

# Improving Access to Recreation: A Collaborative Approach

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Presented at: 2008 Public Health Summit

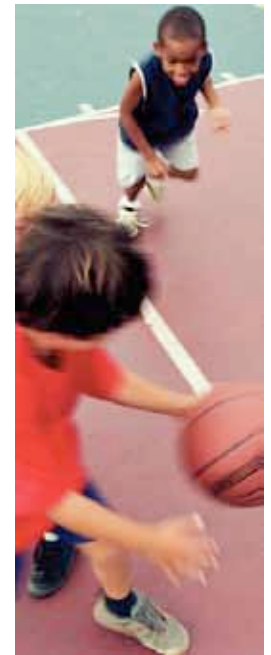
**Howie Dayton**, Chair, Ontario Task Group on  
Access to Recreation for Low-Income Families

Larry Stinson, OPHA Board Member

# The Issue

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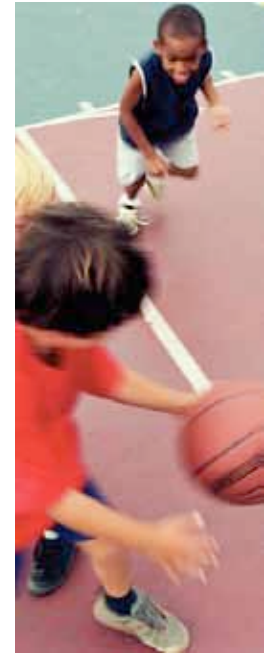
- A multitude of barriers to participation in community recreation exist in Ontario – user fees, infrastructure, community access to schools, transportation, complex subsidy approaches, cultural exclusion, to name just a few



# The Case for Recreation

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



# Why Recreation Saves Money

Recreation/Child Care Pays for Itself by Reductions:

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

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

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

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

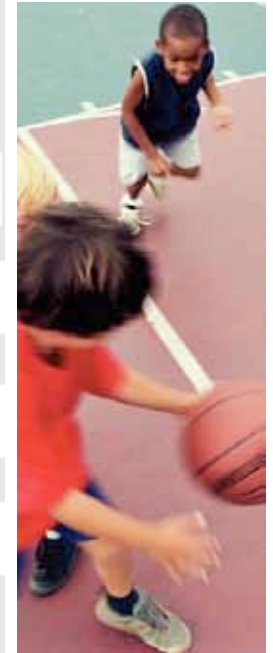
$\frac{1}{2}$  the use of 911 Services

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

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

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

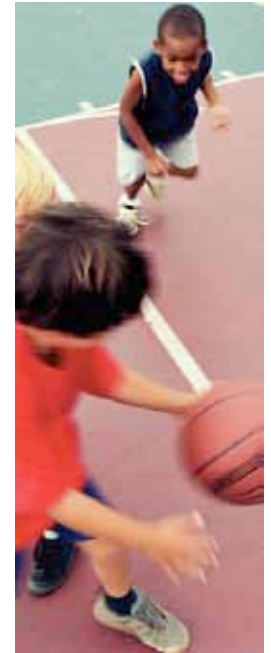
$\frac{1}{2}$  the use of Chiropractors



# Background

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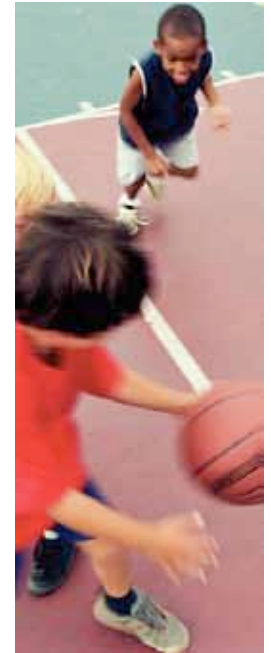
- **2000** Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) Position on Access to Recreation
- **2005** National Policy on Access to Recreation (CPRA)
- **2006** PRO resolution to support access policy development
  - > *formation of the Ontario Task Group*



# The Task Group

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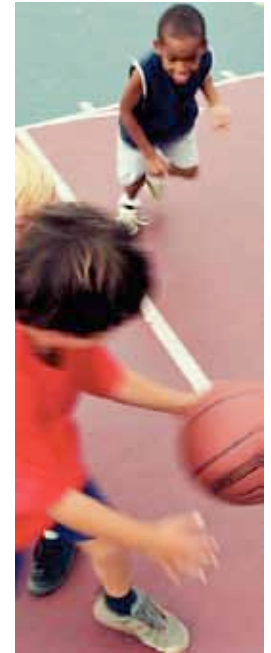
- ❑ **Broad coalition:** provincial, municipal, non-profit, corporate, advocacy
- ❑ **Belief:** Innovative approaches should be taken to ensure that *Every One Plays*
- ❑ Aspire to a collaborative relationship with the provincial government



# A Strategy Grounded in Research

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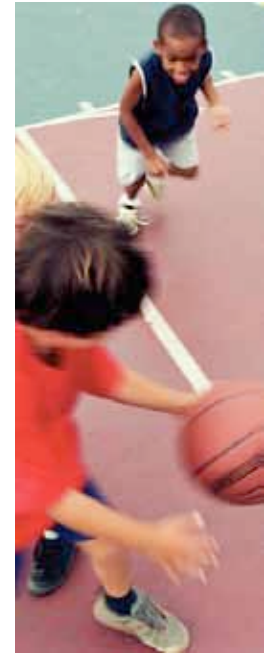
- ❑ 2 provincial surveys on access policies (municipal and non-profit)
- ❑ Research Summary Report
- ❑ Promising Practices Booklet
- ❑ Provincial Policy Planning Institute Nov/07
- ❑ Policy Framework Nov/08



# Planning for a Provincial Framework

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- Policy Planning Institute validated the need for a comprehensive strategy
  
- Eight policy and action themes identified in a future plan of action:
  - Reducing user fees
  - Ensuring sustainable funding
  - Creating the necessary infrastructure – high risk communities
  - Outreach strategies to marginalized populations

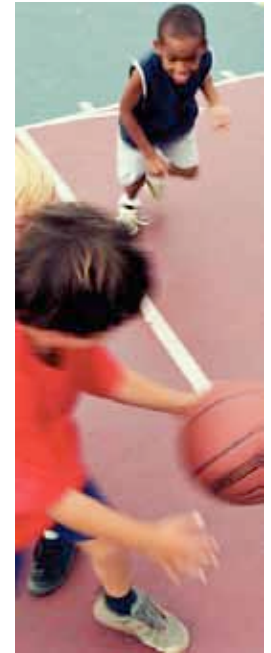


# Planning for a Provincial Framework

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Eight policy and action themes identified in a future plan of action cont'd.:

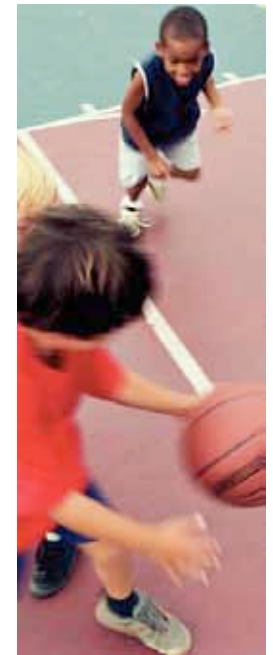
- Community and youth engagement approaches
- Balance tax credits with targeted access funding programs
- Creating community hubs – schools must partner in these approaches
- Creating passive spaces for informal and free recreation



# Potential Policy Directions

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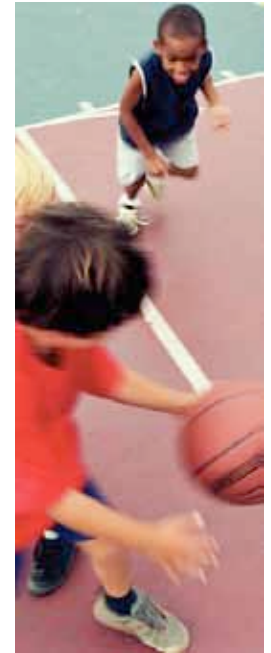
- ❑ Integrated program funding
- ❑ Multi-year access funding to support local initiatives
- ❑ Implementation and awareness of local access policies
- ❑ Expand community access to schools to other community spaces



# Potential Policy Directions cont.

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- ❑ Youth outreach and engagement
- ❑ Support research and performance measures
- ❑ Balance tax credits with targeted access funding/programs
- ❑ Support infrastructure investment in sport and recreation – underserved/high risk communities

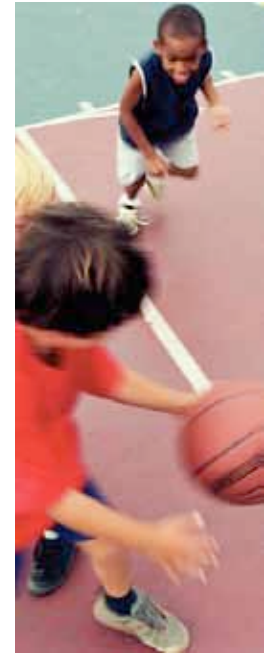


# A Partnership Approach

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Recreation not just a municipality issue

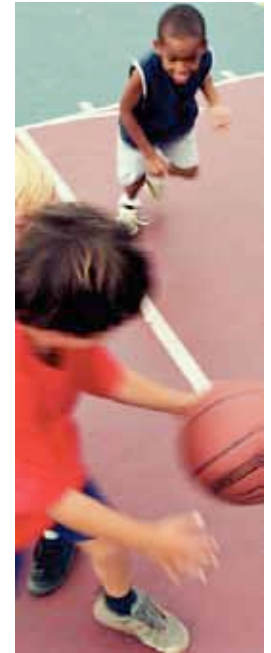
- Social Services
- Mental Health
- Private and Not-for-Profit Recreation
- Child and Youth services
- Education
- NGO's
- Public Health



# Why a Public Health Issue

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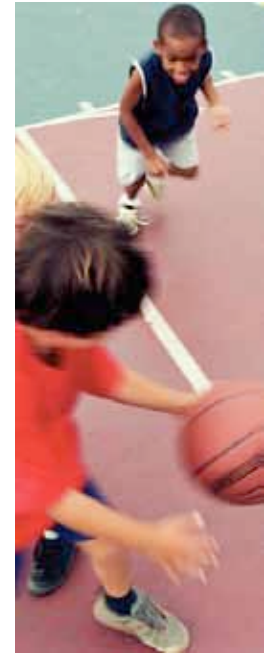
- Healthy Eating Active Living Strategy
- Obesity Strategy
- Poverty Strategy
- Violence Prevention Strategy



# Why a Public Health Issue

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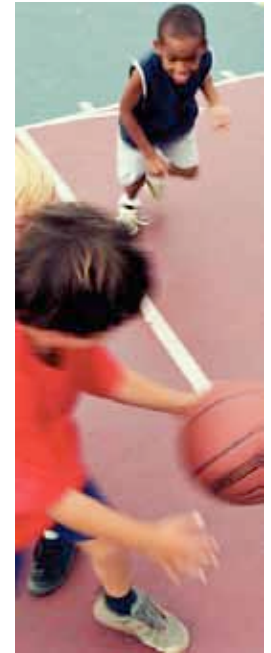
- Recreation and health link
- Foundational Standard
- Chronic Disease Prevention Standard
- Child Health Standard



# Why a Policy Focus

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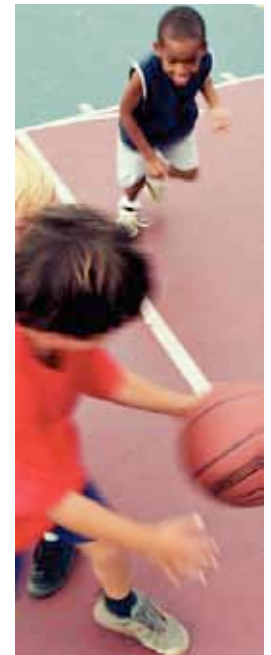
- Only 35% of municipalities have approved and published access policies
- Cost pressures cited as the single greatest barrier to implementing an access policy
- Pressures to increase cost recovery experienced by 62% of municipalities
- Evidence of need and impact exists



# Provincial to Local Focus

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- Use Tools & Best Practice Resources
- Find out what exists
- Establish/Join/Expand Partnerships
- Integrate into plans for CDP
- Advocate for small and big changes



Thank you!

