

Ward 15, Toronto-Danforth
Trustee Jennifer Story
Ward 14, Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Trustee Chris Moise
Ward Forum
Topic: Outdoor Play and Learning
Tuesday March 27, 2018
6:30-8:30pm
Cosburn Middle School

Kate Sanagan, Ward Council Chair

Introductions

Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL)

Pilot Program expanded across schools; potential for more

Chester PS was one of the original schools to provide the program

- ➔ look to support the growth of the program
- ➔ unstructured play are important for students' well-being

Introduction to Cosburn MS—Vincent Spadaro, Vice-Principal

OPAL: Outdoor Play and Learning at School

Guest Speaker, Brenda Simon

Eco Kids

Earth Day Canada

-Kids getting out and playing, exploring nature; valuable form of learning—don't need to teach environmental stewardship

-adventure play

-learning how to animate a green space—create something adventurous for children; children creating a space

-Lawson Foundation, took up the initiative to sponsor Outdoor Play Strategy

Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play

-Access to active play is essential to child's development

-IPA definition of Play - freely chosen, self-directed, instinctive

-human play is a right according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

-increasing anxiety with reduction of free play time in Canada

-Call to action in 2014 for children's right to play

➔getting children to be more active

-landscape of childhood; school is a landscape for being a child; recognizing that childhood is a state of being that has value in and of itself

Children operate on two planes:

1. regulated, taken care of, safe, controlled
2. time to break free, experiments, transformation—discover world on own terms

Playground rules and equipment becoming dismal, uninteresting place for children

-have to create a place for breaking free

-Can create play space in low budget way; long term goal to create interesting play spaces

OPAL

-application process, meetings in east and west end

-workshops brought to schools

-think about rules in adventure playground

-post OPAL program children come into the office less to tell on someone that is bothering them on the playground

-encouraging children to embrace the outdoors—have a clothing library in schools to prepare for all weather

-don't want to interrupt students' play

-Equity and inclusion—OPAL allows all children to be included in play

-OPAL is working on expanding across schools

→schools need to be curious, committed, and have confidence in play

Introduction to South Riverdale Community Health Centre

- aiming to reduce children's obesity
- promoting play and healthy activities and nutritional habits
- Opal will give support and expertise to child care workers at SRCHC
- healthykidstoronto.com

Q&A

How can we make use of resources in school that are there?

Opal encourages teachers to think about their total play culture; each school has to figure out how to use storage at school for materials -- have an infinite amount of resources for children to play with, create a new playground every day

Simplicity of playground equipment results in injuries—one climber at school; how quickly can we get OPAL program in schools?

Lunchroom Supervisor workshops are available; on PD Days

Can join every year for staff turnover

Lunchroom Supervisors become supporters of play
Supervision becomes easier when children can explore their own competence
not an instant transformation

**Children are desperate for something to do on the playground; playground equipment is lacking;
nothing there for them; what can be done?**

Opal vision doesn't rest with TDSB—system change is needed
--continue to advocate over time

Brenda—applications are accepted by April 4—check website
<https://earthday.ca/earthplay/schoolplay/>
--application process; attendance at meeting is mandatory
-can only expand to 10-12 schools

FSLC reports and PIAC reports
--print outs available at meeting

Financial Literacy will be the topic of our next Ward Forum on April 25