



Research article

Educator perceptions on the benefits and challenges of loose parts play in the outdoor environments of childcare centres

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Appendix A: Focus Group Questions

Focus groups followed a semi-structured guide that included the following questions:

1. Outdoor active play

- How would you describe your role as an educator in the outdoor play environment?
- What do you do when children are playing outside?
- How comfortable do you feel when children are playing outside?

2. Loose parts

- What happened when loose parts were introduced in the outdoor environment for the children?
For you?
- Describe any changes you may have seen in the children's development- social, cognitive, physical, emotional, or others.

- How did your own role, attitude, and/or intentions change when loose parts were introduced into the active outdoor play environment?
- Did your usual patterns of interactions with children change? How did they change?
- Were the loose parts used equally or were there favourites? By all children?
- Which loose parts were rarely used?
- Can you describe how loose parts were used? Are some loose parts needing to be replaced or supplemented?

3. Risk-taking

- How would you define risky play?
- Describe an outdoor activity that you would consider risky for children.
- Do the children at your centre engage in risky play (provide an example)?
- Why do you think the children are engaging in this kind of play? Or why not?
- Did the introduction of loose parts add an element of risk to the children's play?
- What are your professional/personal attitudes about risk? Are they the same?

4. Policies

- What policies are in place regarding active outdoor play at your centre?
- Can you describe why these policies were implemented?
- Have these policies been affected by the PLEY project (if at all?). Will anything need to change?

5. Challenges/Benefits

- What are some of the challenges or benefits with this project?
 - ✓ With outdoor play in general?
 - ✓ With the introduction of loose parts?

6. Wrap up

- How have you grown as an educator in terms of your understanding of physical literacy and fundamental movement skills?
 - ✓ Are you more aware of PL outdoors/indoors?
 - ✓ Are you having conversations with your team and families about PL and fundamental movement skills?
 - ✓ What might be an engaging way to involve families and educators who were not involved in the PLEY Project?
- Have any of the other domains (cognitive, language, social, emotional) been enhanced following the introduction of loose parts?
 - ✓ Probe for information about changes in children's behaviours after the introduction of the loose parts into their outdoor spaces.
- How have you helped your children assess their own risk? Materials? Strategies?
- What ideas do you have for sustaining the focus on PL and FMS?

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- How did the changing seasons effect the loose parts play?
 - What loose parts would you like to add to your outdoor spaces? Ideas for different ones?
 - What ideas do you have for storage issues?
 - What is missing in our in-service and preservice training in relation to the understanding of physical literacy and fundamental movement skills?



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