

## PRIORITY 2: SAFE PLACES FOR ACTIVE PLAY

For young children, physical activity means active play. Active play is a child's context for learning. It helps them explore their world and discover how they fit into it. Active play helps children grow healthy bodies with strong bones and muscles. Many young children in Cuyahoga County live in environments where there are few opportunities for active play. Sometimes their neighborhoods are unsafe; sometimes they don't have the resources that they need to make play happen; even still, some children lack a role model to teach them how to play.

*The problem. Young children in Cuyahoga County are not getting the recommended amount of physical activity.*

*The American Academy of Pediatricians recommends no screen time for children younger than 2, and 2 hours daily for children older than 2. In the child care setting, recommendations are 30 minutes per week. Preferences for active lifestyles start around age 2 and build the foundation for healthy activity habits as children age.*

*The 2014 Youth Risk Behavior Study found that 51% of Cuyahoga County 7th and 8th graders get the recommended amount of physical activity per week. (PRCHN, 2014)*

## SYSTEMS CHANGE SUCCESS:

Cleveland Department of Recreation sponsors National Screen Free Week activities at all 24 of Recreation Centers throughout Cleveland

Staff members at The City of Cleveland Recreation Department are our local experts in all things physical activity. Over the past few years, Director Jill Lemmerman and her team have been working to make sure that recreation centers serve not only the physical health of the children, but also promote a healthy whole child. In the spring of 2017, EAHS began planning for our first official National Screen Free Week observation. We shared the National Screen Free week pledges and activity ideas and called on all of our partners what they could do to make Screen Free Week 2017 a success.

The City of Cleveland Recreation Department answered the call and celebrated without screens at all 24 centers throughout Cleveland. Employees took the Pledge and gave kids attending their programs ideas about what they would be doing without screens. Kids who attended programs took Screen Free Pledges and made decorative wall displays. Baskets were put out for kids to deposit their phones and other devices and spend at least the 2 hours that they were at the Recreation Centers unplugged from their devices and plugged in to the world around them. The Recreation Centers will continue to be key leaders in National Screen Free week for EAHS.



## ACTIVE PLAY | OUR GOAL:

Early Ages Healthy Stages will support and expand our network of partners who seek to provide increased opportunities for active play for young children in Cuyahoga County.

Objectives: By December 31st, 2020, Early Ages Healthy Stages Coalition will:

1. Coordinate a county-wide social marketing campaign and event series that coincides with National Screen Free Week to improve community awareness of the importance of active play.

- Promote National Screen Free Week, collecting outcomes and input from multiple coalition members during National Screen Free Week 2017.
- Plan and orchestrate events for National Screen Free Week for the following years.
- Provide resources, materials, and technical assistance to programs and institution participating in National Screen Free Week.
- Track outcomes for number of participants and projects, as well as an evaluation of attitudes of those participating in the projects.



2. Collaborate with community partners to modify shared use agreement toolkits for use by early childhood providers and community organizations to provide safe places for active play.

- Identify partners and institutions throughout Cuyahoga County that are interested in establishing shared use agreements for early childhood activity.
- Develop a model in collaboration with these institutions and current toolkits for a shared use "Partnership Agreement" that is specific to early childhood wellness.
- Generate an updated map of early childhood shared use sites and collect data on use.

3. Provide tools, technical assistance, and seek financial/volunteer support for communities and organizations to update spaces to make them conducive to early childhood play.

- Hold town hall forums and community meetings throughout Cuyahoga County to identify people and places that would have a desire to improve existing spaces.
- Identify local businesses and subject matter experts willing to provide donations of materials or in-kind support.
- Seek funding support for grants and subcontracts for which community organizations, recreation centers, and community development corporations may apply.
- Evaluate short and long term use patterns.