

President's Message

Kellie Baker

One of the things that signals spring to me is when I see more people being physically active. Trail walkers are exchanging hellos and stopping for conversations as if they haven't seen each other for months. Shiny new bikes appear around Easter. Balls can be heard bouncing. Goals are being scored in backyards. Shrieks of joy from children being active fill the air. Just thinking about this brings a smile to my face.

Being active outdoors has moved beyond the obvious physical benefits and is being commonly linked to social and emotional wellbeing. And since learning is not just from the neck up, but from the feet up, there are cognitive benefits to adding movement to content learning as well. As such, this spring, for the health and wellbeing of you and your students, why not set a goal to moving the classroom outside more!

Within the pages of this WOW! newsletter you will read about the benefits of outdoor play for students at Baltimore School as well as recent physical activity guidelines for children ages 0-4. Skills-Based Health Education, an approach developed to support increased student engagement, is something you can learn a little bit more about by reading on. We can also learn from recent UK research about supporting young people's health-related use of social media.

As we *move* from spring to the end of the school year, we encourage you to begin your summer rejuvenation process by taking some time to reflect on the successes over the past school year with some questions from the following site: <http://minds-in-bloom.com/20-teacher-end-of-year-reflection/>. We spend much time and energy recognizing and celebrating even the smallest successes of our students. It's important for our health and well-being that we do the same for ourselves.

Have a safe and rejuvenating summer!

From the Wellness Well

Wellness messages such as "Managing Anxiety in School" and "Supporting Students with ADHD" are informative articles sent to administrators and forwarded on to teachers. Keep your eye out for these emails as they offer great advice and tips for in the classroom!



Managing Anxiety in the School Setting Anxiety

- Everyone experiences anxiety.
- Anxiety is natural, useful and helpful to avoid danger or to motivate us.
- Anxiety can range from mild uneasiness to debilitating panic attacks.
- Anxiety disorders are the most common mental disorders in children and adolescents.
- For the student with a diagnosed anxiety disorder, our goal is to help them manage their anxiety in school.

Managing Anxiety at School

1. Develop a plan ahead of time with the student.

It is difficult to negotiate a plan once the student is escalated or agitated, but a plan agreed ahead of time may have better success.

2. Encourage breaks from the classroom.

Student-directed break cards can help students self-regulate. Providing the option to leave the classroom for brief periods when they feel overwhelmed may help.

3. Allow think time.

When we're agitated we don't process language as efficiently. A student who is anxious may need more time to think before they can respond appropriately.

4. Practice relaxation with the whole class.

Using relaxation techniques with the entire class normalizes these practices, benefits everyone involved, and targets those students who may benefit the most. Some ideas include:

- Guided breathing and visualizations
- Coloring during listening activities

5. When a student is anxious and agitated:

- a) Keep your communication clear and simple
- b) Listen non-judgmentally
- c) Consider moving to a quieter space if possible

Supporting Students with ADHD

The initial discussion with parents:

Tips:

- Avoid saying, “I think your son/daughter has ADHD.”
- Avoid saying, “I think your son/daughter needs medication.”
- Say something like, “We would like to complete an assessment (rating scales, observations, history, etc.) and would like to have a consultation with a medical professional about the high scores in the specific areas of the rating scales.”

In the classroom:

Tips:

- Always be flexible when working with a student with ADHD.

- Have frequent mini-meetings with parents, especially during the diagnosis stage.
- Leave the medication discussions between the medical specialist and the parent.
- Work together as a supportive team. The school counsellor and the school psychologist can play critical roles.
- It is important to have a clear behaviour management plan (BMP) and track specific behaviours.
- Help students target their energy in positive ways (frequent breaks, complete meaningful tasks they like, find their passions).
- Fair is not equal; all students do NOT need to be treated the same. We provide students with what they need to be successful and keep their dignity intact.

“Exercise is one of the best gifts I can give to my ADHD brain.”

~ Dr. Edward Hallowell

Benefits of Outdoor Play

If you are reading this article, you probably have fond memories of playing outside with your peers long after the school bell rang in the afternoon, signaling time to get out and play! Many of us have probably spent endless winter hours making snowmen, sliding down hills, and skating on ponds until we were called in for supper. And once spring came it was time to get out, jump in puddles, skip rope and play roadside basketball.

Times have changed. Kids have changed. Most of the kids we teach in our classrooms do not know what life is like without a handheld device. If you teach Grade 4 or up most do not know what life is like without a cell phone. Long gone are the days of bolting out the door the minute you got out of school to play in an unstructured environment with friends.

Despite the issues and concerns that come with living in a world of technology, one group of students, in particular, coming up through our school system have the opportunity to enjoy the benefit of outdoor play – every day. When the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador implemented the new full day Kindergarten curriculum, they included an hour of outdoor play into every school day. The benefits of this initiative far outreach the confines of the classroom.

Natalie Brazil, Kindergarten teacher at Baltimore School in Ferryland, cannot say enough about the benefits of taking her kids outside every day. “Taking my students outside is one of the best parts of my day,” says Ms. Brazil. “Not only do my students enjoy the obvious physical benefits of active movement, but I get a chance to bring my classroom outside every time we open the door and explore our environment. Essentially every subject area I teach, aspects of the curriculum can be incorporated into our outdoor surroundings. It’s amazing the art that can be created with sidewalk chalk and a five-year-old hand. Just last week we used leaves from a tree to create manipulatives in math; there is nothing like teaching spirituality by taking a walk through nature.”

Ms. Brazil not only sees the benefits of outdoor play from an academic scope, but also says her students reap the benefits of attaining a more positive mental health. “When my kids are outside, nobody is afraid of not knowing an answer, or not being able to complete a task. The emphasis is on fun, and most of the time they do not even realize they are learning. Going outside provides a real mental break for everyone involved. By the time we get back inside, the kids feel refreshed and are ready to settle down and get to work.”

Kids do not have to get 100% on a test to feel a sense of accomplishment. Have you ever witnessed a child who has just reached the next rung on a monkey bar? Have you seen them imitate Sydney Crosby as they flail their arms up in the air after scoring a goal on an imaginary Ken Dryden (that just so happens to be a school fence)?

There are so many opportunities for kids to gain self confidence in the outdoor setting and in a time where anxiety is prevalent in many classrooms, this is more important than ever! In a world where not all children are strong at Math or Science, most have the ability to play, have fun and learn – all at the same time.

There are so many social skills that can be taught in the outdoor setting as well. “Not everyone can be first going down the slide,” says Ms. Brazil. Kids learn to take turns and problem solve on their own, without adult interventions.

Ms. Brazil, like many educators across the province, would love to see outdoor play become part of the curriculum across the board. “All kids can benefit from getting outside; it would be great to see this pattern of play follow the students as they move into elementary school.”

So the next time you shiver as you enter the school on a cold Monday morning, just remember that there are a bunch of excited Kindergarten students reaping the benefits and just bursting to go outside and play!

Skills-Based Health Education: A “NEW” Approach to Health Education

The following article is a compilation of information from a variety of online sources.

We have been seeing a shift from content-based to **skills-based learning**. Social Studies may now be about interpreting and analyzing history, not just memorizing dates and places. Physical Education has shifted from knowing the rules of sport to being a physically literate person (i.e., motivation, confidence, physical competence, and knowledge understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life).

The goal of health education is healthy behaviour outcomes. In order to have healthy behaviour outcomes, our students need to be **health literate**. Health literacy is the degree to which a person has the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

“A skills-based approach to Health Education is life skills education that aims to prepare individuals to make decisions and take positive actions to change behaviours and environments that promote health and safety and to prevent disease” (from: www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7308.html).

For so long, Health Education was a joke class. It was about learning things you really already knew! So **instead, we should be focusing on skill development**. How do we, first, prevent risky behaviours and secondly, intervene before unhealthy habits and routines form?

The opportunity here is that the focus is on the skill development/ progression from introduction to reinforcement to mastery. It could be **accessing information** around support when you or someone you know may be bullied. Or, **accessing information** on sexual health/contraception in your community. Or, **accessing information** on food labels. Or **accessing places** in school where you can wash your hands (more lower elementary level).

Students don't need to know everything. They have the internet at their fingertips. And, if they know how to access valid and reliable information, let's spend less time teaching them the facts and more time allowing time to demonstrate and practice the skills.

(Full Blog: www.cairnguidance.com/blog/2016/4/a-skill-based-approach-to-health-education)

What are the skills?

Decision making/problem solving skills; Critical thinking skills; Skills for increasing internal control; Skills for managing feelings; Skills for managing stress; Interpersonal communication skills; Negotiation/refusal skills; Empathy; Cooperation and teamwork; Advocacy skills (from: <http://janet-yvette-campbell.cmswiki.wikispaces.net/Twenty-First+Century+Skill-Based+Health+Education>)

What are some ways I can start implementing a Skills-Based Health Education approach?

Case studies, demonstrations and guided practice, role play, educational games and simulations, debates, practising life skills specific to a particular context with others, arts/music/theatre/dance, storytelling, relevant discussion/debates (e.g., insidious tactics of the tobacco industry to gain youth smokers), small groups, decision mapping.

Resources to support implementation of a Skills-Based Health Education approach (US-centric):

- One stop resource page including Google Drive handouts, posters, assessment tools
<http://rmc.org/health-education-skills-models/>
- Unit Hooks (i.e., day 1 of health units) from Danielle LaRocque & Jeff Bartlett (please give credit where credit is due when using these activities)
 - Topic & Activity/Unit Hook
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GUpI0cVYc3YqzBrAswQmwo9hOmhWfq4HA37G61gC8Wc/edit>
 - Slide show with topics such as What is a Unit Hook, Why they are important, Connections to Skills Based Health Ed, More activities and links
<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1UuKG-E80RbLXWu9ZaLzTYDUmcqARhWL2wUmFNubrdno/edit#slide=id.p>
- Lesson Planning for Skills-Based Education text being released April 2018
www.humankinetics.com/products/all-products/lesson-planning-for-skills-based-health-education
- 2016 text
www.humankinetics.com/products/all-products/essentials-of-teaching-health-education-with-web-resource-the
- Appropriate practices
www.shapeamerica.org//publications/products/upload/Appropriate-Practices-in-School-Based-Health-Education.pdf

Need more support to make the shift from a content-based to a skills-based approach?

SKILLS-BASED HEALTH EDUCATION has been shown to:

- Assist in development of **coping skills** that are essential components for healthy development in childhood and adolescence and needed for making a successful transition from childhood to adulthood.
- Specifically address the **needs of children growing up in disadvantaged environments** who may otherwise lack opportunities to develop these skills.
- Develop social competence and problem-solving skills which are among the characteristics that **promote resiliency, positive development and effective ways of coping**.
- Develop **“emotional intelligence”** and skills for managing emotions and interpersonal relationships.
- Be **more effective** than programs that focus only on transferring information.
- **Positively influence** the mediators of problem behaviours.
- Have an impact on **multiple adolescent health and development needs**.

- **Help schools** address multiple demands for prevention education curricula by presenting a comprehensive, **unified approach to meeting many needs**.
- Promote **communication skills, decision-making skills, critical thinking skills, and negotiation skills needed for healthy development** and are also skills that are valued by employees in the workplace.
- Promote positive social norms that can impact the **broader environment** of adolescent health services, schools, staff and families.

- **Engage teachers, students, and their families** much more than didactic approaches because of the focus on participation and relevance for the program participants.
- Be **more exciting and rewarding for teachers and students** because the content tends to be more realistic and the methods more fun and effective than traditional (didactic) approaches.
- Help to achieve the Education For All goal of developing **life skills, along with literacy and numeracy among all children and young people**.

New Evidence-Based Guidelines Better Support Young People's Health-Related Use of Social Media

This January 2018 report provides a summary of the latest evidence-based thinking on the role of social media in influencing young people's health and wellbeing. The report has been developed in the context of growing national (UK) and international concerns about young people's health and wellbeing and reported increases in unhealthy lifestyle behaviours, obesity, mental health problems and access to risky online environments.

[http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/3070/1/The_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Young_People%E2%80%99s_Health_and_Wellbeing_\(FINAL_15TH_JAN\).pdf](http://epapers.bham.ac.uk/3070/1/The_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_Young_People%E2%80%99s_Health_and_Wellbeing_(FINAL_15TH_JAN).pdf)

NEW Movement Guidelines* (ages 0-4)

Dr. Mark Tremblay visited the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation on Monday, March 12 for a public presentation on Canada's new movement guidelines (ages 0-4). Although not school aged, it is important to understand the movement behaviours of children coming into our care so that we can consider, as a school community, the implications once they enter school.

The good news is that ages 0-4 do meet 24-hour movement guidelines. Unfortunately, they also exceed the recommended daily screen time. Read more at: <http://csepguidelines.ca/early-years-0-4/>
Watch videos: <http://csepguidelines.ca/early-years-0-4/videos/>

**NOTE: Canada is the first country to release evidence-based guidelines to address the whole day. For more guidelines:*

<http://csepguidelines.ca/children-and-youth-5-17/>

<http://www.csep.ca/view.asp?ccid=580>

The NLTA Health Education Council is Seeking a Secretary

Duties will include, but are not limited to:

- Take minutes at meetings and provide all Executive members, District and Regional reps (when applicable) with a copy, as soon as possible.
- Provide current address and phone numbers of Executive members, District and Regional reps to same.
- Ensure membership information is accurate.
- Supply all minutes to treasurer at year end.

Any NLTA member interested in this position, please contact NLTA Health Education Council President Kellie Baker (kelliebaker@nlesd.ca) to discuss further.

Check out healthednl.com for the latest in resources, information and professional development opportunities for health educators! The NLTA Health Education Council offers health educators a website to keep up to date on the latest research, activities, or professional learning available. For example, a link to PHE Canada's National Conference 2018 registration is highlighted on our "What's New" page. Health Educators can also improve their knowledge and get ideas for the classroom with valuable resources in Healthy Eating, Mental Health, Physical Activity, Gender/Sexual Identity, Substance Use, Sexual Health, Injury Prevention and Comprehensive School Health. For example, "Teach Resiliency", a website developed by PHE Canada for teachers, is a fantastic resource for connecting teachers

with practical, evidence-formed resources and tools to support mental health education in the classroom. Furthermore, on our website you can access our "WOW! World of Wellness" newsletter to keep up to date on everything happening in Health Education in our province.

Want the latest in Health Education news, information, and resources? Check out our twitter page @NLTA_Health_Ed. For searching and keeping up with the latest, use the hashtags:

#nlteachers

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