



Community Development Council of Quinte  
49 Albion Street  
Belleville, Ontario  
K8N 3R7

February 2005

Sport is a universal language that can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs, or economic status. Sports can play a role in improving the lives of whole communities.<sup>i</sup>

- Kofi Annan  
United Nations Secretary General

## **Introduction:**

Study after study has demonstrated the link between active lifestyles and good health. The 2002 Statistics Canada study: The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth<sup>ii</sup> (NLSCY) showed very clearly that over one-third of all children aged 2-11 were overweight, and sixteen per cent considered obese. Obesity in both adults and children leads to significant increases in health problems including increased risk of diabetes and heart disease. While inactivity has been cited as the number one cause of obesity, the study also indicates that low income is a factor contributing to obesity in so far as one quarter of all children considered obese lived in families earning low incomes. The study found that obesity rates declined as a family's economic situation improved.

The Community Development Council of Quinte is a not for profit, charitable organization located in Belleville, Ontario which strives to improve the quality of life of individuals and families in communities. The CDC has three primary areas of focus. They are: social planning & research; community development; and community building.

Through social planning and research, the Community Development Council of Quinte aims to heighten community awareness of the needs of its members by undertaking activities geared toward collecting and analyzing data pertaining to urgent and emerging social issues.

Through community development, the CDC aims to create opportunities for individuals and families to gain control over their own lives through participation in community activities geared toward improved quality of life. The CDC operates six self-help food programs through three depots located in The Village of Bancroft, The Town of Madoc, and in the City of Belleville under its community development umbrella. Sub-satellites are also located in the Village of Marmora, Village of Tweed, Town of Stirling, and throughout Hastings & Prince Edward Counties through partnerships.

Finally, through community building, the CDC strives to strengthen partnerships and collaborative planning by bringing together individuals and organizations of common interest, including those that might not otherwise have the opportunity, or sometimes, the inclination, to work together to create local solutions to local problems.

Through a grant provided to the Community Development Council of Quinte by the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Recreation in support of The Belleville Sport Consortium, the CDC was able to engage a number of partners in social planning, community development, and community building activities for the purpose of enhancing opportunities for the social inclusion of children in sporting and recreational activities in the region.

In the Spring of 2004, the Community Development Council of Quinte (CDC) brought together a number of organizations supporting young people in sporting and recreational activities both directly and indirectly in the City of Belleville. The Belleville Sport Consortium is a loosely based coalition of not for profit, voluntary, recreational, and sporting organizations that provide services specifically within the geographic boundaries of Belleville. While a number of our members also provide services outside the City limits, for the purpose of this activity, the Consortium was brought together to discuss and evaluate ways in which to increase supports to families with low and moderate incomes so as to create opportunities for the social inclusion of children, especially those that are traditionally excluded from full participation in community life through sports and recreation. One of our primary goals included gaining insight into issues of access to sporting and recreational activities in the region.

## Parent's Surveys:

During the spring-summer of 2004, the Community Development Council of Quinte conducted a survey on behalf of the Sports Consortium.

For the purpose of this survey, sport is defined as:

any organized physical recreational activity geared toward developing healthy lifestyles, enhancing skills, building self-esteem, or increasing participation of young people in community life.

To that end, the following are all included as a "recreational activity" for the purposes of the survey:

Soccer	Softball	Baseball	Ice Hockey
Ball Hockey	Lacrosse	Bowling	Martial Arts
Rugby	Football	Dance	Gymnastics
Horseback Riding	Swimming Lessons	Competitive Swimming/Diving	Tennis & Racquet Sports
Speed Skating/Figure Skating	Scouts/Guides	Music Lessons	Art Lessons
Cadets	Clubs (4-H)	Cooking Class	Day Camp
Overnight Camp	Golf	Sailing/Boating	Skiing
Snow or Water Sports	Fishing	Extreme Sports	Gym Membership
Aerobics	Jogging/Running/Track & Field	Mountain Biking	Other

In total, surveys were completed on behalf of 455 individuals. That said, this survey was not intended to represent a scientific study of health or physical activity, but, rather, to portray a snapshot of child and parent participation in organized activities in the region and to identify trends relative to participation. 455 survey respondents are considered a small sample of the local population.

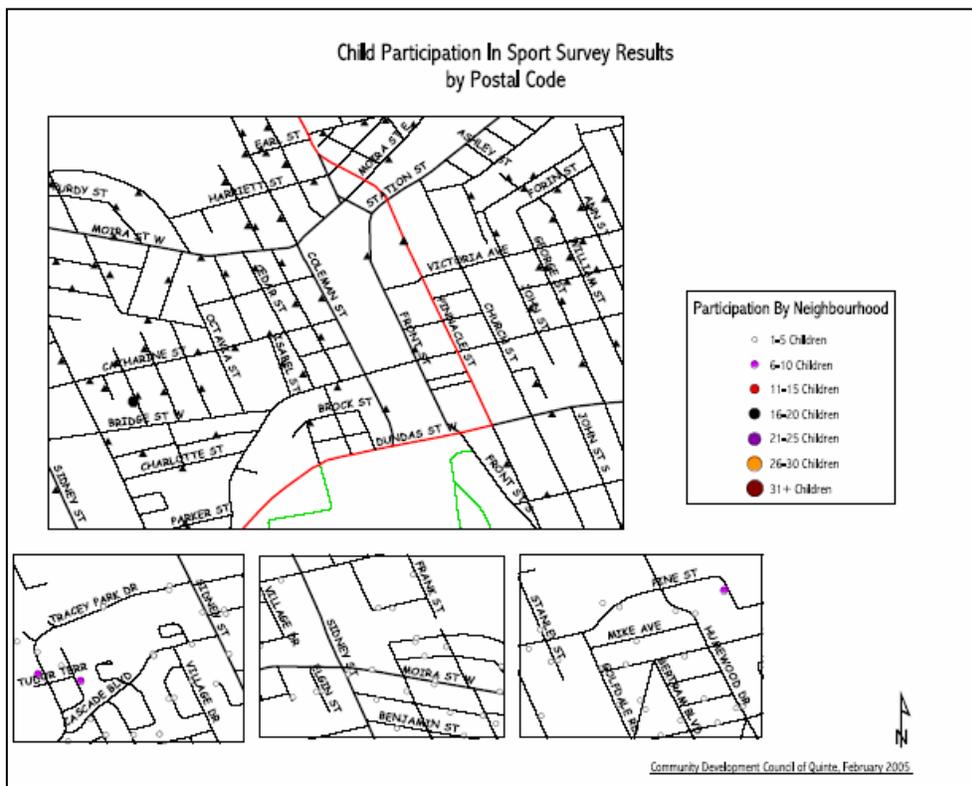
Surveying took place at the following locations over a period of four weeks.

- Parks & Recreation Building, 116 Pinnacle Street, Belleville
- Quinte Mall
- CDC Head Office

These locations were selected so as to ensure a random representation of community.

Surveys were broken out by postal code and assigned a neighbourhood value using Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Survey responses were mapped by geocoding participation by postal code. Although not exact in terms of full neighbourhood participation rates in sporting and recreational activities since surveys were not distributed by household, all survey responses were geocoded to provide a snapshot of child participation by neighbourhood by postal code.



## High Participation By Neighbourhood:

Neighbourhood	Child Participation
Stirling	31+
Tucker's Corners	31+
Foxboro	31+
Montrose	31+
Rednersville	21-30
Shannonville	21-30
Far East Hill (Y)	21-30
Far West Hill (A&P)	21-30

In order to gain insight into factors contributing to participation rates, the Community Development Council of Quinte overlaid the participation map with economic data. Not surprisingly, those areas with lower family incomes participated in sporting and recreational activities in the region less. At the other end of the scale, those neighbourhoods with higher economic means saw increased participation.

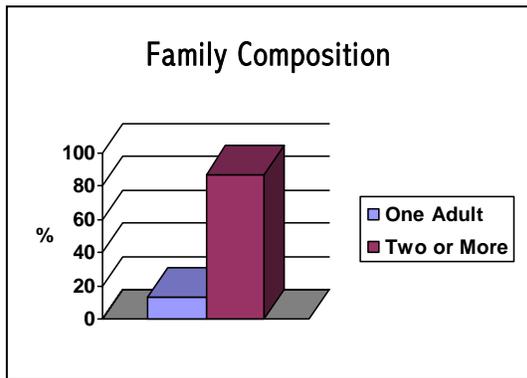
## Medium Participation By Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood	Child Participation
Old East Hill	11-20
Georges Vanier	11-20
Parkdale	11-20
Quinte S.S.	11-20

Overall, rural neighbourhoods saw higher participation (Stirling, Tucker's Corners, Foxboro, Montrose, Rednersville) than urban neighbourhoods.

## Low Participation By Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood	Child Participation
Queen Victoria	1-5
Hillside	1-5
Near West Hill	1-5



In the City of Belleville proper, two parent families make up 82% of all families while single parents lead 18% of all families.<sup>iii</sup>

Similarly, 86% of all families involved in this survey are led by two adults while single adult led families comprise just thirteen per cent of respondents. While it would appear that children living in families with two adults are slightly more likely to participate in sporting/recreational activities than single adult led families, additional investigation must be undertaken to fully support this argument.

## Parental Participation in Recreation:

Parents in fifty per cent (50%) of all families surveyed participate in organized sporting or recreational activities. This is higher than anticipated as on average almost two-thirds of Canadians are inactive.<sup>iv</sup>

Thirty-six percent (36%) of all single parents also participate in sporting and recreational activities in the region. Of those involved in sporting and recreational activities, eighteen percent (18%) are involved in two of more activities.

Fifty-seven per cent (57%) of families with two or more children participated in sporting or recreational activities, eighty-four percent (84%) of whom are involved in two or more sporting or recreational activities.

## Child Participants

Sixty-five per cent (65%) of child participants are between the ages of 4-12 years of age while twenty-five per cent (25%) are aged 13-17. Children three years of age and younger comprise three (3%) of all child participants. This is not unlike the findings of the Canadian Paediatric Society<sup>v</sup> which has determined that children are more likely to be active pre-adolescent than post-adolescent. Seven percent of all child respondents are involved in no form of sporting or recreational activity.

## Average Number of Activities by Age:

Family Status	3 years of age and younger	4 – 12 years of age	13-17 years of age
Single Parent	1 activity	2.7 activities	1.3 activities
Two Parent	1 activity	3.1 activities	1.6 activities
Only Children	1 activity	4.5 activities	1 activities
Rural Children	1 activity	2.8 activities	1.4 activities
Urban Children	1 activity	2.1 activities	1.2 activities
<b>AVERAGES</b>	<b>1 activity</b>	<b>3 activities</b>	<b>1.3 activities</b>

## Benefits to Participation:

Numerous studies have been undertaken that detail the benefits of participation in sporting and recreational activities. The Laidlaw Foundation reports “play and recreation are widely accepted as fundamental to the health, well-being, and social and physical development of children<sup>vi</sup>” and has contracted research aimed at increasing child participation in sporting and recreational activities through social inclusion strategies. To that end, the Belleville Sport Consortium, in partnership with the Quinte Regional Children’s Foundation has developed a social inclusion policy<sup>vii</sup>. The Social Inclusion Policy, distributed to sporting and recreation providers in the region, aims to increase opportunities for young people to achieve their full potential through participation in community life. The Quinte Regional Children’s Foundation has initiated significant activity geared toward reducing barriers for children and their parents so that children are provided an opportunity to develop the skills play provides, including: improved communication skills, enhanced motor skills, sense of belonging, improved self-esteem and ability to work as a team.

## What Does This All Mean?

In the short-term there are direct implications to community as a result of the inactivity of children, especially as it relates to the exclusion of populations within society. Specifically:

- Failing to engage young people in sporting and recreational activities in the region, especially children living in families with low and moderate incomes, reduces opportunities for children to achieve their full potential, nurture self-esteem, and develop skills necessary to social development.
- Increasing insurance, utility, and maintenance costs of facilities reduces the number of no cost or low cost activities thereby reducing access to sporting/recreational activities in the region, especially for children living in families with low/moderate incomes.
- Community policies, such as community use of school fee structures, must be amended to enable the re-introduction of “open gym” activities in order to introduce and engage young people to sporting and recreational activities.

In the long-term there are also direct implications to community quality of life. Specifically,

- Health Canada estimates that for each \$1 invested in physical activity there is a long term saving of \$11 in health care costs citing the benefits as being particularly important for children, since physical recreation is crucial to physical, social, motor and emotional development<sup>viii</sup> resulting in increased costs for society and governments in the long-term.
- Incorporating fitness and activity into children's play from early in life builds opportunities for children to adopt healthy lifestyles from early in life.

**Belleville Sport Consortium Members**

Roni Summers Wickens  
Community Development Council of Quinte

Michael Markwell  
Community Development Council of Quinte

Linda Bryson  
Quinte Regional Children's Foundation

Janet VanVolkenburg  
Quinte Regional Children's Foundation

Sara Marshall Gallant  
Belleville Youth Soccer Club

Kristen Walsh  
Friends of the Frink Centre

Carmela Ruberto  
County of Hastings

**Advisors to the Sport Consortium:**

Jeff Bitton  
City of Quinte West

Dave Allen  
Belleville Family YMCA

Marjorie Buck  
City of Belleville

Julia Gosson  
United Way of Quinte

Michael Coughlin  
City of Belleville

Mark Kartusch  
Hastings Children's Aid Society

## End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General, November 2, 2005 Press Release, New York, NY. Released by The Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary General on Sport For The Development of Peace. <http://www.un.org/sport2005/newsroom>.

<sup>ii</sup> The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) is a long-term study by Social Development Canada and Statistics Canada. It follows the development of children from birth to early adulthood commencing in 1994. The Survey aims to collect information about factors influencing the social, emotional and behavioural development of children, and to monitor the impact of these factors on their development. For more information, visit: <http://www.statcan.ca>.

<sup>iii</sup> Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data, Community Profile of City of Belleville.

<sup>iv</sup> Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute; 1998 Physical Activity Monitor.

<sup>v</sup> Canadian Paediatric Society, Healthy Active Living for Children & Youth, published by the Canadian Health Network, 2004.

<sup>vi</sup> Donnelly, Coakley, The Laidlaw Foundation, The Role of Recreation in Promoting Social Inclusion, 2002, p.15.

<sup>vii</sup> Social Inclusion Policy, adopted from Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) reads: every child has the right to participate in recreational activities regardless of ability to pay, race, gender, ability, or religious affiliation. By adopting the social inclusion policy, sporting and recreational providers are awarded the privilege of being called a "PLAYING FOR KEEPS" organization. To date, more than 40 organizations and 1 municipality have adopted the social inclusion policy.

<sup>viii</sup> Presented at the World Summit on Physical Education, 1999, Berlin; sponsored by the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education, conference proceedings.

\*Funding for this project is provided by the Government of Ontario. The opinions expressed in this paper are that of the Community Development Council of Quinte and should not be misconstrued to represent the opinions of the government of Ontario.