

Childcare provider characteristics and structural support are key drivers in implementing active play standards in childcare.

// My degree is in Child Development, I mean —19 I've been doing this for 20, 30 years, so I mean as far as the rationale why I do stuff, I mean its pretty clear to me.

// We have not just great outside space, but we also —17 have a recreation room and a gym. So I find that, especially for the active play portion, I find those things make it really easy to implement what we learned about in the training.

// Well like all the, the fact the staff were there right, so ... we all know about it —16 so we're all on the same page, so it makes it easier to implement it into our schedule, than if our boss or just one other person had ... doing it with the whole childcare facility, so that everyone's on the same page, has definitely made it easier.

Early learning practitioners' perceptions of new activity standards for British Columbian child care

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Introduction

Canadian children demonstrate low proficiency in movement skills [2]. Over half of Canadian children attend regular childcare [3], but physical activity levels and the movement skill learning environment in child care are insufficient [4,5].

In 2017, British Columbia implemented the Director of Licensing Standard of Practice for Active Play (AP Standard) to guide physical activity practices in licensed child care [6]. A capacity building workshop (Appetite to Play) was released in tandem to support implementation.

The purpose of this study was to qualitatively examine the barriers and facilitators early learning practitioners face in implementing the AP standard, and to explore the role of the capacity building workshop.

Methods

23 qualitative interviews were conducted with participants who completed an Appetite to Play workshop. Thematic analysis was used to code and group responses into themes informed by a theoretical framework of contributions to implementation.

Results

Two overarching themes were identified as supporting the implementation of the child care standards: structural support and characteristics of the provider. Participants praised Appetite to Play for supporting implementation but did not highlight movement skill development specifically in the interview.

structural support

ENVIRONMENT

High quality indoor and outdoor space and sufficient equipment were identified as a facilitator. Participants with low quality space indicated this as a barrier to implementation.

COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT CHANGE

Participants working in an environment where all staff were on board or had participated in Appetite to Play training indicated that this improved organizational capacity to meet the standards.

characteristics of the provider

LONG SERVICE

Participants with extensive experience in child care identified this as a facilitator.

COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT CHANGE

Participants highlighted that they placed value on physical activity which supported implementation.

Conclusion

Capacity building supports implementation of the AP standard, but structural support and provider characteristics play an important role. More work is needed to explore how childcare providers incorporate movement skills into their frame of reference when discussing the workshop and physical activity.

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