

**Toolbox for Community Action:**  
*Promotion of Healthy Eating  
& Active Living in Children*

**Implementation Guide**

Revised June 2004

## Acknowledgements

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## **1. USING THE TOOLBOX FOR COMMUNITY ACTION IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE**

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This implementation guide was designed for use by communities, anywhere, who are interested in promoting healthy eating and active living using a socio-environmental approach.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

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The *Toolbox for Community Action* has been developed to help communities<sup>1</sup> create healthier environments for children through promotion of healthy eating and active living.

Healthy eating and active living are key to the prevention of childhood obesity, which is increasing at an alarming rate. Childhood obesity levels in Canada are at an all-time high. In the past 20 years, the number of obese children has tripled. Today, one out of every seven children between the ages of 7 and 13 is obese (16.6% of boys and 14.6% of girls).

The number of overweight children is also on the rise: from 1981 to 1996, the prevalence of overweight increased from 15% to 35.4% in boys, and from 15% to 29.2% in girls. Childhood overweight and obesity has reached epidemic proportions; not just in Canada, but international groups such as the World Health Organization have now recognized obesity as a global epidemic.

Late childhood or adolescent obesity also places children at risk for adult obesity, and adult obesity is a leading cause of preventable illness and death in Canada. About 70% of overweight children will be obese as adults, putting them at increased risk for diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, gallbladder disease, and some types of cancers.

Obesity develops over time and, once present, is difficult to treat. Many of the lifestyle behaviors associated with the development of obesity are adopted in childhood, so strategies to promote healthy lifestyles need to focus on this important learning period.

The steep rise in prevalence is largely associated with changes in our social and physical environments, which have created barriers to good nutrition and physical activity. This understanding has led to a shift in prevention efforts. Until now, interventions have focused on increasing knowledge and developing skills in families and individuals. While education is important, this single strategy has not been effective in curbing this growing epidemic.

The *Toolbox for Community Action* was developed and further revised to incorporate best practices from the pilot project to help communities' address the social and environmental factors that contribute to obesity-promoting behavior in children. Whether you are a single individual, a small group of two or three, or a larger community network, you can use the process outlined in this guide to create momentum in your community.

### **Why should we focus on healthy eating and active living?**

Obesity is the result of a complex interaction of genetics, diet, metabolism, and physical activity levels, and is influenced by various environmental and hereditary risk factors. In simplest terms, however, obesity is caused by an energy imbalance: energy *in* is greater than energy *out* – or, calories consumed are greater than calories spent. Research and practice suggests that the two major, modifiable factors that influence the energy balance in both children and adults are healthy eating and physical activity.

### **Healthy Eating**

Research indicates an alarming trend for Canadian children, they are eating fewer foods that provide fibre, vitamins or other important nutrients (such as fruits and vegetables), and have not decreased consumption of foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar (such as soft drinks and candy bars).

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<sup>1</sup> Communities are defined as any geographic community.

Another alarming trend is the increase in Canadian children and youth that are dieting in an effort to lose weight. Youth who develop unhealthy eating habits due to distorted perceptions of body weight are at increased risk of developing nutritional deficiencies.

Nutritious diets support optimal growth and development, whereas an emphasis on food restriction can establish a preoccupation with food or body image and disrupt a child's natural ability to respond to hunger/satiation. Planning in this area should conform to national nutritional guidelines supported by Health Canada and can be accessed from you local health region. In Calgary, contact the Nutrition and Active Living department with the Calgary Health Region at [www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/nutrition](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/nutrition).

*Actions in this area should focus on the development of good eating habits rather than restrictive diets and weight control.*

### **Physical Activity**

It is recommended that daily physical activity for children and youth is needed to stay healthy or to improve health. Currently, one quarter of Canadian children are considered 'sedentary' because they do not meet this minimum requirement. Greater time is often allotted to TV and video or computer games than to physical activity; 20-30% of Canadian children and adolescents watch at least 4 hours of TV per day, and 34-41% of boys in grades 6-10 play more than 4 hours of computer games per week.

Gender differences have been observed in this area, particularly among adolescents. Boys are more likely than girls to be physically active, and girls become less active as they progress into high school years. The decrease in girls' participation rate is especially true for more vigorous activities and sports.

There are many factors that may influence children's physical activity patterns. Children are more active when they have mastered the necessary skills, when the activity is enjoyable, when their parents are active, and when they receive parental and peer support for being physically active. Barriers to activity include lack of appropriate facilities/programs, popularity of TV and video/computer games, and safety issues, which may restrict outdoor activities (e.g. walking to school).

Planning in this area should conform to the national nutritional guidelines supported by Health Canada and can be accessed from you local health region. In Calgary, contact the Nutrition and Active Living department with the Calgary Health Region at [www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/activeliving](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/activeliving).

*Actions in this area should focus on the development of environments that support lifestyle behaviors promoting lifelong physical activity.*

### **Why do we need a socio-environmental approach?**

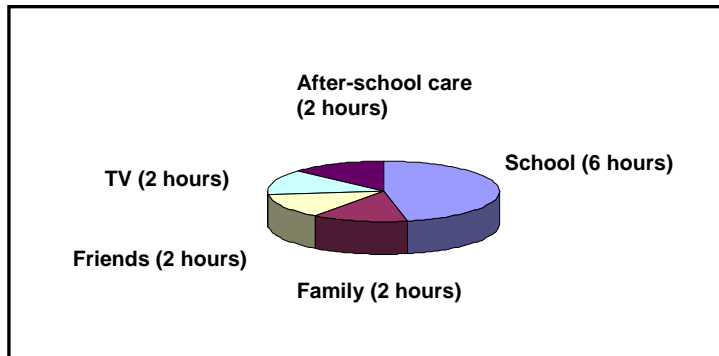
Obesity is a complex problem, one that is influenced by a number of factors. We can educate families (and certainly families have a major influence on a child's nutrition and activity patterns), but how effective will that be when children spend so much of their day in other settings, making choices around nutrition and activity that are beyond the control of the family?

To illustrate this point, consider a day in the life of a nine-year-old boy. Let's say that, out of 14 waking hours, he spends:

- 6 hours in school
- 2 hours in after-school care

- 2 hours watching TV (family may be present in the home, but TV is the main influence during this time)
- 2 hours playing with friends
- 2 hours interacting with family members

A breakdown of his day might look like this:



You'll notice that the time spent interacting with family is potentially only a small part of his day; the rest is spent in other environments. Now, think about the factors, present in each of these environments, that might influence his choices around nutrition and activity. One scenario might be as follows:

*School (6 hours)*

- Physical activity is limited because walking to school is often perceived as unsafe; gym is not offered every day; and only skilled athletes play on school teams.
- Pop and candy are easily accessible in school through vending machines and a tuck shop.
- The school has "hot dog day" once a week as a fundraiser.

*After-school care (2 hours)*

- He often requests high fat snacks from the babysitter.
- Quiet activities are encouraged.
- Space and time for active play are limited.

*Family (2 hours)*

- The family lifestyle leaves little time to prepare meals, so they often use the fast food drive-through for dinner and convenience foods are a staple.

*Friends (2 hours)*

- His best friend is not allowed to play in the nearby park or "hangout" in the neighborhood because of his parents' concerns for his safety, so they usually play video games instead.

*TV (2 hours)*

- TV commercials promote high fat/high sugar foods that are designed to appeal to kids.

Given the number of influences that children potentially experience outside their family, prevention strategies must extend beyond the individual and home environment to include other social and physical settings and influences.

### 3. OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

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Communities are powerful agents of change. Communities can impact their environments to improve the overall quality of life and encourage healthier lifestyles. The *Toolbox for Community Action* was developed to support communities in this process. Specifically, the Toolbox helps people and organizations mobilize around promotion of healthy eating and active living, using a community development approach. This approach can have substantial benefits for our children: prevention of childhood obesity and the development of lifelong diseases.

The Community development process involves a number of key steps. World-wide experience has shown that all groups go through these steps, which is iterative in nature; that is, people move in and out of the different steps, moving through them at their own pace. Figure 1 describes the six steps involved in the community development process, followed by a brief description of each. These steps comprise the next six chapters, where they are discussed in detail.

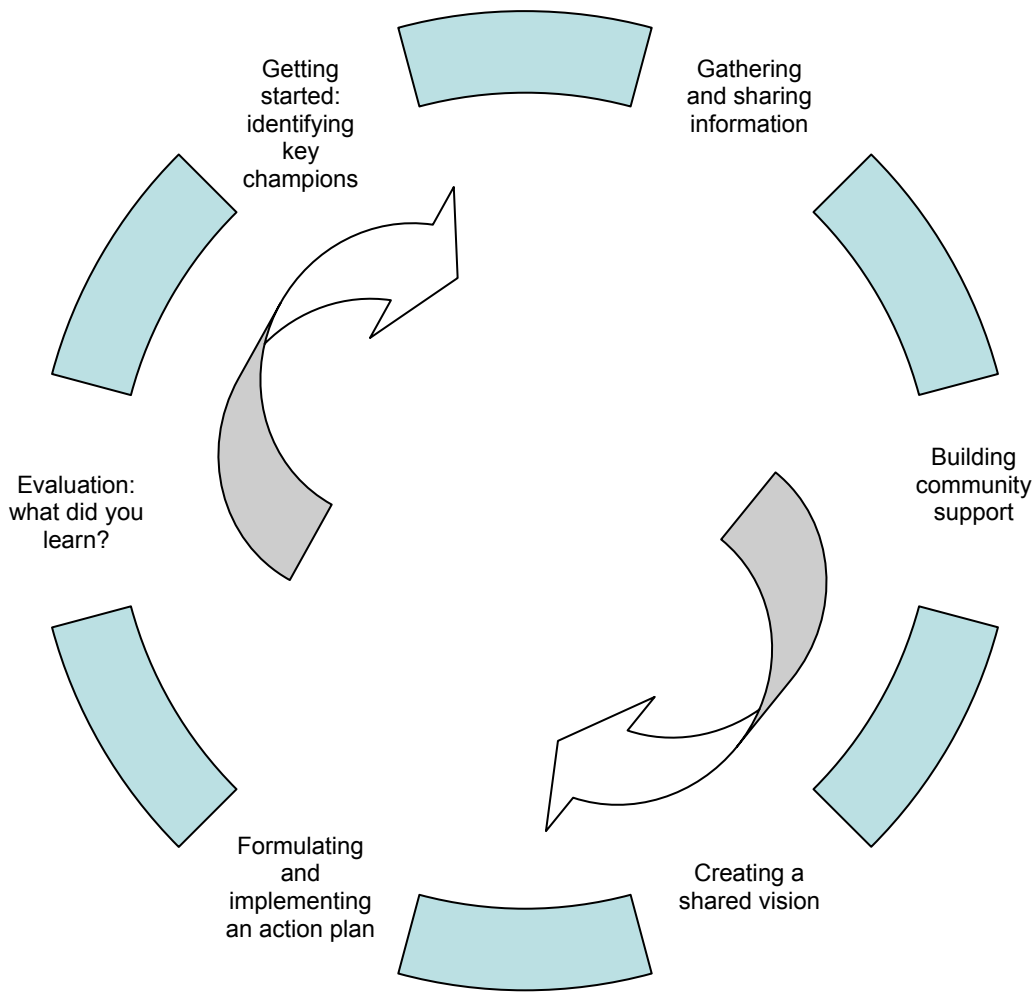


Figure 1: Community development process.

**Getting started: identifying key champions** – Successful community action begins with the identification of key individuals, or champions, who will help to lead the process and inspire and engage community participation. This step will be discussed in Chapter 4.

**Gathering and sharing information** – An important step where issues and ideas are discussed, data gathered and the resulting information shared with the community. Information is needed in order to understand current resources and barriers that exist in the community to inform the next steps to be taken. There are a number of tools presented in this guide to help with the data gathering process, depending on the needs of the community. This step and an overview of the tools will be discussed in Chapter 5.

**Building community support** – Community development cannot happen without the involvement and support from community which includes businesses, organizations, agencies and program and service providers that reside therein. Building community support is a key step toward creating awareness, buy-in and participation in the project, which will move the project forward and help promote sustainability. This step is ongoing and can help with the visioning, action planning and implementation phases of the initiative. Chapter 6 discusses this critical step.

**Creating a shared vision** – Using the information gathered, along with members of the community, the next step is to understand where you are now and where you want to be. This involves developing a shared vision toward what can be done in the community to promote healthy eating and active living. The outcome during this process will help inform the next step, which is action planning. Chapter 7 will describe this process.

**Formulating and implementing an action plan** – The visioning process will guide this step and help in the creation of an action plan or a set of outcomes and strategies, to help achieve the vision. Actions will range in size and complexity, depending on the diverse needs of the various communities. They all, however, can have an impact on the social and physical fabric of the community, setting the stage for further action. Please see Chapter 8 for detail.

**Evaluation: what did you learn?** – This step helps to gather feedback on the actions planned and implemented and critically assess whether or not the objectives and goals are being met. Understanding what factors have facilitated or impeded the process and adjusting the course accordingly can help to achieve goals and increase the level of satisfaction among group members. Information on this topic is presented in Chapter 9.

The next chapters describe these steps in more detail, with best practices from the pilot project incorporated throughout. A number of resources to help with each process have been included for information and use. Please feel free to photocopy and use them as needed.

#### **4. GETTING STARTED: IDENTIFYING KEY CHAMPIONS**

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Successful community action begins with the identification of key individuals, or champions, who have:

- A strong interest in the promotion of healthy eating and active living
- A knowledge of the community development approach or are willing to work within this framework

Key champions will help to lead<sup>2</sup> the process and inspire and engage community participation. A champion may be a parent, a public health nurse, an adult, basically anyone who feels strongly about the issue of healthy eating and active living and is willing to work within the community development approach.

Think about the individuals in the community with a vested interest in creating a healthier, more supportive environment for children. Talk to neighbors or co-workers, community association or local schools. Approach health organizations or recreational facilities and ask if anyone would like to become involved in a community development approach to promote healthy environments and prevent childhood obesity. See the previous chapter for an overview of the community development process.

To help create interest and awareness in the project, a sample brochure can be found in Appendix B. This brochure can also serve as an outline for brief presentations by key champions and other individuals to create and build community support and participation in the project.

The key champion(s) can help identify ways to recruit interested community members to participate in the project. Use as many of the following ways to recruit members, as feasible:

- Word of mouth i.e. talking to individuals in the community who are currently involved in similar initiatives or others who may be interested in volunteering some time
- Flyers delivered through local schools
- Bold signs advertising the project and contact information
- Advertising in the local newsletters and at events
- Presentations to local community members and groups (i.e. school principals, school parent councils, etc.)

Once other interested members of the community come together, they may form a 'community action group' to guide this initiative. A project charter and guiding principles may be used to facilitate common understanding of the group process and project requirements. A sample of both can be found in Appendices C (project charter) and D (guiding principles).

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<sup>2</sup>A key champion is not necessarily the 'chair' or the leader of any action group that is created, rather this individual will help begin the process of mobilizing their community.

## 5. GATHERING AND SHARING INFORMATION

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Gathering and sharing information usually follows the identification of key champion(s) in the community development process. This is an important and ongoing process that helps the action group members discuss their issues and ideas, quantify and give objectivity to their issues, and broaden the community's perspective, as well as that of the action group, on the same.

Gathering and sharing of information can be achieved using a variety of methods including:

- Mapping tools (discussed in the next section, below)
- Focus groups/talking circles
- Town hall meetings
- Round tables
- Surveys and forums
- Discussion groups
- Interviews
- Presentations and workshops

### Overview of the Mapping Tools

Seven tools have been developed to help community members gather information about the resources, barriers and gaps related to healthy eating and active living in their community so that groups will have a better sense of where to focus their energy. An overview of the tools is presented in a table in Appendix E. Detailed guidelines on use and data analysis can be found in the Appendices (as indicated beside each tool below). Here, a general introduction to the mapping tools, their use, and a brief overview of the data collection, resources required, their analysis and presentation will be discussed. Templates for data analysis and results have been developed and are on a disk accompanying this guide.

### Integration of Mapping Tools into the Community Development Process

The tools can serve as a starting point. Consider what information would be most useful in shaping the initial direction. For example, to gather information on the preferences and barriers experienced by families in the area of healthy eating and active living, undertaking the *Child Activity and Nutrition Survey* may be a start. For an overview of the physical and demographic characteristics of the neighborhood, the *Community Profiler* may be used. Generally speaking, the following tools are most appropriate for the Gathering and Sharing of Information phase:

- Community Profiler (Appendix F)
- Child Activity and Nutrition Survey (Appendix G)
- Neighborhood Observation of Parks and Playgrounds (Appendix H)
- Checklist of Other Physical Elements (Appendix I)

The data you get from each tool will likely raise a series of new questions, thereby informing the selection of the subsequent tool. For example, if parents identify fees for recreational facilities as a barrier in the *Child Activity and Nutrition Survey*, you may want to use the *Community Program Survey* to find out about low-cost, subsidized, or free programs in your community. While these tools can be used anytime and in any sequence during the process, the following are most helpful during the Action Planning and Implementation phase, giving community members a picture of who and what services are offered within the community:

- Inventory of Businesses and Organizations (Appendix J)
- Community Programs Survey (Appendix K)

Once actions have been planned, it may help to have the knowledge of what skills currently exist within the action group for implementation purposes. Community members interested in

volunteering their time for specific projects may also complete the following tool to outline their skills and where their time could be used during this phase:

- Community Skills Checklist (Appendix L)

Careful selection of tools, depending on the specific needs of the community is more important than using all of the tools at once. It is recommended that a list of questions or issues be generated by the action group to help decide which tool(s) would best help answer those questions or address the identified issues. For example, you may know that the use of parks and playgrounds in your community is poor, however it isn't clear on why this is so. It may be due to a number of reasons such as safety issues, accessibility, poor condition of equipment, etc. You may decide to explore this issue further using the *Neighborhood Observation of Parks and Playgrounds* tool, gather information on the resources, barriers, and the conditions of the parks and playgrounds in your areas and communicate your findings to the community. This not only validates your issue but provides an objective set of data to present to the rest of the community for support and ownership of the issue.

### **Data Collection**

In most cases, data collection is fairly straightforward and can be conducted by youth or adult volunteers in the community. It is important to provide training to all data collectors on the use and purpose of the tools being used. Recruit a number of volunteers to help with this phase. The data collection process will be facilitated with more volunteers, with less chance for any one person to feel overwhelmed with the process.

### **Resources Needed**

The need for resources depends on the tools used. Generally, many of the tools require a telephone, pen, paper and photocopying. Two of the tools, *Community Profiler* and *Checklist of Other Physical Elements*, may require a small budget for maps (\$20-\$50).

### **Data Analysis**

Community members can analyze most of the data. For visual representation of information, community specific city maps can be used (see *Community Profiler*) and pins or tacks for identifying key elements and relationships. Electronic templates are also available for data analysis, which will require basic knowledge of Microsoft *Excel* or *Word*. Assistance may be available for data analysis and interpretation from local community partners (e.g. local health region or the municipality government).

### **Presentation of Data**

Information gathered can be presented in different ways using tables, charts, graphs, reports or could also be presented through mapping<sup>3</sup>, a visual representation of the data collected, using a map of your community (see *Community Profiler*). For example, through mapping, a community might discover that the highest density of children aged two to six years live in an area in which no playgrounds exist. They then discover that there is a church in that area with some green space. The group approaches the church to see whether it would allow a playground to be built on that property. The group might then use another of the tools to find out what members of their community have construction, design and fundraising skills. They might also build a relationship with the local hardware store to have the building supplies for a playground donated or discounted. At least four relationships or connections are discovered or built in the process:

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<sup>3</sup> Community mapping can refer to collection of data or to a visual representation of the data collected.

1. The relationship between playgrounds (or lack thereof) and location of children<sup>4</sup>,
2. The relationship between the church and the larger community,
3. The relationship between community members and the larger community, and
4. The relationship between a business and the larger community.

These relationships can be illustrated visually presented on the community map (see Community Profiler, Appendix F) with pins or colored 'stickies'. A sample of a community map<sup>5</sup> is also presented in Appendix F.

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<sup>4</sup> This is a relationship between elements rather than people. Many of the tools point to these kinds of relationships, or the lack of them, and offer a good starting point for action.

<sup>5</sup> The map presented in Appendix F was created using MapInfo software that requires a level of expertise to use as well as it's expensive to do this type of analysis. Similar relationships and information can be drawn from using a community map as mentioned in Tool 1: Community Profiler.

## 6. BUILDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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Community development cannot happen without the support and involvement of the community; it is an inclusive process. People are needed to not only start this process but also to move it forward. The action group is encouraged to seek support from their community on an ongoing basis. Further, ideas for visioning and action planning need people, to become involved and participate as active voices. Without this support, the project will progress, if at all, very slowly due to lack of buy-in and will be difficult to sustain. Partnerships and collaborations with a variety of different community members, agencies, and organizations are key in sustaining efforts. Therefore, this process can be viewed as an essential component of this initiative.

Think of answering this key question: *Who are the key people and/or organizations that need to be involved in this initiative?* The unique make up of the community can have an influence on who needs to become involved. For example, if the demographics suggest a high percentage of ethnic population, representation from different cultures, or at least the most dominant one may be beneficial and important to project success.

Start by drawing on the networks and contacts inherent to the action group. Then expand to include representatives from any of the following groups as you see appropriate:

- Parent and School Associations
- School Boards/Divisions
- Churches
- Food Banks
- Businesses
- Day cares
- Parent support groups
- Service Clubs
- Community Associations
- Recreational Facilities
- Police and Fire Departments
- Medical and Other Health Professionals

Consider approaching representatives from government or not-for-profit organizations that might be able to provide expertise, resources, or strategic planning skills. Potential organizations might include:

- Health organizations (e.g. your local health authority, as well as other related disease groups such as the Canadian Diabetes Association or the Heart and Stroke Foundation)
- Pediatric associations
- City departments (e.g. Parks and Recreation)
- Mental health organizations

Information obtained through the *Inventory of Businesses and Organizations* tool is also very useful during this step. Look through the inventory for potential contacts and invite them to participate in this initiative, in whatever capacity they are available. For example, businesses and organizations may want to participate on the action group, provide in-kind resources, door prizes for events, or even help during specific events.

## 7. CREATING A SHARED VISION

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Use the information gathered through the Community Mapping tools, or other initiatives, to determine the current profile and trends for the community; that is, the community strengths, weaknesses, resources and the ideal future for the community. More specifically, what is the data suggesting, how does this relate to next steps, and where does the group see making a difference in the community toward improving the social and physical environments for healthy eating and active living.

A community vision will help create a picture of where you want to be. Remember, though, that this is not a one-step process; like everything else in community development, a vision statement is something that is continually revisited and revised. For successful visioning, the action group must seek input from the larger community, and use the results from the Community mapping process as a starting point. The following are ways to facilitate a visioning session/process:

- Focus groups/talking circles
- Town hall meetings
- Round tables
- Surveys and forums
- Discussion groups
- Interviews
- Presentations and workshops

Once a vision has been created, the action group can plan some actions around promotion of healthy eating and active living. On the other hand, both visioning and action planning can happen at this venue; once a broad vision has been formulated, ask members to reflect on possible actions that will contribute to the vision. This information can then be used to formally plan the actions and their implementation, as outlined in the next chapter

## 8. FORMULATING AND IMPLEMENTING AN ACTION PLAN

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Action planning can be an exciting as well as time consuming process. A guide to help you address key questions has been created to assist in this process and a sample action plan is also included in Appendix M.

As mentioned in Chapter 7 on Creating a Shared Vision, the following can help to provide an opportunity to present data and reflect on possible actions:

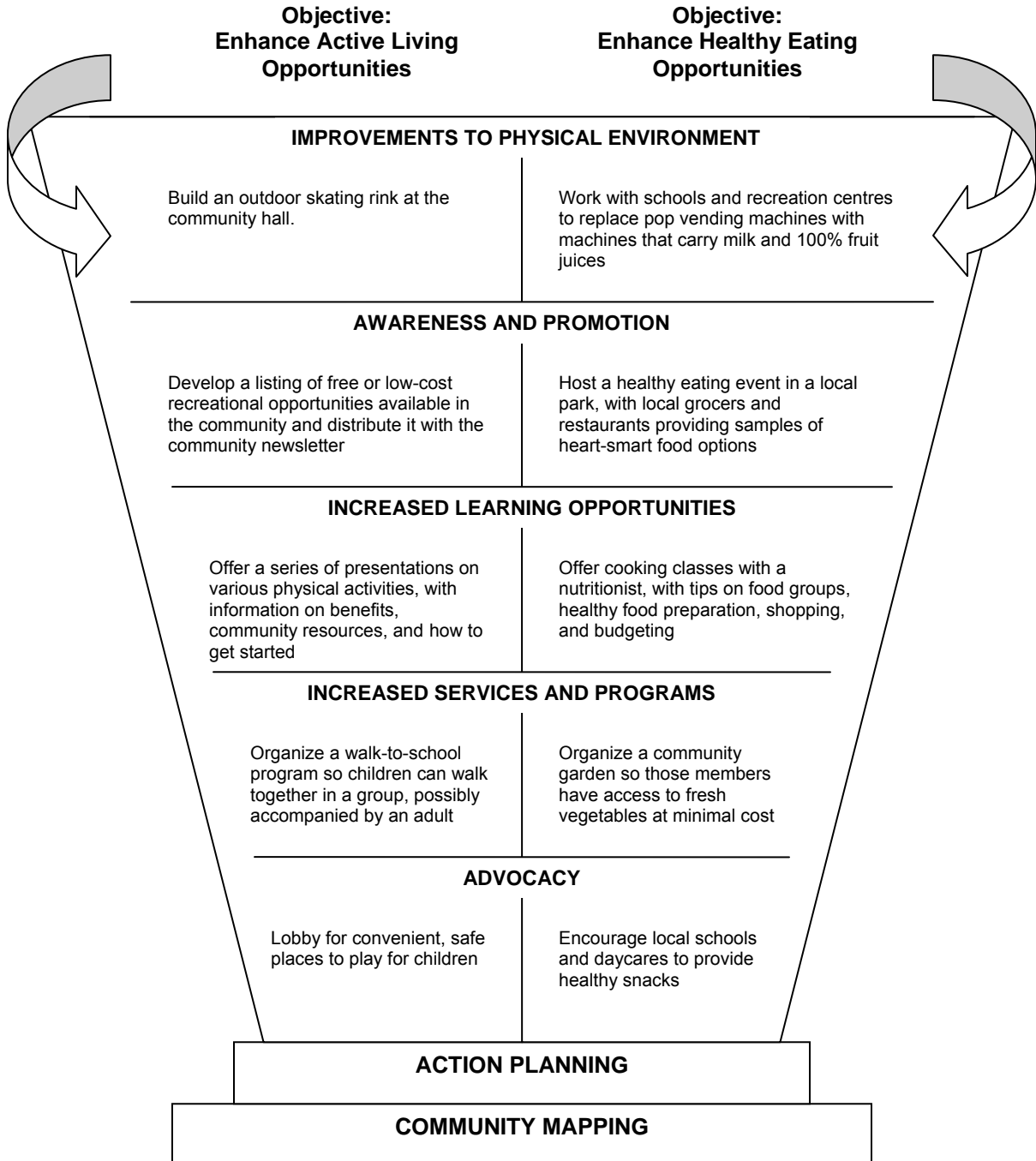
- Focus groups/talking circles
- Town hall meetings
- Round tables
- Surveys and forums
- Discussion groups
- Interviews
- Presentations and workshops

Community partners (such as the local health authority or the municipality government) may be able to provide support during this phase and offer guidance around how to facilitate a planning forum. Essentially, the action group will need to identify specific outcomes, determine priorities, develop strategies, and specify who is responsible for each part of the plan. It is also helpful to determine timelines, necessary resources, and potential partners (see Appendix M for a guide to plan your actions).

The actions that come out of this process may take many forms. The diagram in Figure 2 on the following page illustrates some examples of initiatives that might be implemented to enhance opportunities for healthy eating and active living in the community.

Keep in mind that the categories within this list are provided as examples only and the listing is not meant to be exhaustive. You may find that you develop an altogether different course of action. Also, these examples don't mean to imply that a community group should take on all of these types of activities. Again, they are simply provided as an example of some of the possible actions. See also the sample action plan provided in Appendix M.

Figure 2: Potential Actions emerging from this Community Development Initiative.



## 9. EVALUATION: WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

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Evaluation is an assessment of progress and results, which helps to determine whether the objectives, goals and vision are being reached. It is important to think about what success will look like and the outcomes that are desired in advance as well as during the activities.

### Outcomes Evaluation: Community

To help groups address evaluation of their action plans, it is recommended that the following question be asked for each plan formulated:

*How will you know your activities have been successful?*

For example, if a group has decided to develop a web site for promotion of healthy eating and active living in their community, they may look for the following indicators of success:

- the number of hits on the web site
- the number of volunteers working its development
- has the size and number of links increased
- has requests for advertisement increased

Another example, if a group wants to promote healthy eating through food preparation classes, they may look for the following as their indicators of success:

- the number of participants
- requests for additional sessions
- number of inquiries related to the classes
- surveys (at the end of the class)

While this phase is considered key in understanding whether your programs or activities are going as planned, it is also ongoing and can inform future initiatives. The cooking classes mentioned above may look significantly different the next time around based on the findings of the evaluation criteria and the web site may not exist if underutilized or expanded significantly if there is increased demand and usage. For an example of a survey used for evaluation of an event put on by a community, please refer to Appendix N.

### Outcomes Evaluation: Community Action Group

Equally important is for the community action group to reflect on their learnings in going through this community development process. It is important to ask *what did you learn as a group, not only about the broader community, but also about the action group?* For example, while participation is one of the indicators of success in terms of the community events, it can also be indicative of success within the community action group in terms of the level of involvement and commitment of its members. The group could reflect on *to what extent did the community action group achieve the desired participation on the action group?*

Another aspect to reflect on is related to having a shared vision, without which it is difficult to move forward. The action group may reflect on *to what extent did the community action group achieve a shared vision for this project and to what extent was the project able to communicate its vision to the community?*

These critical reflections can provide valuable information toward the group's growth and learning and awareness of its challenges and suggest ways to enhance the group and its processes as well as its purpose.

## APPENDICES

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## Appendix A: Implementation Guide 2002 Acknowledgements

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Funding for Calgary Community Prevention of Childhood Obesity Steering Committee's work on the *Toolbox for Community Action* was provided to the Calgary Health Region through the Action for Health – Child Health Fund, Alberta Health and Wellness.

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Lynne Chambers, City of Calgary  
Marcie Dryden, Calgary Health Region  
Sherry Hiebert-Keck, North of McKnight Community Resource Centre  
Dave Holmes, Robert McClure United Church  
Debra McIsaac, Heart of the Northeast Community Solutions Resource Centre  
Anne Parker-Wycislik, Boys and Girls Club Community Services  
Shari Rider, McMan Family Daycare and Afterschool Program

*Calgary Community Prevention of Obesity Sub-Committee:*

Heather Cowie, City of Calgary  
Cheryl Doherty, Boys and Girls Club Community Services  
Carol Hauer, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association  
Bretta Maloff, Calgary Health Region

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Denise Bell/Darlene Cavanaugh, Canadian Diabetes Association  
Statia Buckmaster, Health Canada  
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Mary Flynn, Calgary Health Region  
Carol Hauer, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association  
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Marg Schwartz, Ever After Schools Program  
Dr. Rebecca Trussell, Calgary Health Region  
Dr. Warren Veale, University of Calgary  
Kay Watson-Jarvis, Calgary Health Region  
City of Calgary

**Appendix B: Project Brochure** (*separate document in PDF, attached*)

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## Community Participation

Members such as you can actively participate in this project by:

- Identifying volunteers
- Surveying community resources
- Identifying community goals
- Devising an action plan
- Implementing the action plan
- Taking part in the evaluation process

### *Project Sponsors*

[Insert names of project sponsors and/or partners]

## What's in it for You?

A chance to better your community.

Time to socialize and have fun with friends, family and neighbors.

Make "the healthy choices the easy choices".

Connect your community with local resources and support networks.

[Insert any other information such as resources, supports, etc. to help with the project]

### For more information contact:

[Insert Community Action Group Information]

## Promotion of Healthy Eating and Active Living in Children

*"Building a legacy for health and wellness"*

Helping children make choices that support healthy behaviors for a lifetime.

FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT PROVIDED BY [INSERT SPONSOR NAME]

## What is the Project About?

The focus of our project is to work with your community to help you create a program promoting healthy eating and active living in children.

Healthy eating and active living can decrease the risk of children becoming overweight and developing chronic diseases such as diabetes (Type 2), high blood pressure, heart disease and some types of cancers.

By working together, we can help our children make choices that support healthy behaviors for a lifetime.



*Healthy choices are the key to a healthier life.*

## Why Healthy Eating and Active Living?

Lifestyle changes over the past two decades have created many challenges to healthy eating and active living.

Families have less time to spend on planning and preparing nutritious meals.

Instead of being active, children are spending more time watching TV and playing video/computer games.

Children are less likely to ride their bikes or walk to school because of safety concerns.

Children may have little opportunity for physical activity because sports have become more organized and competitive.

Children may not choose physical education in higher grades because it is often offered as an option.

## Community as the Central Focus

The community is at the heart of our program.

It brings members together to work cooperatively in addressing common goals.

In doing so, this process can help the community to:

- Organize and plan together
- Develop options and goals
- Make changes in the environment



*Community members working together with a common goal is a powerful tool for change.*

## Appendix C: Sample Project Charter

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### **PURPOSE**

To work with communities to organize a 'community action team' that supports the promotion of healthy eating and active living in children.

Changes to the social and physical environments around healthy eating and active living are fundamental to the prevention of obesity and developing chronic diseases including diabetes (Type 2), high blood pressure, heart disease and some types of cancers in children.

### **Expectations of the Project**

From [date], the project will provide [some or all] of the following supports to the participating community:

- Project coordinator to support and act as a resource to the community process.
- Provision of surveys and training of community members on the use of surveys.
- Funding (to a maximum) of \$[specify, if applicable] toward implementation of the action plan on approval of action plan and budget.
- Funding (to a maximum) for facilitation of the community process including facilitators, hosting, transportation, childcare services and promotional materials for meetings or events, if required by community members.
- Analysis of information gathered from the surveys and preparation of report.
- Distribution of evaluation questionnaires and their results.

### **Expectations of the Community**

From [date], the community action group will actively participate in the following:

- Mobilizing community members to participate in the project.
- Collection of data using surveys to identify the community resources and/or barriers.
- Visioning and action planning around promotion of healthy eating and active living in children in the community.
- Providing evidence of community participation in the visioning and action planning process that is inclusive to all interested members of the community.
- Provide a detailed action plan and budget addressing healthy eating and active living in children to receive the implementation funds [if applicable].
- Implementation of the action plan.
- Participation in the evaluation process to help facilitate project and community learning such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.
- Providing organizational leadership such as regular meetings, decision making process, resolving conflicts, etc.

---

DATE:

COMMUNITY:

PROJECT COORDINATOR:

COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

## **Appendix D: Sample Community Action Group Guiding Principles**

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1. Everyone has wisdom
2. We need everyone's wisdom to create a meaningful result
3. The wisdom of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts
4. There are no right or wrong opinions
5. Everyone will be heard
6. You can change you mind
7. Have fun
8. The action group will schedule meetings as needed, on *day* as the preferred day, and would like to have *specified time* advance notice.
9. Decisions will be made based on group consensus. In a case where consensus is not possible, a majority vote will be used to guide the decision.
10. In case of a disagreement, the individual in disagreement will present his/her case to the group. If a compromise is not possible and/or the disagreement cannot be resolved, the member in disagreement will be given the opportunity to 'live with' the group's decision and continue or excuse him/herself from the group.

## Appendix E: Table of Community Mapping Tools Overview

Mapping Tool	Purpose
<i>Community Profiler</i>	Collection of demographic data and information around accessing and using city maps to help understand the social and physical characteristics of a community.
<i>Neighbourhood Observation Parks &amp; Playgrounds Checklist and Interview Guide</i>	Direct observation of all parks, green spaces, and playgrounds in the community to understand accessibility, activities, amenities, use, and safety.
<i>Checklist of Other Physical Elements</i>	Direct observation of elements i.e. driving and walking distances to recreational facilities, nutrition-related messaging of outdoor advertising, and indirect observation (through maps) of elements such as bike paths and bus stops.
<i>Inventory of Businesses and Organizations</i>	A listing of local businesses, services, associations and organizations in the area of healthy eating and active living.
<i>Community Program Survey</i>	Collection of information around program delivery, including target groups served, demand levels, accessibility, program fees, and fee subsidies in the area of healthy eating and active living.
<i>Child Activity and Nutrition Survey</i>	Identify barriers, preferences and needs experienced by families in relation to healthy eating and activity.
<i>Community Skills Checklist</i>	Identify a volunteer base for a specific project and identify skills within the community and the action group.

## Appendix F: Tool 1 – Community Profiler

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The *Community Profiler* presents an overview of some of the physical and social characteristics of a community. It is a list of guidelines and tips for gathering information. For the purpose of this initiative, information such as a community map and basic knowledge of the demographic data is most useful and will be addressed in this tool.

### Community Maps

Community maps are available at a small price from the city's planning department (e.g. in Calgary, maps can be obtained from: *City of Calgary, Planning Information Centre, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Calgary Municipal Building, 800 MacLeod TR SE*, at a cost of approximately \$15.00). These maps show the following:

- location of parks, playgrounds, athletic parks, golf courses, outdoor pools, and green spaces
- schools and school property
- fences
- LRT and railway tracks
- housing and commercial buildings
- land use designation
- pathways and bikeways
- all streets roads, alleys, and sidewalks
- other features i.e. physical contours, bridges, trees, and bodies of water

Information from community maps can be used to locate features within an area of or the entire geographic community as well as to locate parks and other green spaces for use with the *Neighbourhood Observation of Parks & Playgrounds* phase of the mapping process. This data can also help to provide a frame of reference, to see how the community compares to others in the area.

### Demographic Information

Demographic data are available from a variety of sources, including Statistics Canada (Census Data); your city census data (e.g., City of Calgary Civic Census Data); and the province's Ministry of Family and Social Services (e.g., Alberta Family and Social Services). The types of information that might be most useful to your community initiative are:

- Population by age group
- Population by level of education
- Population by family status
- Population by employment status
- Population by ethnic composition
- Other indicators of economic well-being
- Population growth by community
- Age distribution by year by community

Demographic data can be collected by anyone with Internet and telephone access and presented in a table format either by hand or computer using programs such as Microsoft Word. A sample of demographic information is presented in Table below.

Knowing the characteristics of the community of interest, such as income level, education level and age distribution will assist communities in making informed and appropriate decisions before proceeding with the design and implementation of potential community action projects.

**Sample Demographic Data for Community A**

Demographics	Community A	
Total Population	14,313	
Age Distribution	0 to 4 years	7.2%
	5 to 14 years	21.8%
Persons in Low Income Households	33.4%	
Total Families with Children	2,530	
% Families Headed by Lone Parent	31.2%	
Immigrant Population	29.9%	

*Data from Stats Canada*

**Sample Community Map\***  
(See attached)

---

\* The map presented here was created using MapInfo software that requires a level of expertise to use as well as it's expensive to do this type of analysis. Similar relationships and information can be drawn from using a community map as mentioned in the tool (Tool 1: Community Profiler) above.

## **Appendix G: Tool 2 – Neighborhood Observation of Parks and Playgrounds**

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The *Neighborhood Observation of Parks and Playgrounds* consists of two parts: a checklist that is to be completed on-site at each park/playground/green space in the community, and an interview guide with questions for park users. Together, the checklist and the interview guide provide a detailed profile of outdoor recreational resources and help to identify needs, assets, and potential growth opportunities in parks, playgrounds, and other green spaces within the community. The tool also helps to provide details that are difficult or costly to obtain through other sources, such as noise levels, quality of lighting and shade, type and quality of outdoor equipment, and potential use or misuse. Resources may include parks, playgrounds, tot-lots, school and community centre grounds, athletic fields, off-leash areas, and other public green spaces within the community.

Start by reviewing a map of your community (see Community Profiler) and identifying all the parks and green spaces to be observed. Then divide them among your data collectors. The number of observers you enlist will depend on the number of parks you want observed and whether you'd like each park observed more than once. Give each data collector one copy of the checklist for each park they will observe, as well as a pencil, notepad, and a list of parks to observe.

### **Checklist**

Before observing any school based parks or playgrounds, it is essential to inform and obtain the permission of the school principal. The observers should spend about 10 to 20 minutes observing each park, playground, or green space and complete the checklist during that time, inserting any additional comments as necessary. If your group's goal is simply to inventory the type and condition of equipment/facilities at the location, one observation is probably sufficient. If the goal is to observe how the park is *used*, additional visits may be required at various times, including weekdays and weekends. You will also need to decide whether the observations should be done during the day or evening or both. This will again be determined by the goals of the project, as well as by the type of park being observed and the availability of the observers.

### **Interview**

Is optional. You may want to supplement the Checklist by asking observers to talk to some of the park users or to interview community members who live near the park. The interview portion of this tool is intended to help understand park usage, for example, is the park being used? Is the equipment used as intended? Does the park meet the needs of its users? Are there any barriers or deterrents to use?.

Before sending your observers out, you will need to offer some guidelines about whom to interview. For instance, do you want the interviewers to speak with parents only? Parental consent may be required if you wish to interview children or youth. To some extent, this will be determined by your needs, the goals of the project, timelines, manpower, and the age of the interviewers.

The interview itself should be directed but informal. The interviewers should identify themselves, offer a brief overview of the project (why they are conducting the interviews and how the information will be used), and provide a contact phone number for further information about the project. The interviewer should also take detailed notes and ask permission of the interviewee of the same. They may also distribute the project brochure for identifying themselves, creating project awareness and providing contact information to individuals interested in volunteering.

As a general rule of thumb, when no new information is being offered, you have conducted enough interviews. However, the number of interviews conducted will depend on the number of users in the park at the time of the observations, and the time of day, the weather, or the season might affect this. In determining the number of interviews to aim for, consider the number of

interviewers available, factors that will potentially affect use (e.g. winter), and how much information you need.

If you find that visits to outdoor recreational locations are producing few interviews (perhaps because of the season or weather), you may wish to use an alternate method. Identify parents within the community whose children are known to use the parks and conduct telephone or face-to-face interviews with them at their convenience.

### **Data Collection**

The *Neighborhood Observation of Parks & Playgrounds Checklist and Interview Guide* can be administered by anyone who is old enough to understand the checklist and is physically able to travel to the location. This is a good way to involve young people in the project. Including a few parents as observers is also recommended. Community members living near the park and regular park users are also ideal for this tool, however, if you can't recruit them for the collection, try to interview them about their park. Interviewing experience is helpful, but not necessary.

A brief training session (15-20 minutes) or giving the observers a copy of the instructions in this guide is important. Also, discuss the questions on the checklist and the interview guide with data collectors (and amongst the action group members) to determine specific parameters. For example, what type of fencing is considered 'safe', is the purpose of the fence to protect children or is it a matter of outward show? Outlining these criteria ahead of time will help data collectors in understanding what they are looking for. This will not only facilitate the data collection process but also increase the reliability of data collected.

### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

Using the checklist and interview data, create a summary for each park/green space (see the sample summary included). Also, a data input template has been created using and can be found in the disk that accompanies this guide. The information drawn from the summaries can then be analyzed and used in several ways and below are a few suggestions:

- Identify problem areas and equipment in need of repair or improvement
- Identify assets and gaps (e.g., "Our community has a number of parks and green spaces, but very few playgrounds")
- Look for themes that emerge around barriers such as safety issues, accessibility problems, proximity to bus routes, usage patterns, or lack of age-appropriate playground equipment in areas with a high population of preschool aged children
- Look for emerging themes around factors that encourage or support use

The information that is gathered through this tool provides comprehensive data about the outdoor recreation and physical activity opportunities, or lack thereof, in the community. This is important for understanding the social and physical barriers and resources that exist in the community related to physical activity, to inform both current and future actions.

**Neighborhood Observation of Parks and Playgrounds Checklist**  
*(Separate document, attached)*

Is also on the disk that accompanies this guide.

## **Neighborhood Observation of Parks and Playgrounds Interview Guide**

### *Suggested Prompts for Interview*

#### **Park Usage**

Do you use this playground often? How often?

Why did you choose this one? (E.g., “is it near your home?”)

What kinds of activities do you see most often in this park/playground?

How are the play areas and equipment in this park generally used?

(Could use specific equipment/play area as prompt – e.g., “how often is the baseball diamond used? Is it used mostly for baseball or is it used for other things as well?)

#### **Equipment/Facilities**

Does this playground meet your needs?

Does it have enough equipment or the right type of equipment?

Is there anything you’d like to see added or taken away?

#### **Barriers**

I notice there is/are no [benches, bathrooms, drinking fountains, shade, lights, fences, etc). Does this ever cause a problem for you when bringing your child to use this play space?

Do you find the weather to be an obstacle to using this park? (E.g., “too windy”, “no shade”)

Has there ever been an occasion when you wanted to use this park/play area but could not?

Why? [Prompts: too many people using the park/play area, safety, drinking or drug use, gangs or large groups of teenagers, loud music being played, etc.]

## Sample Neighborhood Observation of Parks & Playgrounds Checklist Summary

*Provided here is a very basic example of what a checklist summary might look like. The summaries you create might contain detailed descriptions of the type and quality of equipment and other features of the park or playground.*

### #1 – 100 Community Drive

**Type of Location:** - School grounds  
Playground or Tot lot

**Features:** - Basketball courts (2)  
Rollerblade & bike path  
Wooden jungle gym apparatus with slide & monkey bars  
Swing set  
Tetherball poll  
Garbage bins  
Fenced play area

**Quality of outdoor equipment:**

- Fair – some repairs required and/or not very clean

**Hazards or safety concerns:**

- Wooden play apparatus could be hazardous – breaking and splintering

**Lighting, Shade and Noise Level:**

- Lighting = no lights; street lights only; 'very poor' (1 on 5-point scale)
- Shade = 'very poor' (1 on 5-point scale); no trees
- Noise = 'light – hardly noticeable'

**Location, Access and Traffic Volume:**

- Located on Community Drive (2 lane, bi-directional, moderate traffic) and 1 Street (2 lane, bi-directional, low traffic)
- 30kms Playground Zones clearly posted on both roads
- Crosswalk with lights and school patrols on Community Drive
- Distance to nearest bus stop = '3 – 5 minutes'

**Possible Summer Activities:**

- Playing on jungle gym and equipment
- Basketball
- Rollerblading & bike path

**Possible Winter Activities:**

- Playing on equipment

**Possible Night-time Activities:**

- No lighting for night-time activities

**Activities Observed at the Time of Visit and Comments:**

Two young children (under 6 yrs) playing in snow near playground; making snow angels; adult female supervising play.

## **Appendix H: Tool 3 – Checklist of Other Physical Elements**

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The *Checklist of Other Physical Elements* acts as a supplement to the *Neighborhood Observation of Parks & Playgrounds Checklist*. The tool collects information on other outdoor community elements such as:

- presence of bike paths, golf courses, off leash areas and lakes
- location and content of billboard advertising
- location of pedestrian crossings and bus routes
- type of complaints lodged against parks and recreational facilities
- location and types of housing in the community

### **Data Collection**

Most of the information can be obtained through pre-existing sources, rather than direct observation. For example, bike path, off-leash, and bus stop information is available through the City's Parks & Recreation and Transit departments. To find out any complaints about outdoor and indoor recreational facilities, contact the City Parks and Recreation department, as they document these.

Driving and walking distance information (to major recreational facilities from various points in the community) can be collected through direct observation (i.e. odometer reading on a car) or less precisely by using the distance scale on the Community District Map.

Outdoor advertising requires direct observation, such as by driving or walking around the community. Golf course and Lake Information might be gathered from the collective knowledge of community members, or by phoning the appropriate contacts.

Data collection can be divided up among many people. Anyone with access to transportation can gather data that is collected through direct observation; they can also pick up city maps (e.g., bus route maps; bike path maps. Note: a small fee is charged for each of these). Anyone with the use of a phone can collect the other types of data.

### **Analysis and Use of Results**

These results are best analyzed in conjunction with other tools. For example, information on bike paths, off-leash areas, golf courses, and lakes can supplement the *Neighborhood Observation of Parks & Playgrounds Checklist*. Bus route and driving/walking distance information provides additional knowledge around convenience or accessibility of recreational facilities for community members.

The location and types of housing in a community can also be valuable information. For example, high-density housing areas (e.g., high-rise apartment buildings or townhouse complexes) may be characterized by a high population of residents, but insufficient outdoor green space.

Data collected here can also be visually presented using a community map (see Community Profiler) to highlight findings of interest.

## **Appendix I: Tool 4 – Child and Youth Activity and Nutrition Survey**

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The *Child Activity and Nutrition Survey* Parents and Youth is a self-administered questionnaire either directed to parents or youth in the community. It is not necessary to have both groups complete the survey, as this depends on the community's needs. Both surveys help to identify barriers, needs, and preferences around healthy eating and active living among families (parent's survey) or youth (youth survey). The questionnaires is comprised of three sections:

1. General Information – about the respondent and family.
2. Physical Activity
3. Food and Nutrition

The survey asks for the postal code of the respondents, however this is optional.<sup>6</sup> Inclusion of the postal code may help to identify issues or areas of concern within the community. For example, if there are a large number of respondents from the same area within the community who are indicating that their parks or playgrounds are 'too crowded', then an investigation of strategies for increasing the number of parks and/or playgrounds in that area may be warranted. Furthermore, it can help in making sure that the respondents reside within the community boundary of interest.

### **Data Collection**

Questionnaires can be distributed to individuals or to a group, with each respondent filling out the questionnaire independently. Response rates will be higher if an opportunity for the respondents to fill out the survey at the time that it is handed out is provided, rather than asking them to take it home and return it later. Questionnaires should be accompanied by a cover letter (a sample is included in this appendix) containing the following:

- Purpose of the project – who you are and why you are doing the survey
- Rationale for requesting postal code information, with their consent for the same
- Clear instructions on how you are geographically defining the community for this project<sup>7</sup>

When handing out the questionnaire, inform respondents of the following:

- Review the cover letter (included)
- Approximate time it takes to complete (10-20 minutes)
- They are not obligated to answer any questions they don't wish to answer and can end the survey at any time
- They are not to put any identifying information on the questionnaire (e.g. name, phone number or address, except postal code) so that confidentiality can be maintained
- What they are to do with the completed questionnaire (when/where to return it)

The number of surveys completed will depend upon the number of people there are available to distribute and collect the questionnaires and the goals of your project (e.g. the degree of representation sought). Regardless of how many are collected, do strive for a range of people from different economic and cultural backgrounds, different family structures, and different locations within the community.

Recruit representatives from recreational centres, daycares, schools, churches, and clubs or associations that serve children or families (e.g. Boys and Girls Club; Girl Guides) to help distribute the survey. Offer the representative a brief training session (or a copy of the instructions in this guide), a set of photocopied questionnaires, and instructions for returning the completed survey.

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<sup>6</sup> With few exceptions, a respondent's specific address cannot be determined by postal code.

<sup>7</sup> Community action groups may define the project boundary to extend beyond the named community depending upon regular usage for businesses, facilities, etc.

For representation from families who are not associated with any kind of organization and do not use recreational facilities, enlist the help of any of the following:

- public health nurse or the local community health centre
- local physicians or pediatricians
- food banks
- community social service agencies
- grocery store or shopping mall (ask if shoppers may be approached with a survey or set up a booth in the store).

### **Analysis and Use of Results**

For ease of analysis, we have developed templates for data input and analysis, and can be found on the disk that accompanies this guide. Results are generated in tables, charts or graphs. Open-ended responses can simply be listed by type of response or, if appropriate, they can be ranked by number of respondents who mentioned each; templates for recording these are also included.

The results can then be used to:

- identify what recreational facilities are, or are not, being used
- identify barriers to healthy eating and use of recreational facilities
- find out where parents are getting information about nutrition to identify sources that might be under-utilized
- identify the types of activities that children participate in and prefer
- obtain suggestions for community action that could make food shopping or healthy meal preparation easier or encourage physical activity
- create a vision around possible actions needed in your community

Help with data analysis and interpretation may be available, if needed, from community partners such as your local health region, municipal government and others.

**Child Activity and Nutrition Survey for Parents and Youth**  
(Separate documents, attached)

They can also be found on the disk that accompanies this guide.

## Sample Cover Letter for Child Activity and Nutrition Survey

[Date]

Dear Parents,

The [community name] has partnered with [list your sponsors or partners, if applicable] to promote healthy eating and active living in children. In order to make this project successful, we need your help in completing the attached survey, which will help us understand family preferences, barriers and needs around healthy eating and active living in the community. Please take a few minutes to fill it out – your participation is very important to this project.

As you complete the survey, please answer the questions with these community boundaries in mind:

- [Name of your community] boundaries are [street or avenue] to [street or avenue].
- [Names of major recreational facilities or parks, outside community boundaries, as applicable] can be included for the purposes of answering the survey questions.

Thank you in advance for your time and commitment to the children of your community. Please note that your responses are completely confidential. The postal code is optional, but important for us to confirm that the survey was completed by someone within the [community] boundary, and cannot be linked to any individual or family.

[Your name, optional]

[Name of your action group]

For completing the survey, you have the chance to win [a prize, give details, if applicable]. Please fill out the ballot below and [instructions on where to put the ballot].

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to become more involved in this project, please indicate below (check your option):

- YES, I would like to be involved
- NO, I would not like to be involved at this time

## **Appendix J: Tool 5 – Inventory of Businesses and Organizations**

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The *Inventory of Businesses and Organizations* offers suggestions for creating a list of all nutrition and physical activity related recreational facilities, services, local businesses, community-based organizations, service and non-profit organizations listed below. The inventory also helps to identify resources and potential partners, and may point to gaps in services. It also provides a basis for further investigation through the *Community Programs Survey*.

- grocery and convenience stores
- restaurants
- recreational facilities
- athletic organizations
- community kitchens
- community associations

### **Data Collection**

Information can be collected through a variety of sources, including the *Yellow Pages*, your city's *Community Services Directory*, listings already compiled by local organizations, direct observation, community newsletters or other publications, and word of mouth. For each item, be sure to document the name and address of the business or organization, and offer a brief description (type of service or business). A data analysis template created for this tool can be found on the disk that accompanies this guide.

Any available community member can collect the data. If phone calls are necessary for further clarification, you will want to recruit people who are available during weekdays. Group members with an affiliation to service-based organizations are often a good resource for this exercise as they are already aware of many of the services in the community.

### **Analysis and Use of Results**

The results of the *Inventory of Businesses and Organizations* are compiled into a listing that can be used as follows:

- to identify organizations to contact for the *Community Program Survey*;
- create a listing of community resources that can be posted online or published as a pamphlet or booklet for public use; and
- to identify potential partnerships within the community.

Creating partnerships is one of the key principles of community development. The *Inventory of Businesses and Organizations* supports this by helping individuals and organizations identify potential linkages within the community. Below are a few examples:

- Residents of local seniors' home work with the local church to create and maintain a community garden, where seniors can teach young children gardening skills.
- A local park hosts a healthy eating event. Nutritionist/dietitians offer mini-workshops on healthy eating. Local grocers, bakers and restaurants are invited to provide samples of 'heart smart' food options. Organizations such as the Diabetes Association or the Pork, Beef and Dairy industry are invited to put up booths.
- A performer (or older children and youth) offers to do short skits about healthy food choices for young children.
- A local elementary school (or local childcare facility) works with parents in the area to upgrade a public playground. Residents in the area with building skills volunteer their labor. Local hardware stores and playground equipment retailers donate supplies and offer advice.

The *Inventory* helps groups identify existing resources and think about how they might be connected in a way that will benefit the community and support initiatives around healthy eating and active living.

## Appendix K: Tool 6 – Community Programs Survey

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The *Community Programs Survey* follows from the *Inventory of Businesses and Organizations*, and offers more detailed information about nutrition and activity-based programs and/or services offered by organizations within the community and the surrounding area, when appropriate<sup>8</sup>. Telephone interviews are conducted with representatives from selected agencies and organizations to gather information such as: target groups served, demand levels, services in other languages, accessibility, volunteer staff, program fees and subsidies, and type of organization.

### Data Collection

Using the listing that you compiled from the *Inventory of Businesses and Organizations*, put together a list of agencies or organizations that are likely to be offering some type of nutrition or physical activity programs. These may include recreational programs, active living programs, parent and tot activities, nutritional advice, shopping advice/assistance, food and meal preparation advice, food and nutritional assistance, and transportation assistance. The possibilities are as varied as the organizations that offer them.

Call each of the agencies on the list and ask to speak to the director or supervisor of the program or organizations. Offer your name and your reason for calling, and explain that the interview will only take a few minutes. Then proceed by asking the questions in the *Community Programs Survey* and taking detailed notes. The questions in this tool are offered as a guide. Interviewers should feel free to probe further with other questions as they see fit.

Ideally, try to recruit adults with interviewing experience. If that is not possible, then try to find people with good telephone skills and the ability to quickly write down information.

### Analysis and Use of Results

Begin by generating a chart using *Word* or *Excel* or some other spreadsheet program, and create column headings for each type of information gathered. A template for recording this information has been created using *Word* and can be found on the disk that accompanies this guide. You may want to note details such as availability of services in other languages, availability of fee subsidies, accessibility for disabled persons and any special target groups served. Identify what programs are available and note any potential problems such as accessibility or over-subscription. For example, an organization may offer a physical activity program for preschoolers, but if there are consistently too few spots for the number of interested participants that might signal the need to offer or create more programs of this type. This information can then be offered publicly through a pamphlet, newsletter or a web site.

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<sup>8</sup> Community action groups may define the project boundary to extend beyond the named community depending upon regular usage for businesses, facilities, etc.

**Community Programs Survey**

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***Interviewer please complete***

Start time: \_\_\_\_\_ am or pm

End time: \_\_\_\_\_ am or pm

Date: Day \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's Name & Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**[Interviewer please read]**

Hi. My name is ..... and I am working on a project initiated by [name of project or group]. The [name of project or group] is a [describe group and affiliates]. The [name of project or group] has been formed to help encourage Active Healthy Living among children and their families in the community of [name of community].

This survey is being conducted to collect information about the various programs and services related to nutrition and physical activity that are available to children and their families within this area. With this information, we hope to help people in our community contribute to the nutritional health and physical fitness of their children. May we ask you some questions about your organization?

***Background Information:***

Name of organization/agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name (and title): \_\_\_\_\_

Address (include postal code): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. What is the main client group served by your program or organization? (Mark one only)**

- General population
- Primarily a prenatal program
- Children (birth to 6 years)
- Children (7 years and older)
- Parents/caregivers
- Other – please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Do you provide programs or services related to nutrition or physical fitness for children and/or their families?**

- No (OUT OF SCOPE. END SURVEY AND THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR TIME.)
- Yes

**3. Could you provide me with a description of the programs or services you offer related to nutrition or physical fitness for children and/or their families? [Use back of questionnaire or other paper if needed] (Request brochure or program listing if available)**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 4. Are there any specific groups for whom this [program/service] is targeted?**  
 [DO NOT READ LIST, except as prompt if needed] (Mark all that apply)
- Mothers
  - Aboriginal children/families
  - Low income children/families
  - Immigrant and refugee families
  - Specific language and/or cultural groups – please specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - Parents with disabilities – please specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - Children with special needs – please specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - Single parent families
  - Other – please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. How often do you feel this [program/service] adequately reaches the clients for whom it is intended?** (Mark one only)
- Almost always
  - Often
  - Sometimes
  - Don't know
- 6. How has the demand for this [program/service] changed over the past 1-2 years? Would you say demand has decrease significantly, slightly decreased, slightly increase, increased significantly or there has been no change in demand:**
- Decreased significantly
  - Slightly decreased
  - No change
  - Slightly increased
  - Increased significantly
- 7. Over the past 12 months, how often has this [program/service] been running at full capacity (i.e., all available spots in the program are taken)? I am going to read you a list of possible answers. (Please choose only one)**
- All or almost all the time
  - More than half the time
  - About half the time
  - Less than half the time
  - Never or almost never
- 8. Is there a waiting list to access this [program/service]?**
- Yes (if yes, go to 8b)
  - No (if no, go to 9)
- 8b. What is the average waiting time for enrolment?** \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Do you offer your services in languages other than English?** (Mark one only)
- No, and no interpreter is available
  - No, but an interpreter is available
  - Yes, please specify language (s) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Is the location in which this [program/service] is being offered ...** (Mark all that apply)
- Accessible by public transportation (e.g. bus)
  - Accessible by disabled persons (e.g. wheelchairs)
  - Accessibility not relevant (e.g. worker travels to meet client, such as in-home visits)

**11. Are you aware of any physical barriers or social barriers that may prevent families from accessing this program or service (please specify):**

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**12. [If appropriate ask] Do you offer any food services or meals for your clients?**

- No
- Yes (GO TO 12b.)

**12b. Please describe the type of food service offered and any guidelines you have in place.**

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**13. [CHILDCARE FACILITIES ONLY] Do you offer daily physical activity, active playtime, walks or outings for your clients?**

- No
- Yes (GO TO 13b.)

**13b. Please describe the type of activities offered.**

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**14. In terms of program implementation, could you tell me approximately what percentage is supported by volunteers. (Mark one only)**

- None
- Less than 25%
- 25-49%
- 50-74%
- 75-99%
- 100%

**15. Do you charge a fee for this [program/service]? (Mark one only)**

- Yes (IF YES, GET FEE INFORMATION) \_\_\_\_\_
- No (IF NO, GO TO 17)

**16. Are any of the participants' fees financially subsidized? (Mark one only)**

- Yes
- No (IF NO, GO TO 17)

**17. On average, what proportion of this program's clients use subsidies? (Mark one only)**

- Almost all or all
- More than half
- Half
- Less than half
- Almost none or none

17b. What facilities are available and is there a fee to use them?

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18. [If appropriate ask] Does your organization have any meeting rooms or recreational space available for use by community groups or the public?

- No
- Yes (GO TO 17b.)

19. Which of the following best applies to this program or organization? (Please choose one only)

- Government sponsored
- Private
- Non-profit/charity
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

20. Are you aware of any other organizations in this community that offer programs or services related to physical activity or nutrition for children and their families? (Please specify).

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**Additional Comments:**

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**We have reached the end of this interview. I just have one final question.**

**Consent for Publication of Information Provided**

As stated earlier, the [name of project or group] was initiated to encourage healthy eating and active lifestyles among children and their families. The [name of project or group] is compiling a list of all the programs and services related to nutrition and physical activity that are available to children and families in this area. A comprehensive list of these programs and services will ensure that when families need information about available programs and services they will be able to choose the one that best meets their individual needs and circumstances.

We are planning to produce a [type of document] with information about these programs and services and would like to include your organization. The [type of document] would be made available to interested community organizations and individuals. And, prior to publication of this [type of document] we would send you a draft copy for your approval.

May we include information about your organization in our [type of document]?

- Yes (IF YES, CONFIRM ADDRESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION)
  
- No (IF NO, ASK IF THEY WOULD AGREE TO ALLOW US TO SIMPLY LIST THEIR ORGANIZATION NAME, ADDRESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION)

**THANK PARTICIPANT FOR THEIR TIME AND ASSISTANCE.**

## Appendix L: Tool 7 – Community Skills Checklist

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The *Community Skills Checklist* is designed to help community groups identify skilled volunteers for a specific project and determine whether or not a sufficient resource base exists within the community. For instance, the *Community Skills Checklist* can help identify people with the ability to build an outdoor skating rink, repair playground equipment, offer healthy eating workshops, or start a community kitchen. The *Community Skills Checklist* asks individual community members to identify skills and abilities that they may wish to contribute to a particular community action project. These skills may have been learned from experience in the home, with their family, at church, in the community, or on the job.

A number of cases in which the use of community members' skills may be necessary or may expedite the solution to a problem, for example:

- If an organization responsible for a particular resource (e.g., a community playground or tot-lot) is not able to maintain that resource due to lack of funds or manpower
- If a new resource requires community support for its construction and ongoing maintenance in order to make it happen (e.g., an outdoor skating rink)
- If a community action group wishes to build a new community garden or expand on an existing community garden
- If a community action group wishes to organize a community event such as a garden market or children's festival in a local park
- If a community action group finds a need for increased outdoor physical activity programs (e.g., drop-in programs) for children in that community and needs volunteers to organize or administer the program (e.g., youth or seniors supervising children's play activities or teaching dance to preschoolers in the park)
- If a community action group wants to start a community kitchen or healthy eating/cooking group
- If a community action group wants to offer presentations or workshops about healthy eating or nutrition for young children and finds that there are people in the community qualified to run these workshops and willing to volunteer their time.

The categories included in the *Community Skills Checklist* include: general construction, repair and maintenance skills, food and nutritional skills, supervision, and organizational skills, skills related to activities for children, language skills, and general community organizational, or volunteer skills. Any of these can be omitted or adapted to better suit a particular project.

### Data Collection

This tool is not designed to produce tabulated results of any kind. Rather, it is intended to help identify people within the community who might be willing and able to help with a specific project. The tool can only be used once a project has been identified and planned (e.g., resources required, funds available, number of people required, start date, timelines for completion, etc.). Identify the types of skills needed and select the applicable skills from the checklist. Then write up a detailed description, including:

- description of the project
- benefits of the project to the community and to the volunteer
- timelines
- number of volunteers
- role of volunteers
- approximate number of hours required (people are more likely to participate if they know exactly what is expected of them and how much time they need to commit)
- name(s) of project organizers and affiliates
- any honoraria or gifts that are being offered (e.g., gift certificates or recreation centre passes), if applicable

- contact information
- deadline

Once the *Community Skills Checklist* has been adapted to the project and a description of the undertaking has been written up, begin using the *Community Skills Checklist* to recruit volunteers in the community.

Distribute the *Community Skills Checklist* in several different ways; choose the method(s) that are best for the project. The easiest way is probably to use the network of contacts already available within the action group. For example, community and service organizations can give them to their clients; daycare centres can give them to parents; church leaders can give them to their congregation; existing community groups such as Scouts or Girl Guides or local community associations can give them to their membership. Other suggestions include:

- Advertising in a local community newsletter or other publication which is distributed to all households in the community (preferably one that is free and offers free or low cost advertising space).
- Posting notices at local message boards such as at the library, local recreational facility, churches, shopping centres or grocery stores.
- Dropping off or mailing notices to homes in the whole community or within a specific area (e.g. within reasonable walking)
- Group members can take it to neighbors, for example, or ask permission to set up an information table at the local grocery store or at a distance from a playground that needs repair or upgrading.

### **Analysis and Use of Results**

Like the *Inventory of Businesses and Organizations*, the results from the *Community Skills Checklist* are not analyzed but are simply compiled for immediate or future use. For instance, if equipment in a particular playground were in need of repair, the *Community Skills Checklist* would be used to identify volunteers within the community who can help to repair it. In this case skills might include carpentry, painting, general handiwork, fundraising, and collecting in-kind donations from local hardware or paint supply stores. A data analysis template can be found on the disk that accompanies this guide.

## Appendix M: Sample Community Action Plan and Guide

### **Sample Action Plan for Healthy Eating & Activity Living Section in the Local Newsletter**

1. Why is there a need for this program in the community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Survey results and focus group feedback suggested a need for nutrition information, recipes, and kids information.</li> <li>- The local newsletter can be used to advertise HEAL and other healthy eating and active living events in the community.</li> </ul>
2. What do you hope to achieve through the program? Briefly describe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To utilize existing resources found in the community, health region, province etc. in providing information to community members about healthy eating and active living.</li> <li>- The local newsletter is well read in the community and could become both an educational and interactive forum around healthy eating and active living issues.</li> </ul>
3. What group of community people will this program serve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All community members including adults, children and youth.</li> </ul>
4. What activities/events are planned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monthly submissions to the local newsletter with various topics around healthy eating and active living</li> <li>- Contests</li> <li>- Question and answer forum</li> <li>- Advertising of HEAL or community events that promote healthy eating and active living.</li> </ul>
5. What resources are needed to make the activities/events possible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Articles, recipes, web sites from health region staff, community members, HEAL members.</li> <li>- Article reprints of topics of interest, food industry information as deemed appropriate (recipes, etc.)</li> <li>- Contest prizes.</li> <li>- Stipends for articles written by special request.</li> </ul>
6. What is the cost of resources needed to implement the activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prizes [budget]</li> <li>- Stipends [budget]</li> </ul>
7. Who will be involved in the planning and implementation of the activities/events?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HEAL Action Group members will take the lead in co-ordination of the materials.</li> <li>- CHR, community members (both laypersons and those with specific expertise), businesses with healthy eating and active living interests.</li> </ul>
8. What is the timeframe?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Articles will be submitted monthly from February to December 2004 as part of this action plan.</li> <li>- It is hoped that this portion of the project continues as a regular feature in the local newsletter.</li> </ul>

<p>9. How will you know your activities have been successful?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submissions by community members and local businesses.</li> <li>- Number of entries to contests.</li> <li>- Needs assessments and evaluations done through the local newsletter and collected via the HEAL email address.</li> <li>- Increased interest in HEAL initiatives – participation and active volunteerism.</li> </ul>
<p>10. How do you plan to continue once start-up activities are completed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue monthly submissions.</li> <li>- Designate a sub-committee within the HEAL Action group to coordinate the collection and submission of articles from appropriate sources.</li> </ul>

**Community Action Plan Guide**

1. Why is there a need for this program in the community?	
2. What do you hope to achieve through the program? Briefly describe.	
3. What group of community people will this program serve?	
4. What activities/events are planned in order to meet #2?	
5. What resources are needed to make the activities/events possible (e.g. supplies, people, etc.)?	
6. What is the cost of resources needed to implement the activities?	
7. Who will be involved in the planning and implementation of the activities/events (e.g. agencies, volunteers, etc.)?	
8. What is the timeframe?	

<p>9. How will you know your activities have been successful (e.g. # of participants, increased # volunteers, # of new programs, etc.)?</p>	
<p>10. How do you plan to continue once the start-up activities are completed?</p>	
<p>11. What did you do to involve the community at large? How did you involve them in the planning and execution of the 'program'? How many members were actually involved?</p>	

## Appendix N: Sample Survey for Community Events

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Thank you for attending this event. Please take a moment to complete this survey. Your comments will help guide our planning of future events.

1. How did you find out about this event?  
 School    Newsletter    Poster    Flyer    Friend    Other
- 

2. Tell us about you. Did you come to this event:  
 Alone    With family members    With friends

How many people in your group attended this event: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the ages of the people in your group that attended this event (check all that apply):

0-5 years    6-11 years    12-14 years    15-17 years    18+ years    25+ years

3. Have you heard about [the name of your action group or project]?  
 Yes    No    Unsure

If yes, how did you hear about us?

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4. How would you rate the length of the event?  
 Too long    Just right    Too short

5. Did you enjoy the snacks provided?  
 Yes    No    Unsure

6. Did you enjoy the activities?  
 Yes    No    Unsure

If yes, what activities did you take part in?

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7. Did you visit the booths and displays?  
 Yes    No

Did you find these useful?

Yes    No    Unsure

Which ones did you find useful?

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8. What was the highlight of this event?
- 
-

9. Do you have any other comments or suggestions for future events?

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**DOOR PRIZE!** Please give your name and phone number for the DRAW:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be more involved in this exciting project?       Yes       No