

# HEALTH IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS

In Fall 2017, Ophea surveyed parents of Ontario school-aged children to better understand their perspectives on pressing health issues, Health and Physical Education (H&PE), healthy schools, and physical activity.

Parents believe that Ontario schools have an important role to play in supporting the health and well-being of their children, but have concerns about how equipped kids are to meet 21st century health challenges.

## TOP HEALTH ISSUES

Parents identified the following top health concerns:



Obesity

37%



Mental health

32%

Other pressing health issues include:



Addiction and drug abuse



Diet and nutrition



Physical activity levels

\*Since Ophea's previous parent opinion survey (2010), there has been a significant increase in mentions of mental health (from 10% to 32%) and addiction including cannabis and opioids (from 4% to 13%).

## THE GOOD NEWS

98% of parents say that H&PE is very important and most agree it helps prepare children to address these pressing health issues.

Most parents agree with and support the inclusion of all eight topic areas covered within the H&PE curriculum.



- ✓ Healthy eating
- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Substance use and addiction
- ✓ Sexual health education
- ✓ Physical literacy
- ✓ Safety and injury prevention
- ✓ Cannabis/Marijuana
- ✓ Critical thinking and healthy decision-making



Parents view teachers as a trusted source of health information for their children, behind health professionals and themselves.

## CONDITIONS FOR A HEALTHY SCHOOL

Most parents agree that their child's school demonstrates the attributes of a healthy school, saying that the school is...

accepting of all individuals



cares about physical safety



encourages involvement



is open and welcoming



...and cares about emotional safety and engagement with the broader community.

## ADDITIONAL PARENT PERSPECTIVES



99%

of parents support the Ontario government's commitment to encouraging 60 minutes of daily physical activity for children



26%

of parents report that their children are active to that standard every day



89%

of parents believe schools have a critical role to play to ensure that children are physically active



Parents want their kids to be physically active and when ON Physical Education Safety Guidelines are used, are more comfortable with active play

94% indoor setting

89% outdoor setting

## MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Ophea encourages all stakeholders to freely use this information to support their future planning efforts. All materials (including the full report) are available through Ophea's website [www.ophea.net/advocacy](http://www.ophea.net/advocacy).

Ophea is a not-for-profit organization that champions healthy, active living in schools and communities through quality programs and services, partnerships and advocacy. Ophea's vision is that all children and youth will value and enjoy the lifelong benefits of healthy, active living.

