

Status Report on a Literature Review: *Learning through Recreation*

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The Goals of the Literature Review

- Identify the state of Canadian knowledge about two aspects of the relationship between youth and structured recreation:
 - the impact of participation on youth's physical, psychological, social, and civic development.
 - The major social, economic, political, and cultural factors that limit youth participation.

Scope and focus of the literature review

- We look primarily at:
 - structured recreation
 - youth aged 10 to 15 years old
 - Canadian literature
 - academic and scientific literature
 - current literature, since 1990

What we know about the impacts

- Structured recreation has positive outcomes.
- Authors positively assess the effects of recreation for physical and psychosocial development.
- However, only the evidence related to the physical outcomes is really scientifically grounded.
- Methodological weaknesses of available studies make authors reluctant to conclude that recreation produces “automatic” positive psychosocial outcomes.

What we know about the constraints

- *Youth and parents* identified cost, transportation and time limitations as the major constraints to youth participation.
- *Researchers* identified socioeconomic status and gender as the key determining factors for youth participation, but other factors such the influence of peers and parents, and the organizational structures of recreational services are also important.

What are the knowledge gaps about youth and structured recreation?

We do NOT know:

- the effects of *structured recreation* as compared to other types of recreation
- the long-term effects of recreation on youth development
- the long-term effects of current constraints
- the intensity or quantity of recreation that is required to produce outcomes
- the kind of outcomes produced by non-participation

Further gaps in knowledge

- There is a lack of:
 - knowledge about the consequences for society of youth participation in recreation
 - knowledge about the weight of each factor limiting youth participation
 - longitudinal studies
 - empirical evidence of the effects for youth psychosocial development
 - studies examining the access and supply of publicly supported recreation services
 - studies of structured recreation apart from physical activity

About the Family Network of CPRN

For additional information:

- Web site: <http://www.cprn.org>
- e-mail: family@cprn.org

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