EVIDENCE-INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS

Tips and Tricks for Developing and Disseminating Physical Activity Information for Families of Children with Disabilities

ACTIVE LIVING ALLIANCE FOR CANADIANS WITH A DISABILITY
ALLIANCE DE VIE ACTIVE POUR LES CANADIENS AYANT UN HANDICAP
cdpp
Canadian Disability Participation Project
Le projet canadien sur la participation sociale des personnes en situation de handicap

GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

Physical activity through play, sport, and active transportation offers many physical, social and mental health benefits to children and youth with disabilities (CYWD). However, a **lack of accessible and relevant physical activity information is a known barrier to physical activity participation among CYWD and a common source of frustration among parents**. As a first step in addressing this barrier, a set of evidence-based recommendations were established to assist organizations in developing and disseminating physical activity information targeting families of CYWD.

SCOPE & PURPOSE

The recommendations were developed for use by any organization that works to promote, support or deliver physical activity for CYWD.

The recommendations are intended to help promote and support physical activity among CYWD through sharing helpful or motivating information with parents or caregivers.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS HELP ADDRESS...

- What **physical activity information** should organizations provide to families of CYWD?
- What **motivational physical activity messages** should organizations provide to families of CYWD?
- How can organizations **best disseminate** physical activity information to families of CYWD?

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 5 recommendations are listed below. Not all the recommendations may be relevant to the missions and values of your organization, therefore, you may choose to focus on the ones that are most relevant to your organization. **If you are curious about how the recommendations were developed, please refer to Appendix A.**

Provide families of CYWD with...

#1. Language & Definitions

- Clear and consistent definitions of terms such as physical activity, adapted, accessible, integrated, and inclusive.

#2. Physical Activity Program Information

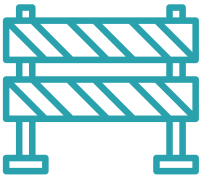
- Clear and detailed information about your physical activity programs, staff and facilities.

#3. Benefits of Supporting Physical Activity

- Information about the specific benefits of supporting physical activity for children and youth with disabilities.

#4. Ideas, Tools & Resources

- Ideas, tools and resources to support physical activity participation, goal setting, planning and progress.



#5. Information to Address Barriers

- Information regarding strategies to help address barriers to physical activity participation among children and youth with disabilities.

#1. Language & Definitions

Clear and consistent definitions of terms such as physical activity, adapted, accessible, integrated, and inclusive.

- To address this need, we recommend that your organization use and apply clear and consistent definitions when using terms such as **accessibility**, **adapted**, and/or **inclusive** physical activity.
- Below, is a glossary of terms with suggested definitions that any organization can use when communicating physical activity information targeting families of CYWD.

ac·ces·si·bl-i-ty

\ ik- ˌse- sə- ˈbi- lə- tē\

Accessibility is: information, products, services, and spaces that have the flexibility to accommodate each person's needs and preferences, or that anyone can use without the need for adaptation.

A program is accessible if...

- ✓ Information about the program is provided in different formats (e.g., text, images, audio).
- ✓ The facility is safely and easily accessible for participants' mobility needs (e.g., facility that is spacious, well-lit, free of obstructions, and has elevators and/ or ramps).
- ✓ Specialized or adaptable forms of equipment are available or provided (e.g., sports chairs, beeper balls, Velcro grips for dumbbells, adjustable nets).

adapt· ed

\ ə-ˈdap-təd \

Adapted is: changing or modifying activities, instructions, equipment and/ or environments to facilitate physical activity participation across a wide range of abilities.

A program is adapted if...

- ✓ Volunteers and staff are attentive to the needs, abilities, and interests of participants.
- ✓ Volunteers and staff are capable of knowing when and how to appropriately modify activities, instructions, and equipment to match the abilities of participants.
- ✓ The social and physical environment can be altered to meet the specific needs and abilities of participants.

in·clu·sive

\ in-ˈklü-siv \

Inclusive is: activities, programs, events, or roles in which everyone can participate and contribute to the fullest extent possible.

A program is inclusive if...

- ✓ It is developmentally appropriate and celebrates individual differences between participants.
- ✓ It provides equal opportunities for everyone to participate and contribute in similar capacities or roles regardless of ability.
- ✓ It does not relegate anyone to a single position or role based on their ability to participate in a given task. Instead, it provides the appropriate accommodations to ensure that equal opportunities for participation are available to everyone.

KEEP IN MIND!

If your organization already has clear definitions of these terms then that is great! Just ensure they are consistently applied in all communications.

#2. Physical Activity Program Information

Clear and detailed information about your physical activity programs, staff and facilities.

- This information may help to address some of the barriers that parents of CYWD face when looking for information about physical activity programming.
- This information can enable parents to support their child's physical activity engagement.
- Below is a checklist that your organization can use when creating or evaluating sources of information about physical activity and programming for CYWD. Be sure to check out the Tips and Tricks!

WHO

- ***Authorship***

☐ Name of and background information on your organization, including your mission statements and values regarding inclusion, as well as information regarding any funding sources or sponsors.

☐ Clear and up to date contact information that is easily accessible to parents.

- ***Staff***

☐ Credentials, training, experience, and certificates should be clearly stated

Tips and Tricks:

- Provide contact information in various ways (e.g., phone number, email, social media so parents have different communication options).
- As appropriate, include contact information for staff that are involved in programs relevant to parents of CYWD or supervise the programs directly.

WHAT

- ***Program Description***

- [ ] Description of specific activities (e.g., type of activity, level of integration, eligibility, level of challenge).
- [ ] Program reviews from parents of CYWD.
- [ ] Specific supports that are available to CYWD and/or parents of CYWD.
- [ ] Cost of program, including any information regarding available subsidies or relevant governmental finical support.

Tips and Tricks:

- Use images and videos of your programs so parents can better understand the activities and determine if they are appropriate for their child.
- Be detailed when describing the program! Provide as much information as possible regarding program structure and duration.

WHERE

- ***Program Location***

- [ ] Description of facilities, including location (e.g., address), safety features, accessibility features, and any support or specialized equipment available.
- [ ] Transportation information (e.g., bus stops, train stations, transit).

Tips and Tricks:

- Include a link or image of your facility's location on a map (e.g. using Google maps). Consider including information about public transit (e.g., nearest bus stops), parking, or shuttle services as appropriate.

WHEN

- ***Program Schedule and Timing***

☐ Clear schedule of when and where programs will take place. (e.g., specific dates/times, duration and location).

- ***Information Monitoring***

☐ Include a date to indicate when the information was last updated.

Tips and Tricks:

- Ensure information is accurate, consistently monitored and updated to provide the most current information available.

HOW

- ***Organization and Presentation of Information***

☐ Incorporate inclusive images (e.g., diverse abilities) in the design of information resources.

☐ Adhere to provincial guidelines regarding accessible information (e.g., Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act: https://www.aoda.ca/the-act/).

☐ Make information easy to find and access.

For Website/Online Sources

☐ Navigation should be simple and clear.

☐ Implement a search feature so parents can use familiar terms (e.g., type of physical activity, their child's disability, adapted or inclusive) to quickly find relevant information about available programs

For Print Sources

☐ Create a separate section for programs relevant to parents of CYWD.

Tips and Tricks:

- Engage your audience! Seek feedback from parents to better understand their needs and how your organization can help them support their child's physical activity participation.
- Connect with community organizations that target CYWD and their families to help disseminate program information to parents of CYWD.
- If available, provide references for information to improve the credibility of information you are providing.

#3. Benefits of Supporting Physical Activity

Information about the specific benefits of supporting physical activity for children and youth with disabilities.

- Providing this information can help to motivate parents of CYWD to provide support for their child's physical activity.
- Below, is a list of benefits associated with parent physical activity support and physical activity participation among CYWD, along with targeted messages that speak to some of these benefits. Feel free to use these or create your own!

What are the benefits of parent support for physical activity?

Here are just some of the many benefits! There are also example messages provided that your organization can use in communications with parents.

PARENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SUPPORT *CAN...*		EXAMPLE MESSAGE

Child Centered Benefits	• Enhance the likelihood that CYWD:
	  ◦ Meet the recommended physical activity guidelines
	  ◦ Experience benefits associated with regular physical activity participation
	  ◦ Achieve their goals
	• Teach healthy habits and the value of an active lifestyle
	• Promote inclusion and safety
		Parents are their child's best advocate!
		By communicating your child's strengths and needs with program providers, you can promote a physical activity environment that it inclusive and safe.

Parent Centered Benefits	• Provide opportunities to socialize with other parents of CYWD • Free up time and allow parents to take a break • Enable parents to experience the benefits of physical activity through shared participation	***By supporting your child, you are taking care of yourself!*** Engaging in physical activity alongside your child can offer a wide range of benefits including improved mood, energy levels, patience, and sleep.
Family Centered Benefits	• Offer an outlet for quality time and improve connectedness • Develop structured family routines • Create opportunities for the whole family to set physical activity goals	***Get active together and be proud of your shared achievements!*** When parents support their child's physical activity, they give the whole family meaningful goals to work toward together.

#4 Ideas, Tools & Resources

Ideas, tools and resources to support physical activity participation, goal setting, planning and progress.

- Providing this information to parents of CYWD can help make physical activity more achievable
- Below, is a curated list of strategies that any organization can use to support parents of CYWD with goal setting, planning, and monitoring, along with some examples of ways that parents can provide physical activity support. **A list of suggested tools and resources can be found on page 16.**

SET INTENTIONS

Goal setting *is a great place to start because it helps guide and motivate the attention and efforts of parents so they can effectively support and promote their child's physical activity.*

Some ways <u>your organization</u> can support parents in their goal setting:

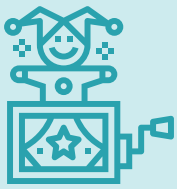
1. Provide parents with information about the physical activity guidelines.
2. Educate parents about how to set SMART goals.
3. Direct parents to tools and resources that can support their goal setting .

Calendars and logbooks *make great planning tools.*

MAKE A PLAN

Some ways <u>your organization</u> can support parents in their planning:

1. Teach parents about how to make a good plan.
2. Direct parents to tools and resources that can support their planning like, calendars, logbooks, or ideas.
3. Provide messages that encourage parents to engage in planning behaviours. For example:
   - *"Planning is a great way to create routine and consistency, making physical activity more achievable for the whole family!"*



HAVE A BACK-UP PLAN

Not only is it important for parents to plan the details of their child's physical activity, but they should also ***anticipate and plan*** *for possible challenges or interruptions.*

Some ways <u>your organization</u> can help parents plan for the unexpected:

1. Encourage parents to brain-storm potential challenges and some strategies to overcome them.
2. *If-Then Planning:* IF the weather is bad, THEN the kids will engage in indoor activities (e.g., play hide-and-seek, target games, mini sticks)

KEEP TRACK

Monitoring *can help parents get a sense of what is or isn't working and inform adjustments they may need to make to their child's physical activity plans.*

Some ways <u>your organization</u> can help parents monitor their child's physical activity:

1. Encourage parents to keep an activity log to track their child's activity level, progress, goal achievements, and mood.

KEEP IN MIND!

- **Check-out the links on page 16 for tools and resources** that can be shared with parents to help support physical activity goal setting, planning, and monitoring!

#5 Information to Address Barriers

Information regarding strategies to help address barriers to physical activity participation among children and youth with disabilities.

- Providing this information can help parents navigate barriers to supporting their child's physical activity.
- Below, is a list of common barriers to physical activity participation among CYWD. We provide suggestions of strategies that your organization can adopt to help parents of CYWD overcome these barriers.

Physical & Emotional Safety

Parents of CYWD express concern over their child's physical and emotional safety during physical activity.

How Can <u>Your Organization</u> Help?

- **Empower parents to make an informed decision!** Provide clear and detailed information about your organization, staff, and programming so that parents can feel confident knowing that the program they choose is best suited for their child's needs, abilities, and interests. **Refer back to Recommendation #2.**
- **Communicate well and communicate often!** Below are some suggested conversation prompts for frequent staff-parent communication:
  - Ask about the child's enjoyment or mood before/following a session.
  - How is the child discussing their relationship with peers or teammates?
  - Are the parent and child satisfied with the program?
  - What can be improved upon to enhance the child's experience?
- **Safety is no accident!** Frequently audit your facility and check for any issues that may impede accessibility. Refer to the Accessibility Ontario Act for a comprehensive list of accessibility standards.

Tips and Tricks:

- If you don't see parents at pick-up and drop-off, consider sending an e-newsletter to communicate effectively!

Program & Equipment Cost

The cost of adapted programs and specialized equipment is a barrier to physical activity participation for CYWD. Parents also experience difficulties finding information related to program costs and financial support.

How Can Your Organization Help?

- **Be transparent!** Provide information about the costs associated with programs and ensure that this information easy to find. If your organization offers financial support, make it known to parents and ensure the application process is easy to navigate.
- **Being active does not need to break the bank!** Provide parents of CYWD with low- or no-cost physical activity suggestions. **Refer to page 16 for some physical activity ideas.**
- **Offer ways to cut-down costs!** Fundraising events, equipment "swaps", and gently used equipment donations are great ways to help cut down costs. Consider curating a list of organizations where parents can seek financial support. **Check-out page 16 for some ideas!**

Finding Time

Parents of CYWD have *a lot* on the go! Finding time to plan for their child's physical activity can be a big source of stress among parents of CYWD.

How Can Your Organization Help?

- **Make it a family thing!** Consider providing open gym times, family nights, or guided family activities.
- **Plan it! !** Planning can help take the stress out of finding time for physical activity. To support parents of CYWD in planning for their child's physical activity, **refer to Recommendation #4.**
- **The power of play!** Inform parents of opportunities for their child to engage in unstructured physical activity. Some ideas include, going for a walk, bike or roll, having a dance party, and playing a game of tag or hide-and-seek. **Additional ideas can be found on page 16.**

"How To" Guide for Physical Activity Support

Here are some examples your organization can share with parents of CYWD who are looking for ways to support their child's physical activity.

Prioritize Safety!

- Supervise your child to observe and gauge the intensity of their physical activity.
- Teach your child precautions for engaging in safe physical activity to avoid injury.
- Work to support your child in understanding and reinforcing rules for how to engage in safe physical activity.

Be a Role-Model!

- Engage in physical activity.
- Arrange opportunities for the whole family to engage in physical activity together.
- Set meaningful physical activity goals for the whole family.

Be Your Child's Cheerleader!

- Provide emotional support, like encouragement, positive feedback, motivation, and praise.
- Encourage active play with friends.
- Monitor screen-time and encourage activities that require movement.
- Encourage your child to increase their intensity when performing everyday physical activities.

Get Involved!

- Engage in physical activity with your child (e.g., act as a training partner, learn new activities or skills together).
- Attend and actively watch your child's physical activity events.
- ·Become a volunteer for programs that your child participates in (e.g., as a coach, assistant).

Build a Strong Foundation!

- Discuss the benefits of physical activity with your child.
- Ask your child about their preferred physical activities, and discuss different activities that they would like to try.
- Teach your child fundamental movement skills to enhance their physical literacy (e.g., running, jumping, throwing, catching, skipping).
- Include your child in goal setting, planning and monitoring of physical activity.

Create Opportunities!

- Facilitate and coordinate transportation (e.g., driving your child to and from recreational venues, supervising active transportation).
- Seek out funding opportunities designed to support your child's physical activity.
- Find or purchase sport and physical activity equipment for your child.
- Provide your child with various outlets for structured (e.g., organized sport or lessons) and unstructured physical activity.

KEEP IN MIND!

- **Take it step by step!** Encourage parents to start by incorporating a few of these behaviours and to gradually increase their support when and if they feel ready.
- **Consistency, Not Variety!** Remind parents that physical activity can include things they already do with their child, like walking/wheeling/ biking to school, gardening, or playing fetch with the dog.

Reaching Your Audience

Strategies for Dissemination

Credibility is Key!

Parents want to know that the information they receive comes from a credible source.

- Include logos of credible sources of information
- Include information from credible sources (e.g., community centers, public health institutions, schools, doctors, government agencies)

Make it User Friendly!

Structure websites and technical features that are easy to find and simple to navigate.

- Include labelled tabs, hyperlinks, drop-down menus
- Create a "Central-Hub" where parents can easily access information and resources

Increase Exposure!

Provide different, frequent, and consistent exposure to information and messages.

- Utilize various strategies for sharing information
  - Traditional strategies (e.g., pamphlets, newsletters, radio, and television)
  - Digital strategies (e.g., social media, websites, text messages, and mobile apps)
  - Unique strategies (e.g., storybooks, parent information sessions, community events)

Engage Parents!

Parents of CYWD value and seek information from other parents of CYWD.

- Include parent reviews and feedback about programs
- Provide an outlet where parents of CYWD can share their experiences and connect with other parents of CYWD either virtually (e.g., chat or forum) or in person (e.g., organized events or information nights)

Make it Relevant and Inclusive!

Target the needs, preferences, and values of parents of CYWD.

- Tailor information to subgroups of parents (e.g., parents of CYWD from urban or rural settings, different ethnicities, specific disabilities)
- Translate information in different languages
- Include captions with audio or videos
- Include audio descriptions with text or images
- Include images that are inclusive of children and youth with various and diverse disabilities

Additional Resources

To Share with Parents

Physical Activity Ideas

- Jooay https://jooay.com/
- Active for Life
  - 8 Ways to Keep Your Kids Active on a Budget https://activeforlife.com/keep-kids-active-on-a-budget/
  - Activities for Kids https://activeforlife.com/activities/
  - 42 Easy Activities to Keep Kids Busy While Parents Work at Home https://activeforlife.com/42-activities-to-keep-kids-busy-while-parents-work-at-home/
  - Recipe for an Active Day https://activeforlife.com/content/uploads/2020/05/Recipe-for-an-active-day-COVID_v2.1-1.pdf
  - Recipe for an Active Year https://activeforlife.com/content/uploads/2019/12/AFL-RecipeForAnActiveYear_v1.3.pdf
- We have the Moves! Physical Activity Resource https://static.pbslearningmedia.org/media/media_files/f5f46648-c476-4b1e-8b98-0a5aecc7e9f9.pdf

Goal Setting, Planning and Monitoring

- Make Physical Activity Part of Your Family's Routine https://letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/make-physical-activity-part-your-familys-routine
- SMART Goal Setting https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/living-well/physical-activity/general-information-and-tools/forms-and-tools/smart-goal-setting
- Track Your Child's Activity With This Handy Printable Log https://activeforlife.com/track-your-child-with-activity-log/
- Healthy Family Calendar https://letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/letsmove.gov/files/Family_Calendar.pdf
- Welcome to Plan to Move! https://plantomove-week1.weebly.com/

Financial Support for Physical Activity

- List of Adapted Sports Equipment Grants and Funds In Canada https://www.exerotech.com/en/canada-funds-and-grants-adaptive-sports-equipment
- Sources of Equipment Funding https://services.easterseals.org/equipment-funding/other-sources-for-equipment-funding/
- Assistive Devices Program https://www.ontario.ca/page/assistive-devices-program/
- Funding, Finance and Planning https://www.ctnsy.ca/Online-Resource-Centre/Funding-Finance-and-Planning.aspx
- Adapted Recreation Equipment Loan Program https://www.hollandbloorview.ca/services/programs-services/adapted-recreation-equipment-loan-program

Physical Activity Guidelines for CYWD

- Ability Toolkit https://cdpp.ca/resources-and-publications/ability-toolkit

For Organizations

Information about Accessibility Guidelines

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/
- Web Experience Toolkit https://wet-boew.github.io/v4.0-ci/index-en.html
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act https://www.aoda.ca/
- How to Make Websites Accessible https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-make-websites-accessible

Information about Disability and Physical Activity

- Disability Tip Sheets https://ala.ca/disability-tip-sheets
- A Blueprint for Building Quality Participation in Sport for Children, Youth, and Adults with a Disability https://cdpp.ca/resources-and-publications/blueprint-building-quality-participation-sport-children-youth-and-adults

ENDNOTES

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

What do YOU need for these recommendations to work for YOUR organization?

Contact us if you have any **ideas and feedback to share** or if you would like **more information.**

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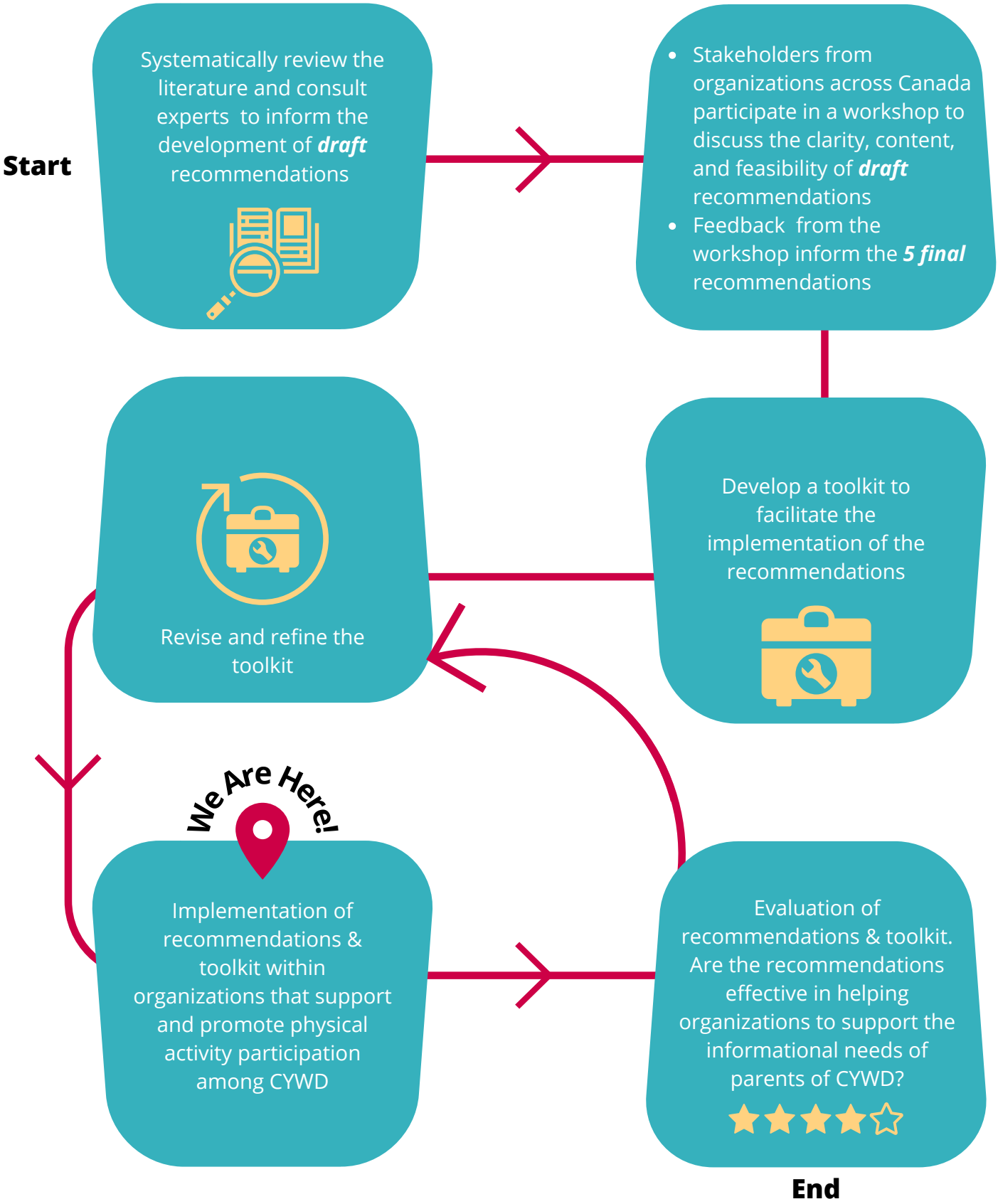
Behind the Scenes

The research team adopted a systematic approach for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the recommendations. The steps are outlined in the figure below.



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