NEWSLETTER
DEFINING HEALTHY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The childhood years play a defining role in our lives. Through a better understanding of the key ways that children grow between the ages of 6 and 12, we can better support their healthy development during these important years.

The Five Domains of Healthy Childhood Development

Middle childhood (ages 6-12) is a crucial time in the development of a child. Everything they experience during this period has a major impact on the skills and competencies they develop later on in life. Based on the report *"On My Way: A Guide to Support Middle Years Child Development"* by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, this development takes place over 5 domains:

Cognitive – the construction of thinking skills, including problem solving and decision making

Physical – physical growth, development of fine motor skills and health knowledge

Emotional – development of emotional regulation skills and sense of self-identity

Social – refinement of social competencies and positive relationships with adults and peers

Communication – development of ability to express feelings and thoughts, a fundamental foundation for emotional self-regulation abilities

The Five Domains of Healthy Childhood Development

Barriers Towards Healthy Childhood Development

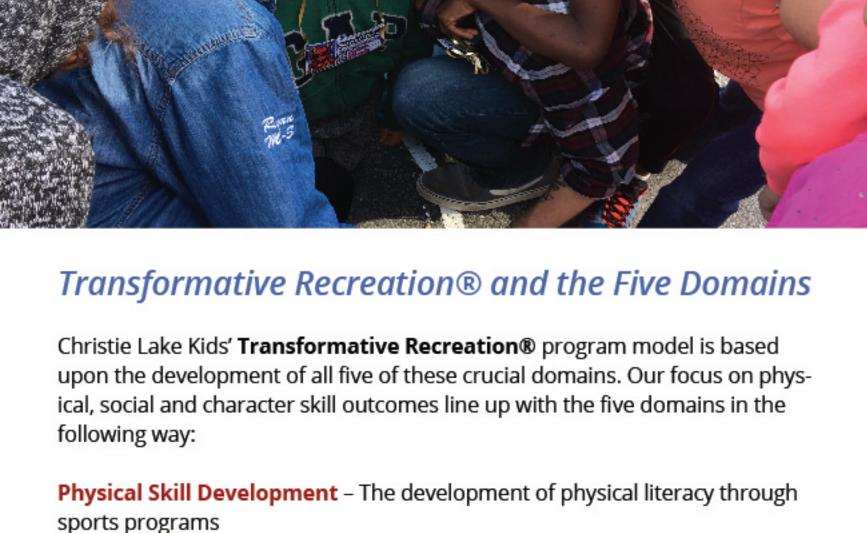The factors behind childhood development are many, however one influential factor is the neighbourhood a child grows up in.

Children living in lower-income neighbourhoods in Canada face greater risks to the development of these five key domains. Compared to kids in other neighbourhoods, children cannot access the same quality of child care, food and medical services. Exposure to excessive noise and poor housing conditions also create risks towards a child's healthy development. While all children attending Christie Lake Kids' programs live below the low-income cut-off line, about **90%** live in these concentrated low-income neighbourhoods.

Transformative Recreation® and the Five Domains

Christie Lake Kids' **Transformative Recreation®** program model is based upon the development of all five of these crucial domains. Our focus on physical, social and character skill outcomes line up with the five domains in the following way:

Physical Skill Development – The development of physical literacy through sports programs

Social Skill Development – Social development through the development of positive peer and adult relationships, and *communication skill development* through encouraging the expression of feelings and thoughts during program check-in and out

Character Skill Development – *Cognitive development* through encouraging program solving during programs, and emotional *development* through solving challenges arising in programs with an emphasis on identifying feelings and regulating emotions

Evaluating Healthy Development in CLK Programs

All programs delivered by Christie Lake Kids are evaluated to ensure that children are receiving a high quality, skill-building experience. These evaluations help to make sure that each program is helping to foster healthy childhood development for children living in low-income communities in Ottawa.

To learn more about healthy childhood development, and how to support your child's development in each of these five domains, download the full ministry report below..

Download Report

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