

RESEARCH *INSIGHTS*

Supported by the Barrie Region MISA Professional Network Centre

Evaluating the implementation of...

20 Minutes of Daily Physical Activity

In October 2005, the Ministry of Education issued Policy / Program Memorandum No. 138 which stated that, as of September 2006, schools “were to ensure that all elementary students in Grades 1 to 8 had a minimum of twenty minutes of sustained moderate to vigorous physical activity each school day during instructional time.”

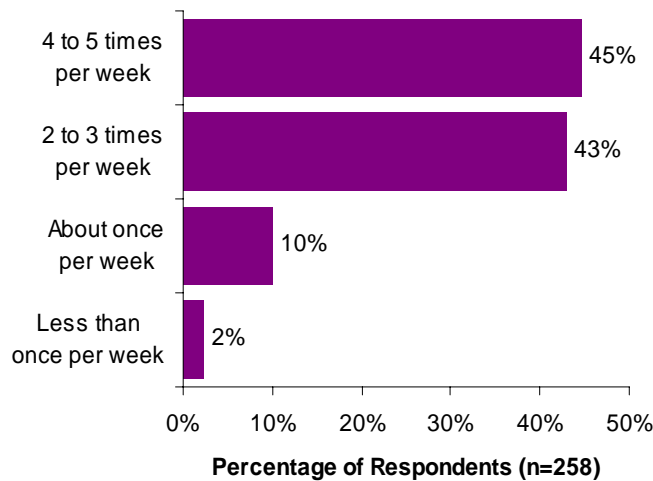
The memorandum also stated that school boards were required to “monitor the implementation of the policy on daily physical activity to ensure that all elementary students, including students with special needs, were provided with the opportunity to be active for at least twenty minutes each day during instructional time.”

Through financial sponsorship provided by the Barrie Region Managing Information for Student Achievement Professional Network Centre, the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board contracted two students from Georgian College’s Research Analyst Program, Mark Modeski and Aimee O’Connor, to evaluate the policy’s first year of implementation within SMCDSB schools.

The students designed a survey, analyzed the results and reported on their findings to members of the Board’s DPA Committee on April 16, 2007. The following report is a summary of their findings.



Since September, how frequently has your class participated in 20 minutes of daily physical activity?



PARTICIPATING, JUST NOT DAILY: Just under half (45%) of the Grade 1–8 classroom teachers who responded to the survey indicated that their classes were participating in 20 minutes of daily physical activity on a regular basis (4 to 5 times per week). The remaining 55% of respondents indicated that their classes participated 3 times per week or less.

Rationale for DPA

Physical activity is essential for the proper growth and development of children and youth. Providing students with opportunities to be physically active can have a positive impact on their physical, mental, and social well-being. In particular, physical activity is likely to have an impact on students’ achievement, readiness to learn, behaviour, and self-esteem. Positive experiences with physical activity at a young age also help lay the foundation for healthy, productive lives.

Physical inactivity has become a serious health and social issue for Canadian children and youth. Research indicates that activity levels for the majority of children and youth are not sufficient for healthy growth and development, and that many young people do not have an opportunity to be physically active every day. During the past twenty-five years, obesity rates among children have increased substantially, with the result that a large number of children face the risk of developing serious illnesses such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, stroke, and some cancers.

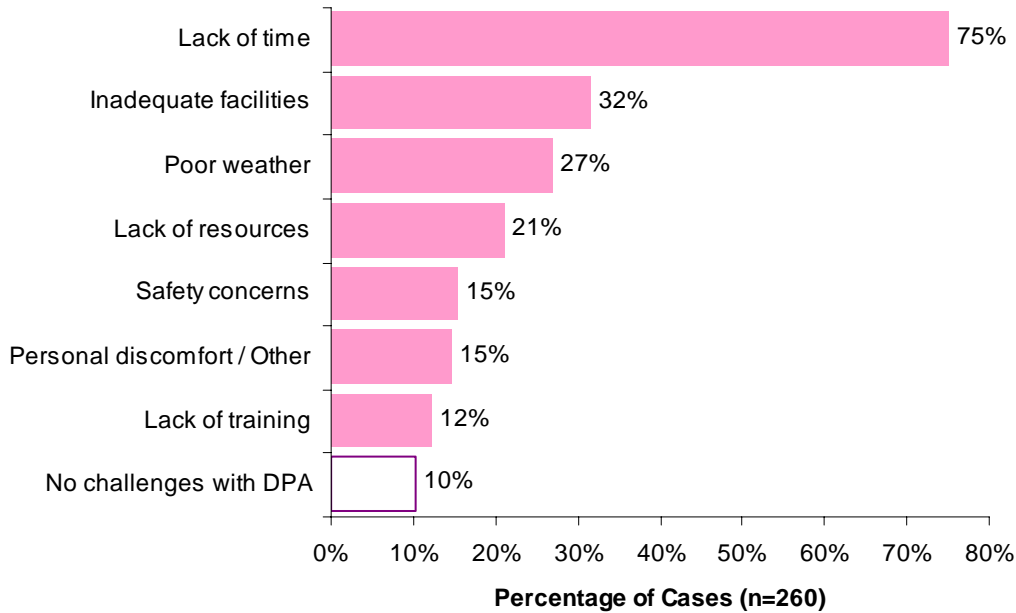
Sources

2004 Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health Report: *Healthy Weights, Healthy Lives* (Toronto: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ontario, 2004), pgs. 2–3.

The World Health Report, 2002: *Reducing Risks, Promoting Healthy Life* (Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, 2002), p. 61.

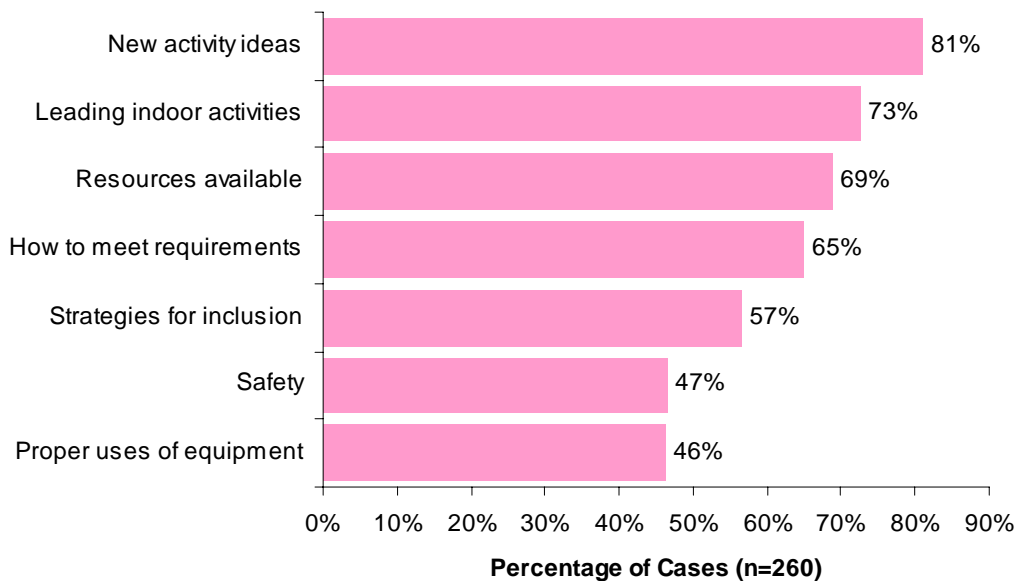
Implementing DPA: *Challenges and Supports*

What have been your main challenges associated with implementing 20 minutes of daily physical activity?



IT'S ABOUT TIME: 75% of the Grade 1–8 classroom teachers who responded to the survey noted “lack of time” as one of the challenges associated with implementing daily physical activity. Other reasons were cited to the extent indicated in the chart below. 10% of teachers indicated that they had no challenges with implementing daily physical activity.

How useful to you would each of the following training topics be in terms of assisting you with implementing daily physical activity in your class, or at your school?



USEFUL TRAINING: 81% of teachers who responded to the survey indicated that receiving training related to “new activity ideas” would be “useful” or “very useful” to them. A majority of respondents also indicated that training related to “leading indoor activities,” working with “resources already available,” “how to meet DPA requirements” and “strategies for inclusion” would also be useful.



“We enjoy being outdoors so much! Some more ideas for activities in poor weather would be helpful.”

“I mostly do moderate activities, how do you get students vigorously participating in activities?”



“I feel that DPA is very beneficial to the students any myself, however, I wish we could have more time to implement all subjects.”

“If 20 minutes of daily physical activity had been a whole school activity, I may have been more eager to participate.”

