

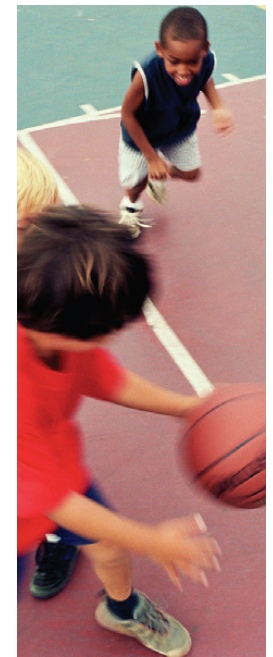
Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy and Recreation: A Collaborative Approach

Presentation: Ontario Public Health Association
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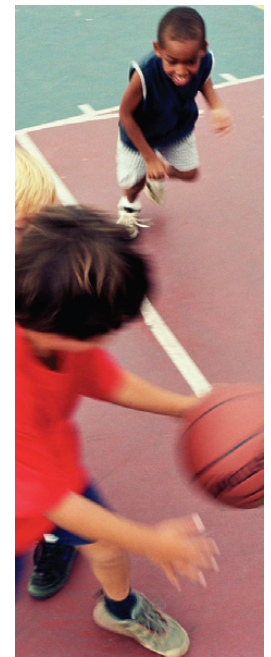
Background

- Over the past 7 years, Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) has identified that access to recreation is a growing concern and that the benefits of providing access to all, especially those marginalized, are not being recognized as priorities as other pressures for municipalities and non-profit providers have arisen



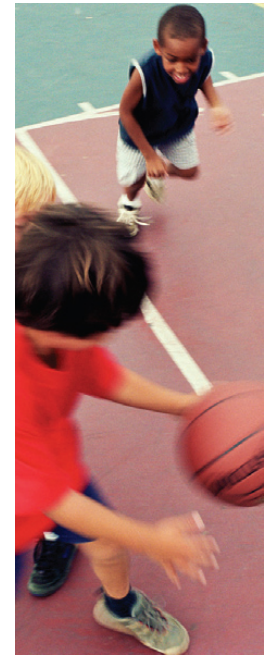
The Issue

- A multitude of barriers to participation in community recreation exist in Ontario – user fees, infrastructure, community access to schools, transportation, complex subsidy approaches, cultural exclusion - to name just a few



The Case for Recreation

- Physical health benefits
- Psycho-social benefits (i.e. protective factors) of participating in community recreation are well documented (Offord et al, CPRA)
- Investing in recreation actually saves health and social services dollars (Dr. Gina Browne)



Why Recreation Saves Money

Recreation/Child Care Pays for Itself by Reductions:

$\frac{1}{2}$ the use of Medical Specialists

$\frac{1}{2}$ the use of C.A.S. Services

$\frac{1}{4}$ the use of Occupational Therapists

$\frac{1}{3}$ the use of Physiotherapists

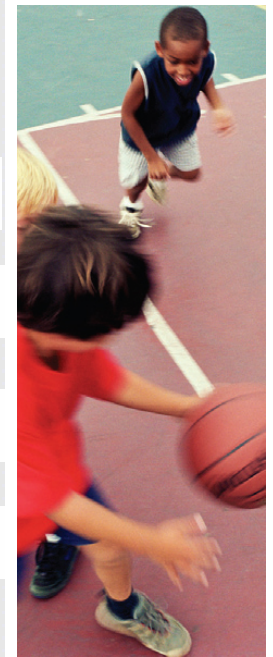
$\frac{1}{2}$ the use of 911 Services

$\frac{1}{2}$ the use of Psychologists

$\frac{1}{10}$ the use of Social Workers

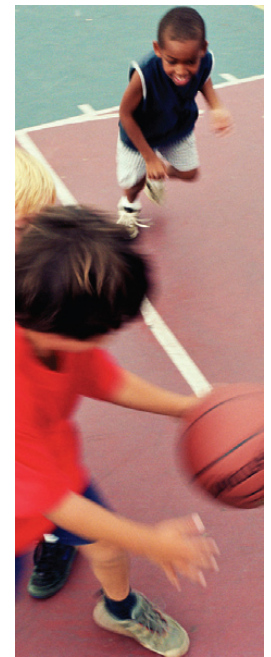
$\frac{1}{10}$ the use of Probation Officers

$\frac{1}{2}$ the use of Chiropractors



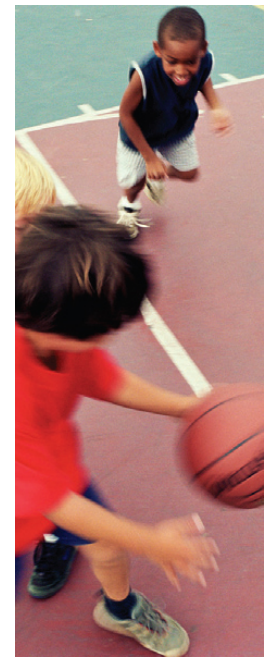
The Task Group

- **Broad coalition:** provincial, municipal, non-profit, corporate, advocacy
- **Belief:** Innovative approaches should be taken to ensure that *Every One Plays*
- **Aspire:** A collaborative relationship with the provincial government



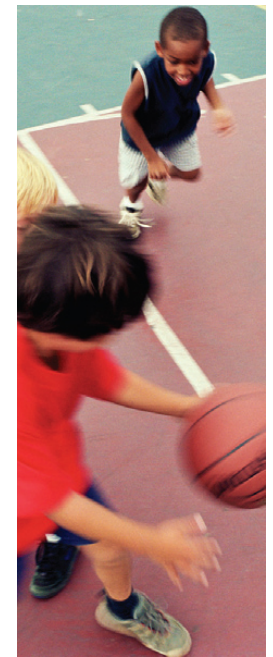
A Strategy Grounded in Research

- ❑ 3 provincial surveys on access policies (municipal and non-profit)
- ❑ Research Summary Report
- ❑ Promising Practices Booklet
- ❑ Provincial Policy Planning Institute Nov/07
- ❑ Development of Policy Framework and Action/Implementation Plan



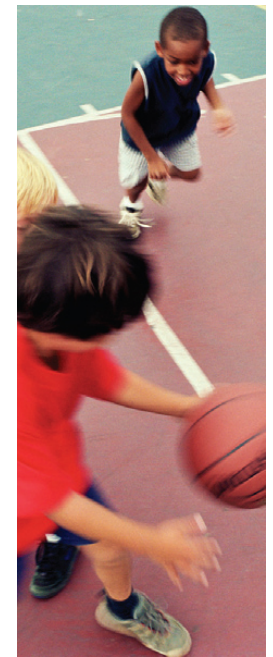
Poverty Reduction

- Recreation should be a component of the Poverty Reduction Strategy
 - *Access to community life and civic engagement mitigates the effects of cyclical poverty*
- Participating in recreation leads to stronger, healthier children, families and communities
- Task Group has met with officials from the Poverty Reduction Task Force



Task Group Work Plan

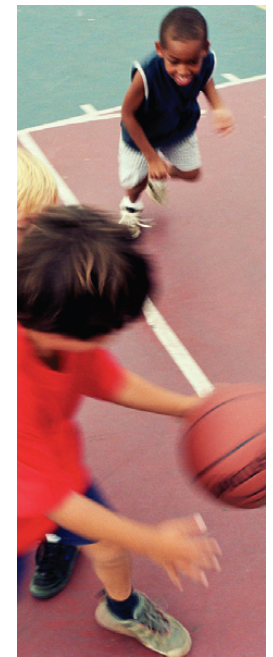
- Commitment of Ontario Task Group to develop an Access to Recreation Policy Framework and Action Plan – release March 31, 2009
- Help inform the development of the provincial strategies including Poverty Reduction, HEAL, Obesity, etc.
- Provide tools and resources to communities/local councils – Action Plan for Communities



Planning for a Provincial Framework

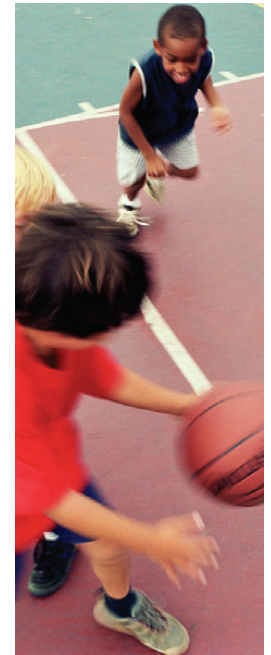
Eight policy and action themes identified:

- Reducing user fees
- Ensuring sustainable funding
- Creating the necessary infrastructure – high risk communities
- Outreach strategies to marginalized populations
- Community and youth engagement approaches
- Balance tax credits with targeted access funding programs
- Creating community hubs – schools must partner in these approaches
- Creating passive spaces for informal and free recreation



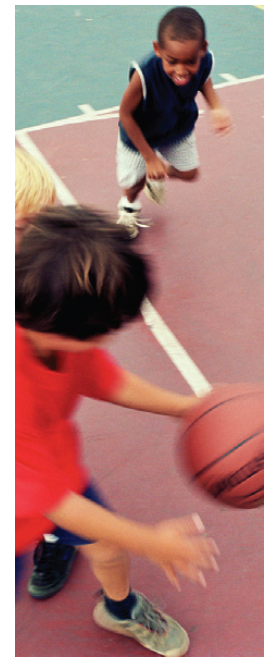
Framework Principles

- With a focus on children, youth and families, the policy framework recommendations will:
 - Be grounded in research and promising practices
 - Be responsive to gaps in local and provincial policy
 - Address legislative barriers to access for low-income children and youth
 - Share responsibility provincially and municipally



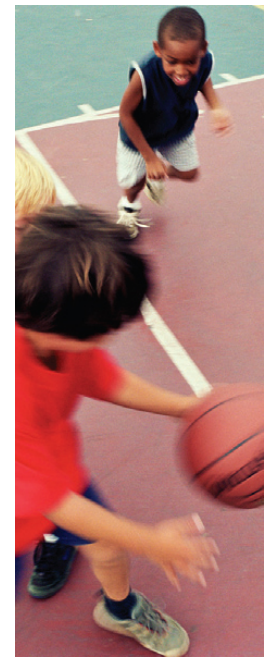
Key Policy Directions

- Access Policies – developed at the municipal and community levels
- Baseline of free, universal programs identified and delivered in communities



Sub-Themes - Policy Directions

- ❑ Community Access to Community Spaces
- ❑ Community Partnerships to enhance coordinated delivery of services
- ❑ Engagement of marginalized populations – youth, diverse communities, low income families
- ❑ Champions for success – funders, government, local recreation providers, education, community organization, participants



Outcomes

- ❑ Improved collaboration and coordination of recreational opportunities at the community level with a focus on access
- ❑ Improved access supports poverty reduction by helping to end cyclical poverty
- ❑ Access to community services, spaces, early learning, nutrition, physical activity are key to healthy development and pro-social behavior
- ❑ Investment in recreation is a cost-effective alternative to some other interventions

