

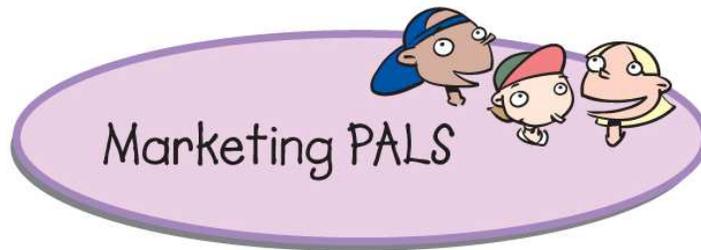


Playground Activity
Leaders in Schools



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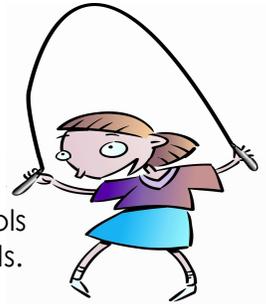


Marketing Overview Checklist

- Email/Call to/from school
- Attend staff meeting to promote program
- Schedule teacher supervisor planning meeting
- Attend school council meeting to promote PALS program
- Provide equipment list and solicit support for funds from school council
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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 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

The program 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.**

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

The P.A.L.S. program is coming to your school!

The P.A.L.S. program encourages all children to participate in activities regardless of their gender, size or ability. The program promotes positive play during recess by offering a variety of fun and interactive games lead by trained student leaders. P.A.L.S. has been implemented in over 50 schools.

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 in grade 4-6

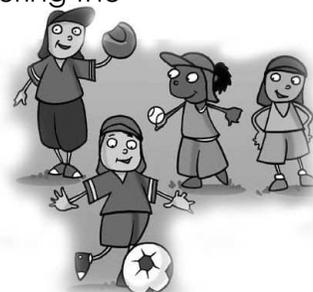
A Public Health Nurse trains staff and students to implement the program. School staff are responsible for the program supervision with the Public Health Nurse providing ongoing support. Students in grades 4 to 6 with leadership qualities are trained to act as playground activity leaders for younger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

Leader training

Initial leader training takes approximately 3 hours. Ongoing support is provided with the introduction of new games and regularly scheduled meetings. Each student leader receives a **P.A.L.S. Leader Handbook** to be used during the training and as a reference after the training.

Topics addressed during the training include:

- safety on the playground
- qualities of a leader and leadership styles
- communication skills
- conflict resolution and bullying
- games



Games

P.A.L.S. leaders are taught skipping, tag, jumpsies and ball games. Schools are given a resource containing approximately 100 games for the playground. The leaders are encouraged to lead games shared by participating students or ones they know how to play.



Playground Activity
Leaders in Schools

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

Leader selection

Students in grades 4-6 can apply to be P.A.L.S. leaders. They are given information about the program and the responsibility associated with being a P.A.L.S. leader. Interested students are provided with a P.A.L.S. application form and parental permission form. Students are notified if they have been selected and are asked to attend the training session.

P.A.L.S. Pinnies

The school is provided with 12 red and white P.A.L.S. pinnies to increase leader visibility while on the playground. These pinnies were made possible with funding from the Peel Heart Health Network. This demonstrates the commitment and belief in the program by community partners.

Your school has decided to introduce the P.A.L.S. program. This requires a great deal of time and commitment on behalf of the staff and students to implement and sustain the program. We are certain your school will see positive outcomes once the program is underway.

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.”

A Child Leadership Initiative to reduce Bullying through Physical Activity

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

School councils are proud to have the P.A.L.S. program offered at their school and often express interest in supporting the program. Here are suggestions for how your school council may wish to support P.A.L.S. at your school.

Funding equipment costs

Program games include skipping, jumpsies/yogi, ball and tag/team games. Some schools may also choose to include marbles and jacks. Equipment is usually stored in a bag or container that is easily transported to and from the playground. See equipment list in supervisor's handbook.

Leader training day

Provide a nutritious snack and beverage for the leaders on the training day.

P.A.L.S. leader/supervisor recognition

Does your school recognize students who commit to a program or event? Recognizing the contributions of those involved can be a formal celebration or an informal thank you with a pat on the back. "Recognition is a valuable motivator, since positive reinforcement enhances self-esteem, personal growth and a sense of belonging." When participants, leaders and supervisors are recognized they show greater commitment to the program and you are likely to see increased participation.

P.A.L.S. leader are scheduled to be on the playground approximately twice per week during their lunch hour. Selecting a leader of the week or month and providing them with a token of appreciation reinforces your support for the program.

Tokens of appreciation may be pencils, coupon for a free hot dog or slice of pizza on school special luncheon days, cupcake on bake sale day etc.,

End of the year celebration luncheon

Each leader is provided with a certificate of appreciation for their commitment to the program. These certificates can be presented at an end of the year luncheon.

Ask your school if there is anything you can do to assist with P.A.L.S. program

Parent volunteers who provide recess/lunch duty have assisted with the day to day running of the program.



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