

## INTRODUCTION

The *Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (CSEP)*:

- Toddlers (1-2 years of age) and preschoolers (3-4 years of age) should be participating in an accumulated 180 minutes of physical activity throughout the day.
- Three main levels of physical activity: moderate, vigorous and moderate-to-vigorous.
- A fourth level of physical activity called Energetic Play.
- An energetic level is more appropriately contextualized for the way young children move.
- Energetic physical activities encourage children in the early years (0-4 years of age) to work hard, breathe heavy and feel warm.

## Early Childhood Educators (ECE) Questionnaire

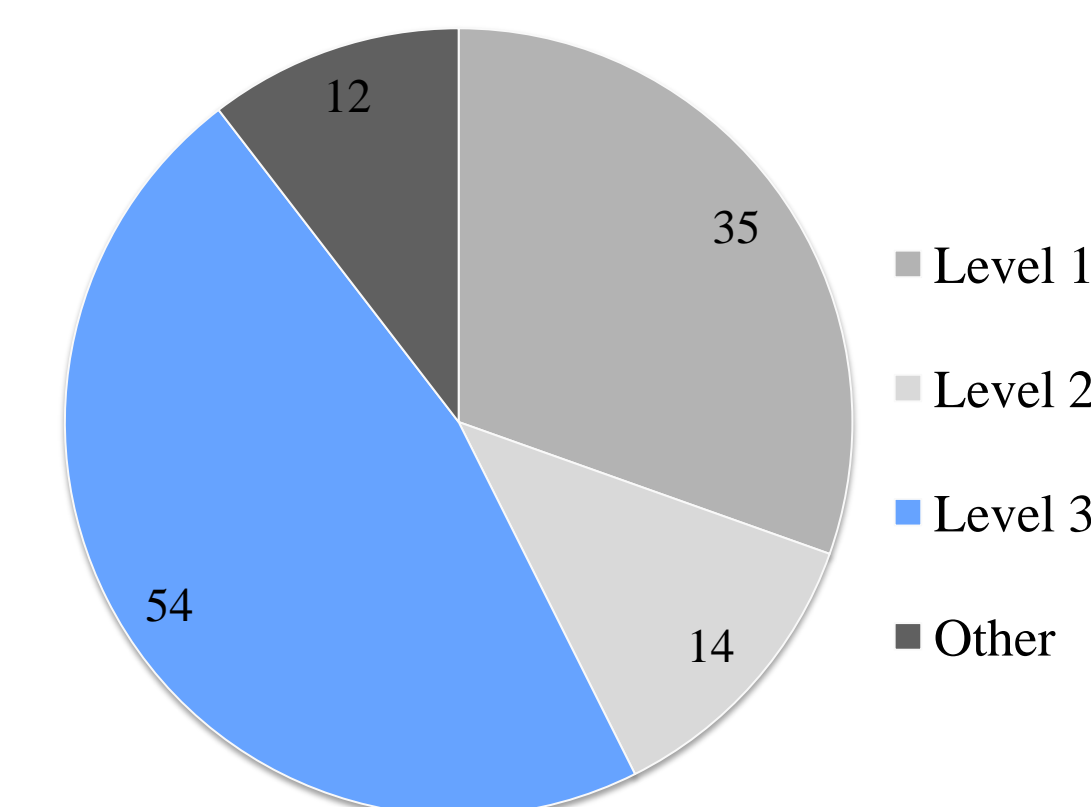
Designed to connect behaviours and perceptions regarding physical activity for both ECEs and children in their care.

- ECE education levels, gender, immigrant status, years of experience, personal active and sedentary behaviours on both weekends and weekdays, children's structured and unstructured activity levels within their classrooms
- 116 respondents from 9 child care centres across Alberta completed the questionnaires

## FINDINGS

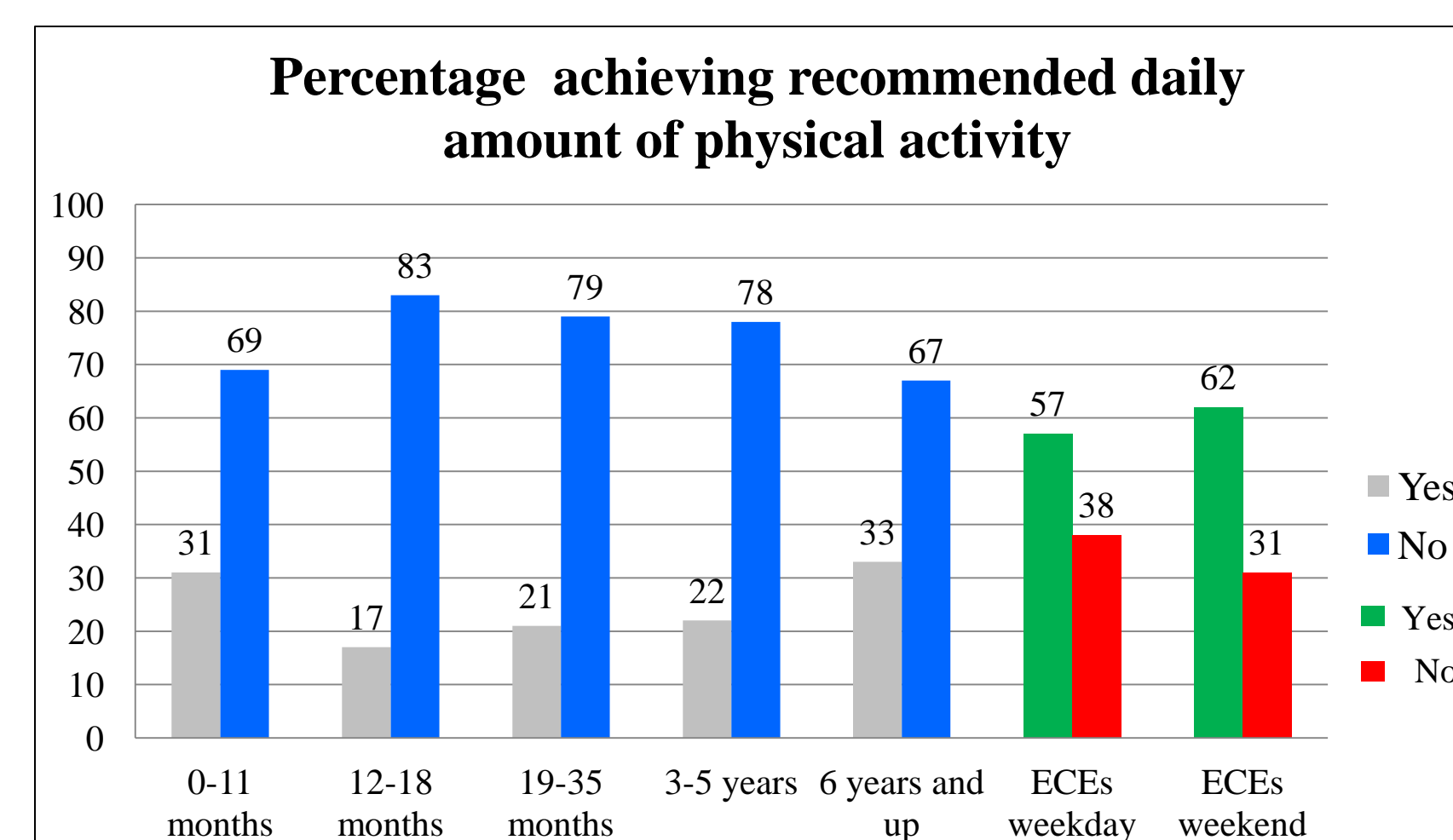


ECEs Level of Education/Certification

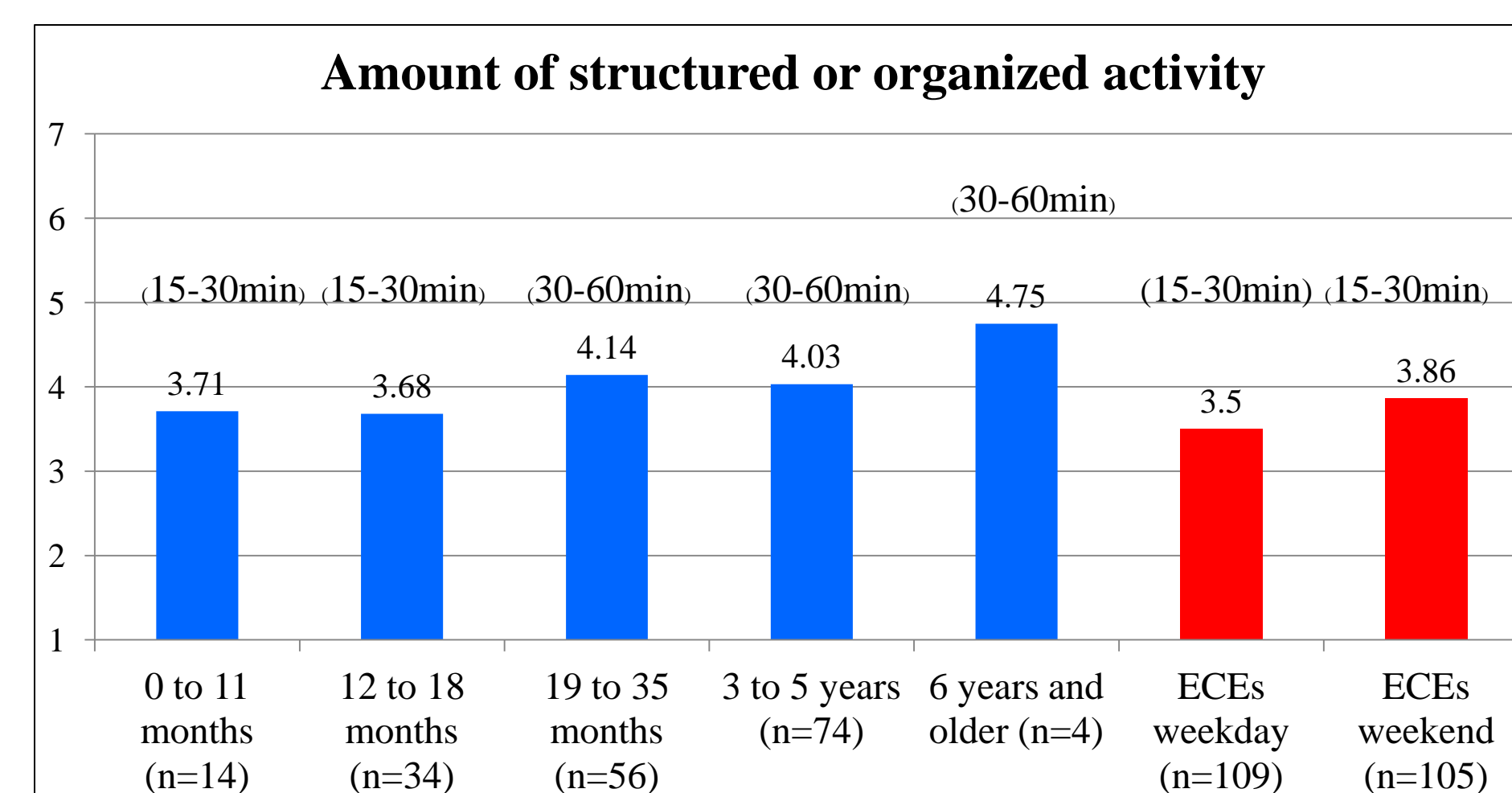


- 96% of ECEs in child care centres feel that it is important to be physically active.
- ECEs identified few barriers to providing physical activity within their child care centres.
- And yet, children in care are not receiving the recommended levels of physical activity throughout the day.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS

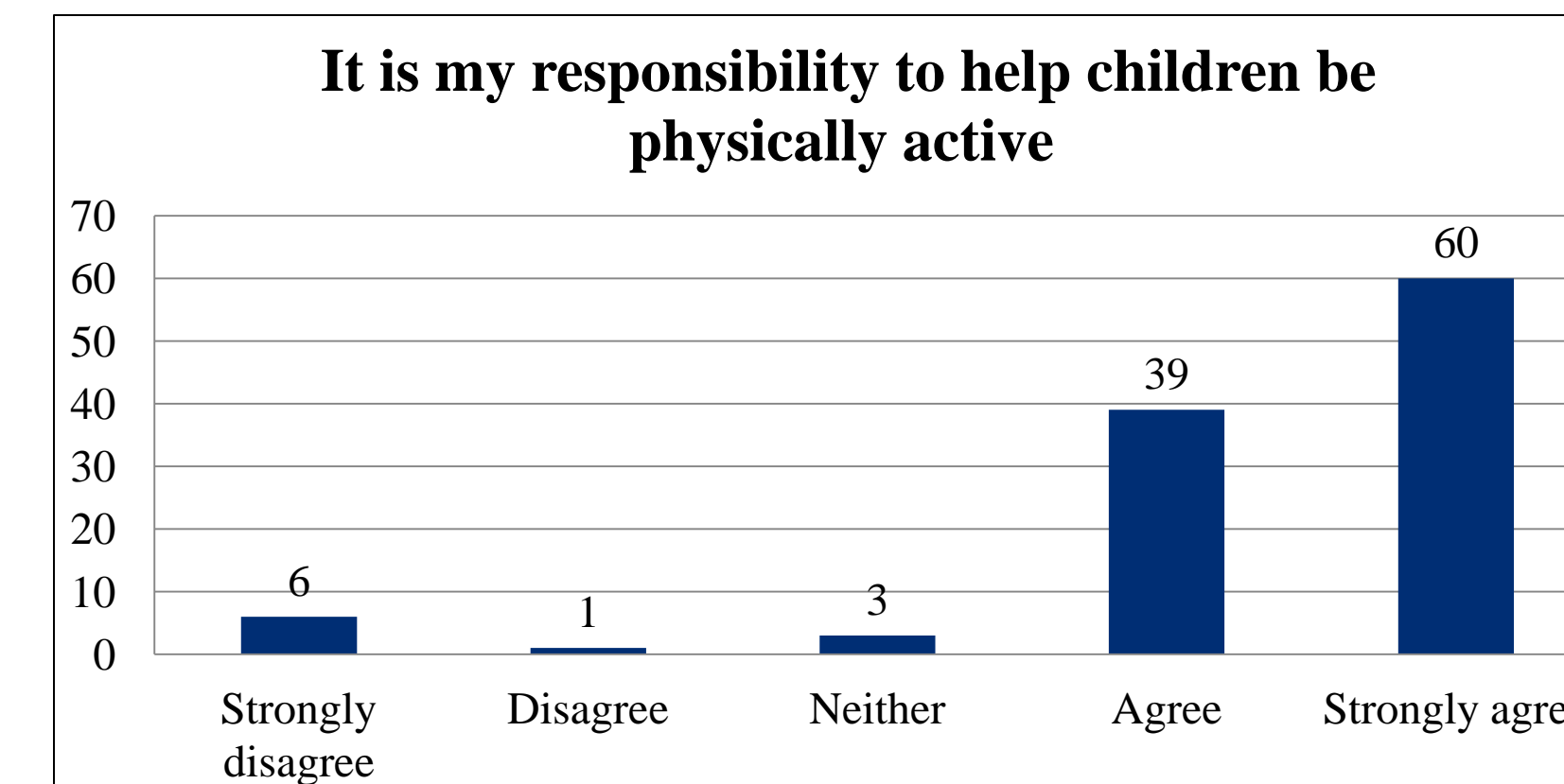


- Identified are the percentage of children in each age group who achieve the recommended daily amount of 180 minutes of physical activity while in childcare (blue and grey).
- Identified are the percentage of ECEs who report achieving the recommended daily amount of 60 minutes of physical activity (red and green).



- Illustrated in red is ECEs structured activity time during the week and weekend.
- Illustrated in blue are children's structured activity time during their day spent in child care.

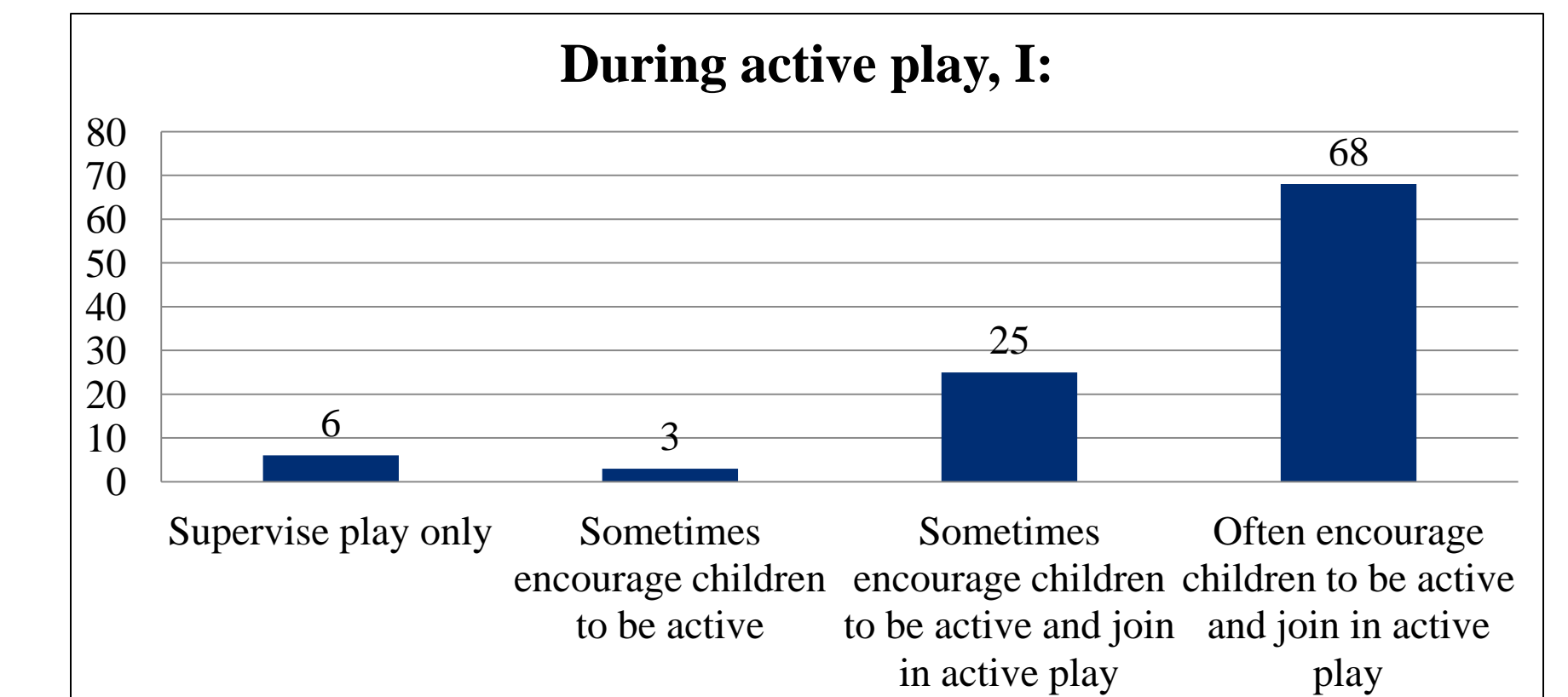
## ECE PERCEPTIONS



99 out of 116 ECEs either agree or strongly agree that it is their responsibility to encourage the children to be physically active

## TYPES OF ACTIVE PLAY

- Tag
- Relay Race
- Bunny Hop
- Freeze
- Biking
- Dance
- Jump Rope
- Soccer
- Mr. Wolf
- Treasure Hunt
- Ball Toss/Catch
- Yoga
- Pretend Play
- Stick and pine cone hockey
- Circuit



The majority of ECEs actively encourage children to engage in physical play.

ECE Identified Barriers

Barriers to Providing Physical Activity	Yes	No
In cold and wet weather, children are less likely to get outside and the indoor activities tend to be less active	59 (56%)	47 (44%)
Opportunities are limited by inappropriate clothing worn by children (i.e. flip flops, no hat or gloves, nice/expensive clothing)	40 (40%)	61 (60%)
Small outdoor play spaces limit the range of activity	33 (32%)	70 (68%)
Opportunities are limited by safety concerns	29 (28%)	75 (72%)
Some fixed equipment is too big, and therefore too dangerous, for younger children	26 (25%)	77 (75%)
Children lose interest in fixed equipment	24 (24%)	78 (76%)
We don't have much equipment for outdoor active play	24 (24%)	78 (76%)
We don't have much equipment for indoor active play	22 (22%)	79 (78%)
Opportunities are limited due to concerns the children will get dirty	10 (10%)	91 (90%)
I lack confidence in my ability to offer opportunities	8 (8%)	90 (92%)

ECEs reported that the top barriers impacting their provision of physical activity were inappropriate clothing, inclement weather, and safety concerns.

## CONCLUSIONS

Results suggest that although ECEs perceive physical activity to be important for themselves and children in their care, children are not receiving the recommended amounts of physical activity in child care settings, despite having identified minimal barriers.

**Future development of tools and strategies for ECEs to:**

- Promote and encourage age appropriate physical activity
- Broaden the definition of active play
- Support planning of active indoor and outdoor environments