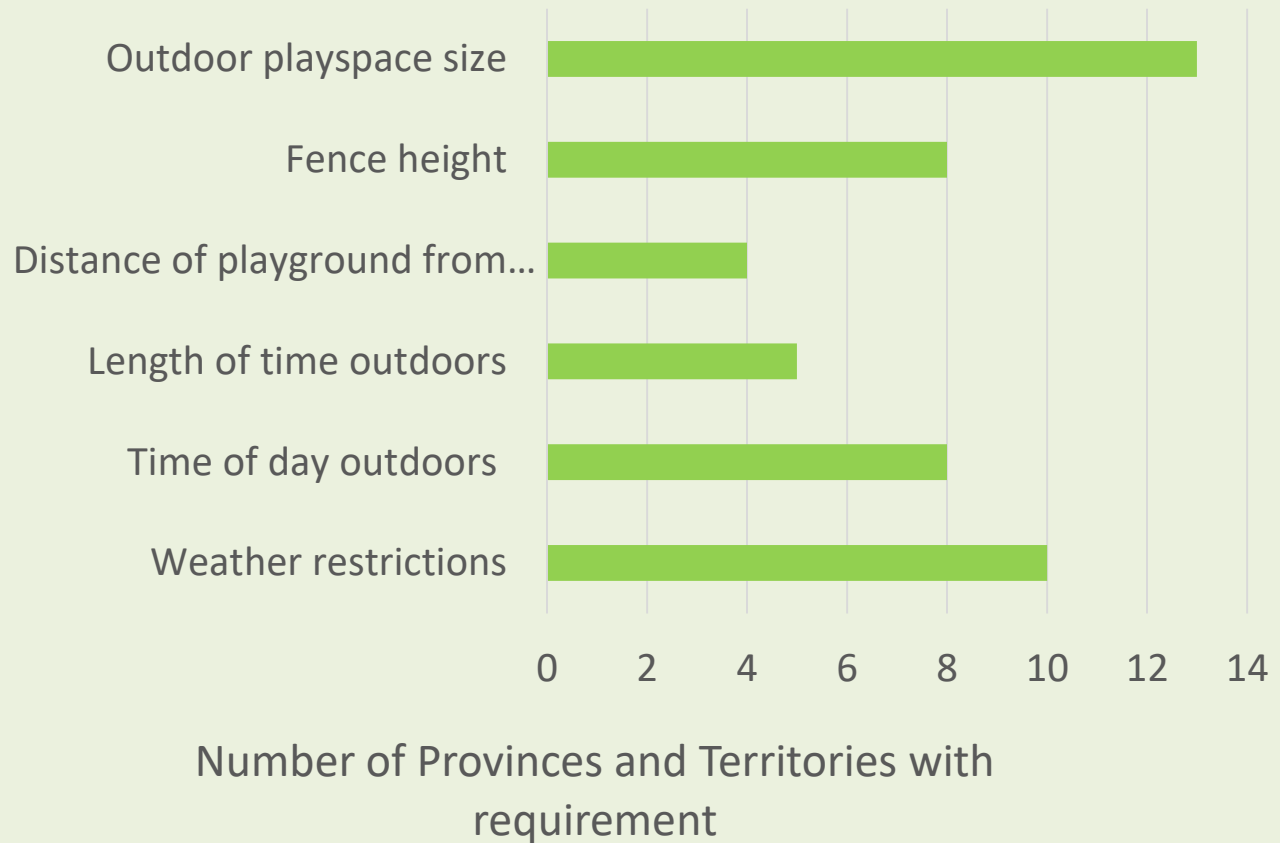


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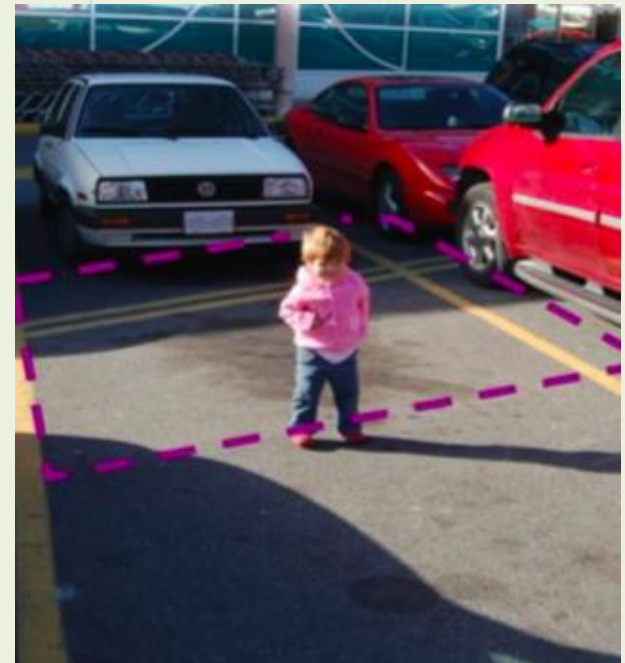
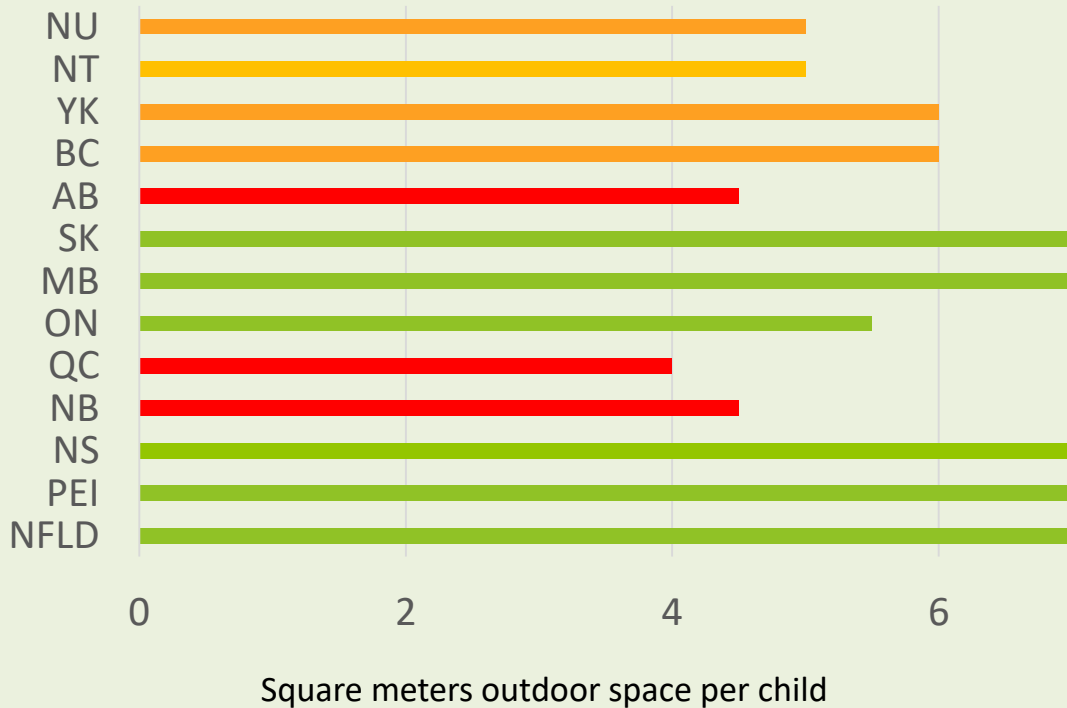


**OUTDOOR PLAY REQUIREMENTS
IN LICENSED CHILD CARE**

Outdoor Play Requirements For Licensed Child Care



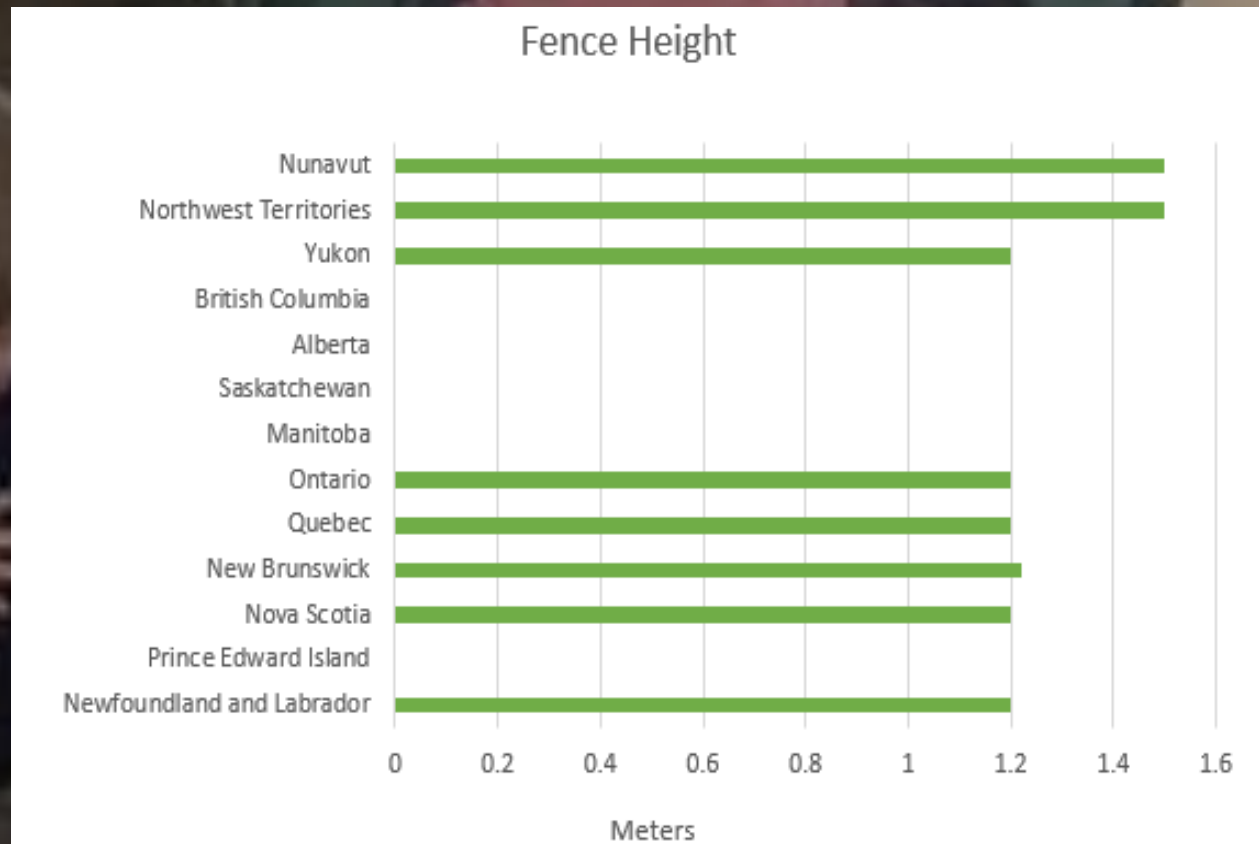
Child Care Legislation: Outdoor Space/Preschool Age Child



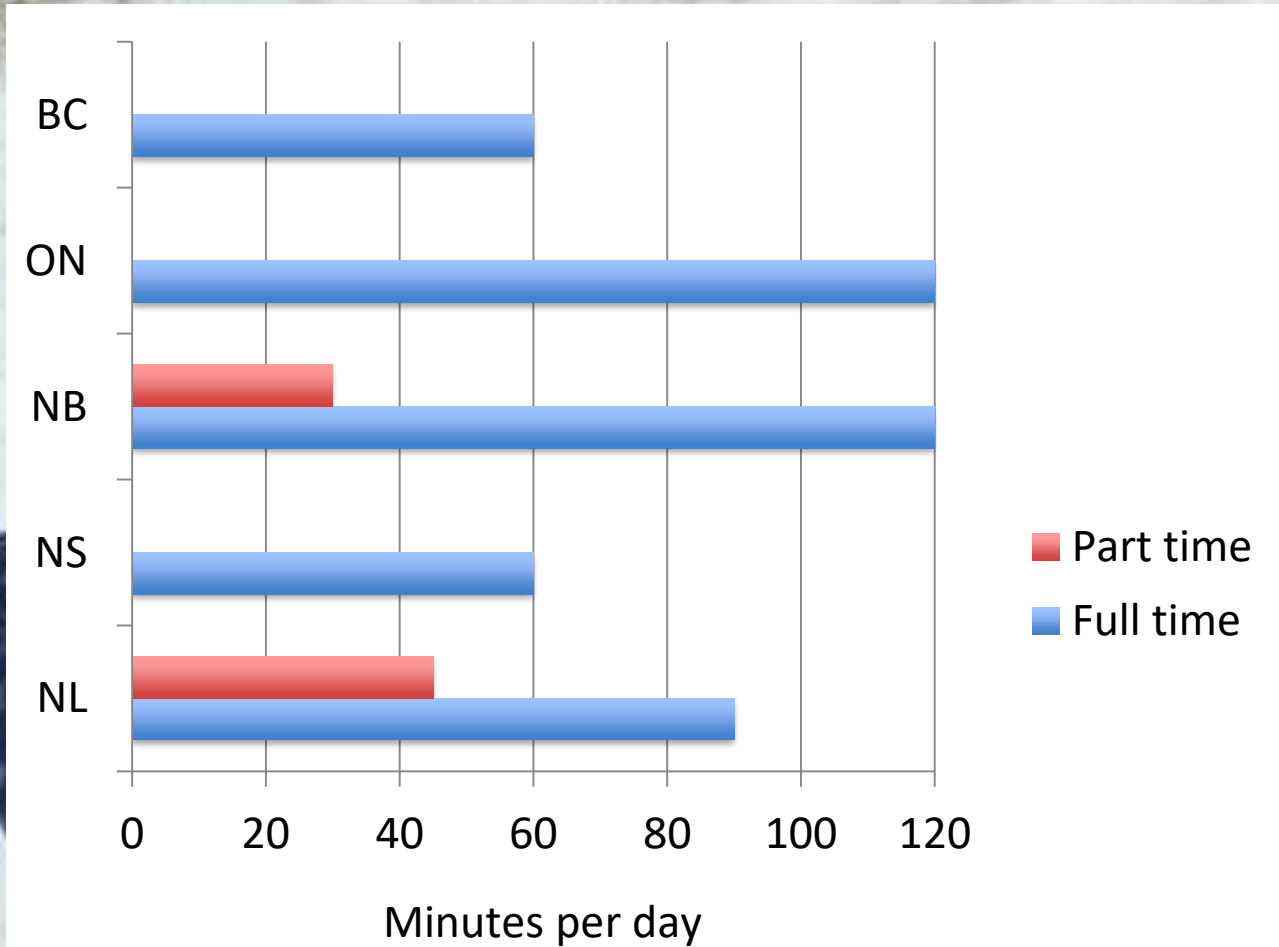
Half a parking space

Minimum space per child may not include all children enrolled in the facility. For example QC requires 4 square metres/child for a third of the children enrolled. Some jurisdictions have different outdoor space requirements for infant and toddlers.

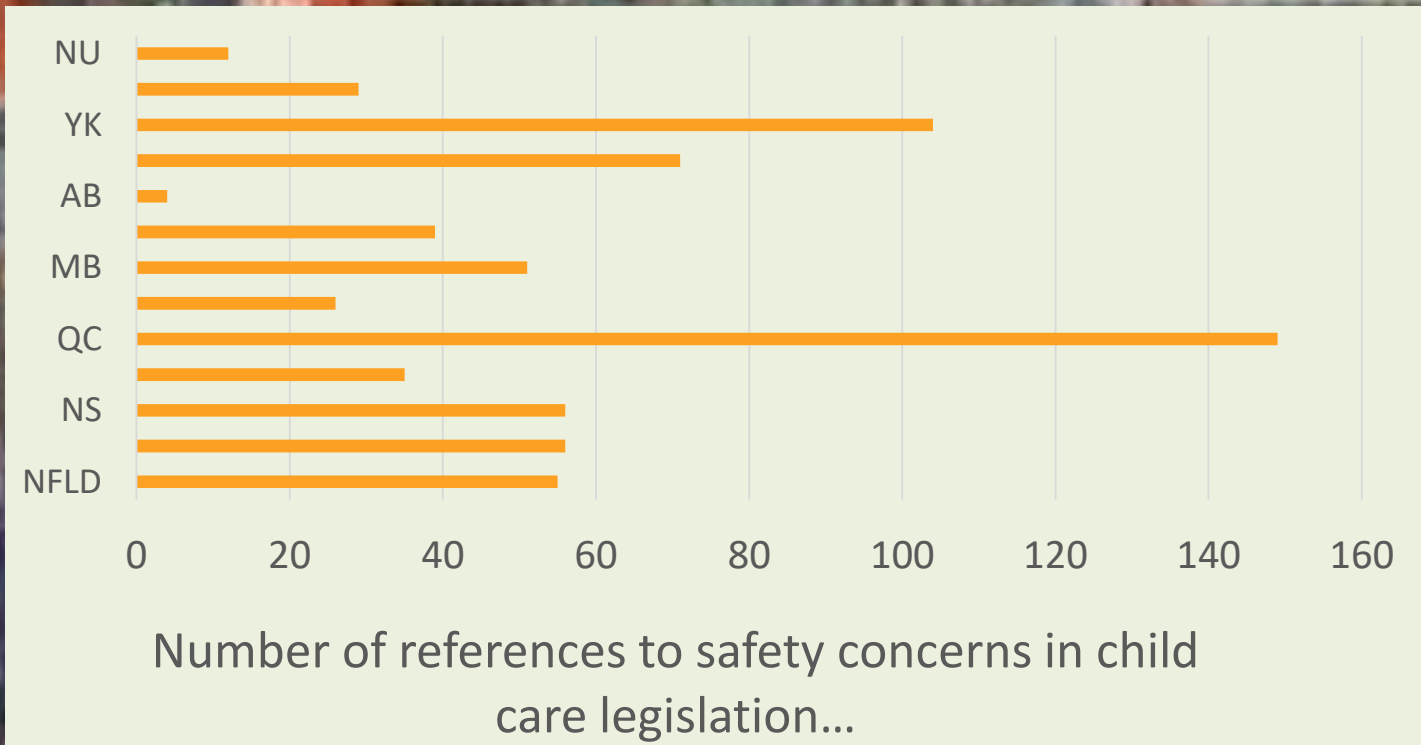
Child Care Legislation: Fence Height



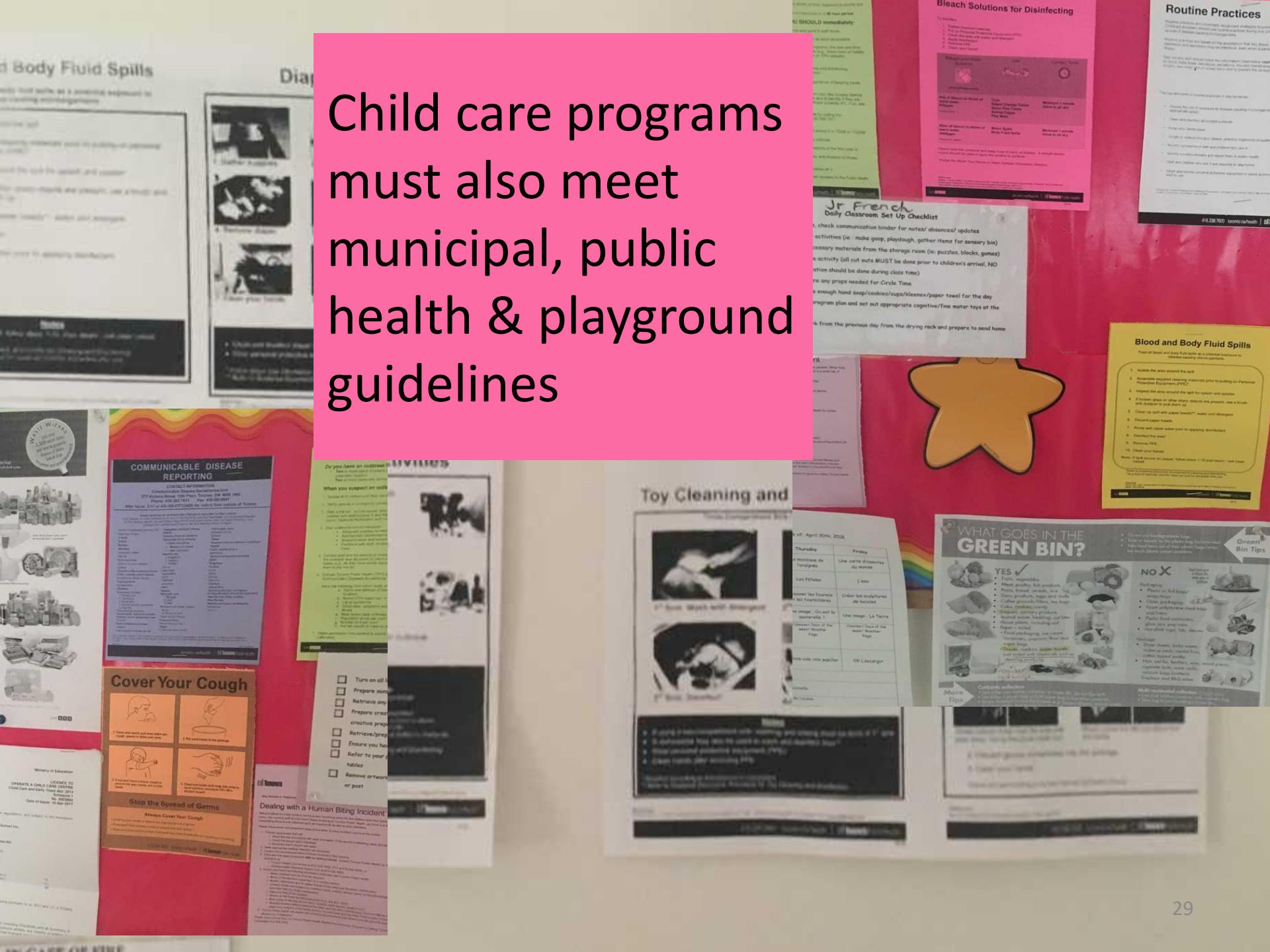
Child Care Legislation: Length of Time for Outdoor Play



Focus on Safety in Licensed Child Care



Child care programs must also meet municipal, public health & playground guidelines



School Playground Rules

PLAYGROUND RULES

- Use playground at own risk
- Children under the age of 7 must be accompanied by an adult
- No glass or alcoholic beverages
- Proper footwear required
- Improper use of equipment prohibited
- Playground hours from dawn to dusk
- This playground is for children age 6 thru 10

SWINGS

- Hold on with both hands
- Do not stand on swings
- Stop swinging before getting off
- Never swing or twist empty seats
- Stand clear of moving swings

CLIMBERS

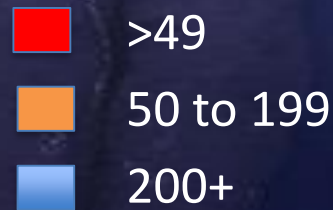
- No pushing, running or shoving

SLIDES

- Slide feet first, no walking up slide

Education Acts download responsibility for school safety to school districts or principals

References to Outdoor/Active Play in Child Care & Kindergarten Curricula



	Child Care	Kindergarten
NU	N/A	
NT	N/A	
BC		
AB		
SK		
MB		
ON		
QC		
NB		
NS	N/A	
PE		
NL	N/A	

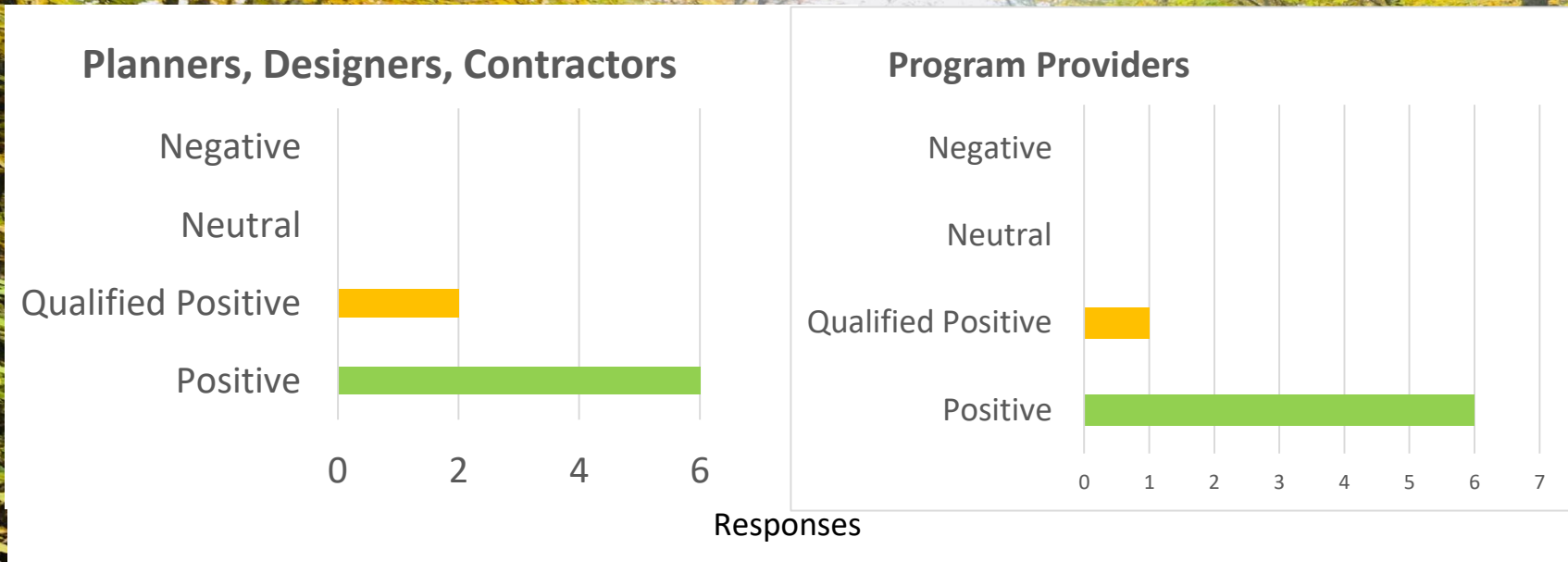
New and in Development Curricula Framework & Resources

- NL – Early Childhood Learning Framework
- NS - Early Learning Curriculum Framework
- BC - Play Today
- BC - Early Learning Framework revised
- NT – Right from the Start
- NU - early childhood curriculum framework

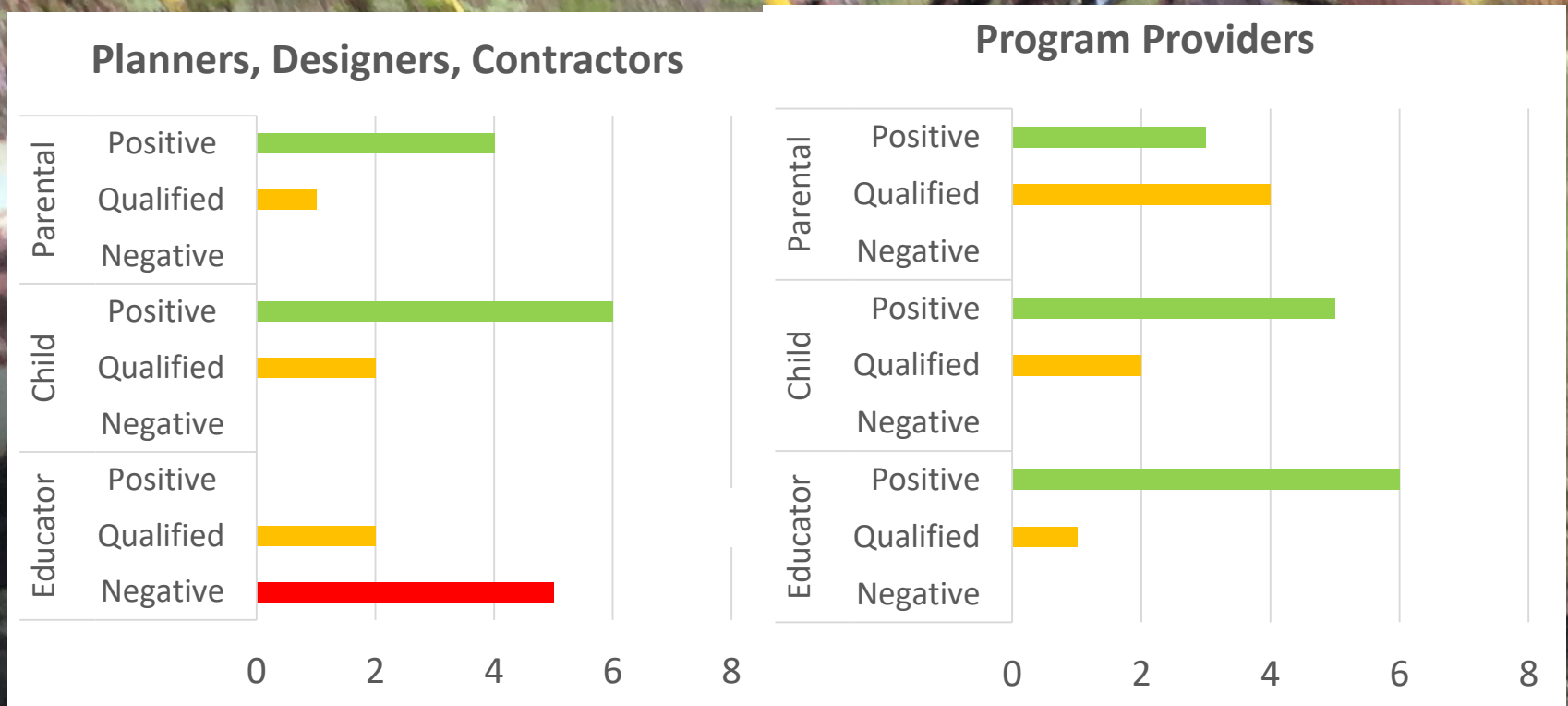


VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Is active, play in outdoor settings important to children's development?

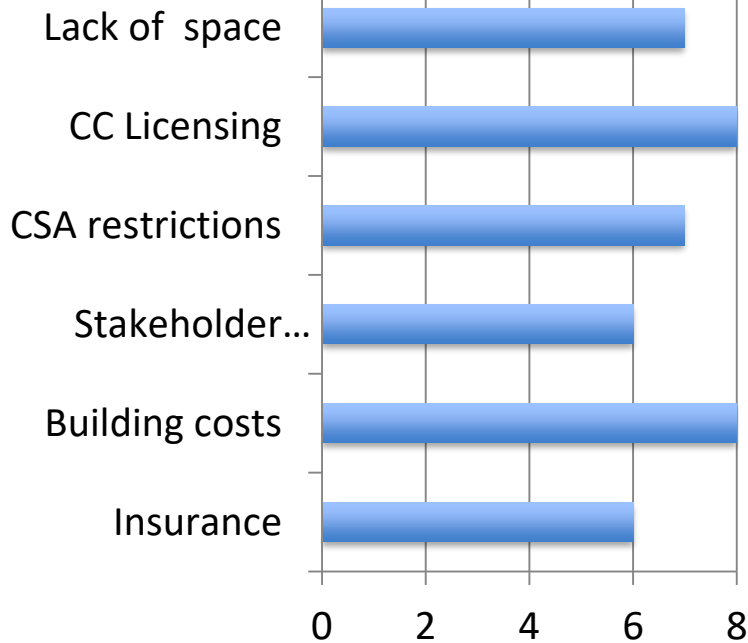


How would you rate parent, children's and educator views of active outdoor play?

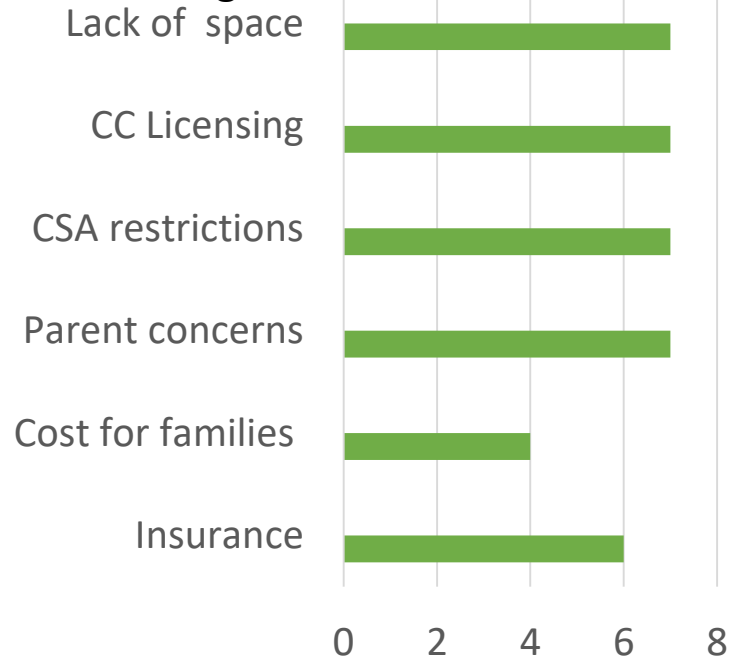


What are the barriers to outdoor play and natural playgrounds?

Planners, Designers, Contractors



Program Providers



Continuum of Play-Based Learning

(Pyle & Danniels, 2017)

Child

Educator

Educator

Directed-----Guided (-----Directed

Free
Play

Inquiry

Collaborative
Play

Playful
Learning

Learning
Games

Observe &
reflect

Facilitate time
space &
things

Extend child
initiated ideas
&
explorations
through
questions,
provocations,
investigations

Use
opportunities
to enter
children's play
& incorporate
targeted skills
into the play

Focus on
targeted skills
in learning
experiences
that can
incorporate
children's play
narrative

Prescribed
activities
focused skills
– usually
movement,
literacy &
numeracy
skills



Promising Practices

- Increase amount of time outside - anything done inside can be done outside.
- Schedules are made to change.
- Add loose parts and natural elements.
- Identify and use resources, including parks and nature-related organizations to support engagement in active outdoor play.

A photograph of children playing on a slide. One child in a yellow shirt is at the top of the slide, another in a blue shirt is in the middle, and a third in a pink shirt is at the bottom. The slide is blue and the surrounding area is green.

CONCLUSIONS

Literature	Indicates outdoor play is highly important
Educator Guides	Vary widely in definition and salience
Legislation	Focuses on safety sometimes to the detriment of play
Champions	Educational leaders and practitioners, city planners, playground designers and contractors
Barriers	Perception, safety standards, costs, space. Biggest barrier to outdoor play is too few children have access to quality early childhood programs
Further research	Audit play deserts. Assess children's active play. Assess the impact of MOVERS or similar tools on encouraging outdoor play. Pilot outdoor free play environments.

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