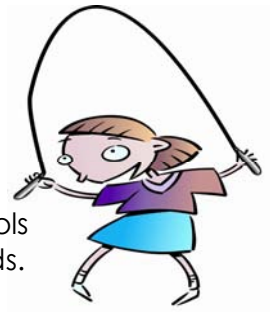


Playground Activity Leaders in Schools - P.A.L.S.

“Playground play should be for everyone.” This was the belief of the Canadian Intramural Recreation Association in 1998 when they first introduced a playground leadership guide. Since that time, many schools and health departments have adapted the program to meet their needs.



P.A.L.S. is a playground leadership program that encourages all children to participate in activities regardless of their gender, size, or ability. P.A.L.S. was developed after a review of existing playground leadership programs and consultation with other health departments.

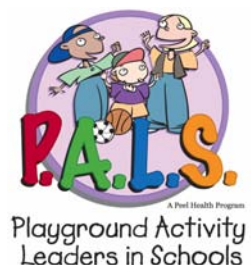
The **objectives** of the program are to:

- Increase physical activity
- Decrease conflict and reduce the incidence of playground bullying
- Provide a leadership opportunity for students

A Public Health Nurse trains staff and students to implement the program. School staff supervise the program with the Public Health Nurse providing ongoing support. Students in grades 4 - 6 with leadership qualities are trained to act as playground activity leaders for younger students. These students will plan and lead fun and safe activities on the playground.

Feedback from participating schools indicates that the program has been very well-received and successful.

- 55% of program supervisors felt that student activity levels had increased “somewhat” and 40% reported activity levels as having increased “very much”.
- 81% of supervisors felt that inappropriate verbal behaviour had decreased “somewhat” or “very much.” 89% felt that inappropriate physical behaviour had decreased “somewhat” or “very much.”
- 87% of P.A.L.S. student leaders would recommend being a leader to others.
- Student comments include:
“You can be leaders in the school and set a good example for the younger people.”
“I learned about how much exercise you can get by playing the games.”
“We can make bullying stop if we do this every year.”



Program Implementation

School meeting

A Peel Health Public Health Nurse (PHN) will meet with the principal and/or vice-principal to provide an overview of the program and secure support for program implementation.

Solicit and meet with supervisors

The PHN is available to provide a presentation to staff. Two or three school staff are required to oversee the program. A training session, along with a Supervisor Handbook, is provided for those who volunteer to be P.A.L.S. supervisors.

Leader selection

The P.A.L.S. leaders are chosen generally from grades 4-6 students. Students are provided with a P.A.L.S. application form and parental permission form.

Leader training

Training is approximately 3-4 hours with an initial training day of two and half hours plus a follow-up lunch meeting. Each student receives a Leader Handbook. Training sessions cover:

- Safety on the playground
- Qualities of a leader and leadership styles
- Communication skills
- Games
- Conflict Resolution



Launch the program

The program and P.A.L.S. leaders can be introduced at an assembly. Participating students are then introduced to the program and games.

Evaluation

Peel Health will seek feedback from the P.A.L.S. leaders and supervisors at the end of the school year to assist in continuous program improvement.

Equipment

Minimal equipment is required to get started. Skipping ropes, an assortment of soft balls, jumpsie/Yogi ropes, kerchief or plush toys, marbles, jacks and smooth stones (optional), whistles and a bag(s) or back pack(s) to store the equipment are all that is needed.

Games

P.A.L.S. leaders are taught skipping, tag, and ball games. Other options can include jumpsie or Yogi ropes and marbles and jacks. The leaders often choose to lead games that the students make up or know themselves.

**If your school is interested in P.A.L.S., please contact your
Public Health Nurse.**