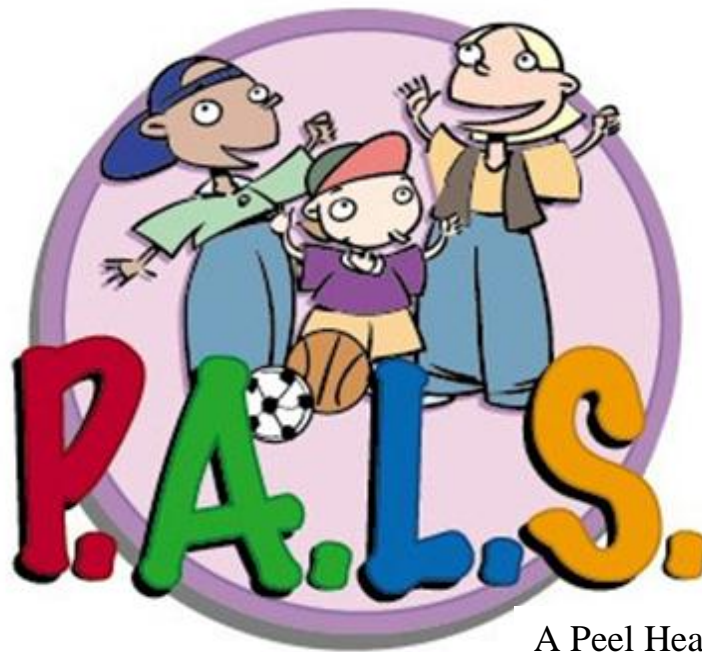


Program Overview & Implementation Steps



A Peel Health Program

Playground Activity
Leaders in Schools

Welcome to P.A.L.S!



Thank you for your school's interest to participate in the P.A.L.S. Program! Your school is on its way towards creating a supportive environment for students to play and learn.

This Toolkit was designed to help support school staff who will be taking on the role of Supervisor(s) for the P.A.L.S. Program.

Enclosed, you will find (8) Sections with program materials to help facilitate P.A.L.S. Please take the time to review each Section of the Toolkit to obtain a thorough understanding of the background information and processes involved to present and implement the P.A.L.S Program at your school.

With commitment and dedication, you can accomplish amazing opportunities for your school community!

For more information about the P.A.L.S. program, please dial 311.

Introduction to P.A.L.S.



A Peel Health Program

Playground Activity
Leaders in Schools

P.A.L.S. Background

Playground Activity Leaders in Schools, "P.A.L.S." was created by the Region of Peel Public Health Department in 2003. It is a peer-led playground leadership program that encourages all children to participate in activities regardless of their gender, size, or ability.

P.A.L.S. key messages are to encourage:

"There's always room for one more!"

"Physical activity is fun!"

"Everyone is welcome!"

Halton Region adapted Peel Public Health's P.A.L.S. program to support your comprehensive bullying prevention, physical activity and/or youth engagement initiatives in your school. In addition, Developmental Assets® are included in the program to enhance student skills, experiences, relationships, and behaviors that will enable young people to develop into healthy individuals.

The P.A.L.S. program offers:

- Intermediate students (Grades 4 to 6) the opportunity to be "P.A.L.S. Student Leaders" to gain valuable communication, leadership, and conflict resolution skills while leading games on the playground.
- School staff/parents/volunteers to be "P.A.L.S. Supervisors" and work with a group of "P.A.L.S. Student Leaders".
- Students to be physically active and engaged at recess.
- Structured play and safe activities during recess while still having fun.
- Anti-bullying messages and conflict resolution.
- Developmental asset building and youth engagement opportunities.

P.A.L.S. is a Valuable Program for your School!



A Peel Health Program

Playground Activity
Leaders in Schools

The objectives of the P.A.L.S. program are to:

- Increase physical activity of children on the playground
- Decrease conflict and reduce the incidence of playground bullying
- Provide leadership opportunities and build Developmental Assets® for students

P.A.L.S. and Physical Activity

P.A.L.S. provides opportunities to improve physical activity levels of students during school recess as students participate in a variety of structured activities. Research shows that children 5-11 years and youth 12-17 years are currently not active enough to stay healthy. Currently only 31% of children and youth are active for 60 minutes per day and fitness levels have declined in all children and youth. About 31% of Canadian boys and 25% of Canadian girls are now classified as overweight or obese (Statistics and Trends Physical Activity Report, Halton Region 2012).

P.A.L.S. and Conflict & Bullying Prevention

As children move through elementary school, their peer relationships take on greater influence and they begin to congregate in areas where adults may not always be present (in the bathroom), or where they can be easily hidden from view (in the playground) (PREVnet, 2014). Approximately 12% of girls and 18% of boys reported bullying others at least twice in previous months. 15% of girls and 18% of boys reported being victimized at least twice over the same time period, (PREVnet, 2014).

P.A.L.S. provides support for organized play and fun activities to do at recess that can decrease bullying incidents. Games teach children social skills and playing with others to help them have a positive view of themselves.

Also, P.A.L.S. promotes skill development amongst the student leaders such as:

- Communication skills
- Problem solving skills
- Team work/fair play
- Conflict resolution
- Responsibility

These skills will help to build better peer relationships, social skills, respect and understanding, and positive role modelling, which can decrease the frequency of teacher intervention in resolving conflict and lead to less bullying incidents on the playground.

P.A.L.S. and Leadership & Developmental Assets®

P.A.L.S. offers skill development for Student Leaders such as communication, problem solving, organization, and cooperation. They learn that leadership is about getting people to work together to accomplish something. In addition, students are provided with opportunities to explore, develop their competencies, and build Developmental Assets®. As a P.A.L.S. Supervisor, you have a unique opportunity to be an Asset Builder in your school and incorporate Developmental Assets® into everyday practice.

Developmental Assets® is a framework developed by Search Institute™ that represents common wisdom about the kinds of positive experiences and characteristics that young people need and deserve. Building Developmental Assets® in students promotes positive behaviours and attitudes and helps protect young people from problem behaviours.

There are 40 identified assets that children need to succeed for healthy child and youth development. These assets fall under eight categories:

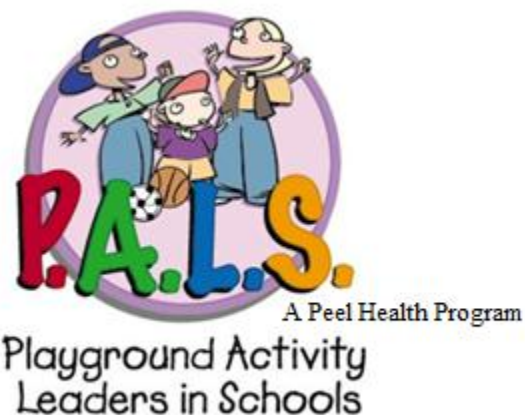
- ♥ Support
- ☀ Empowerment
- 🏠 Boundaries and Expectations
- 🕒 Constructive Use of Time
- 💡 Commitment to Learning
- 😊 Positive Values
- 😊 Social Competence
- 👍 Positive Identity

The more assets children have, the less likely they are to be involved in risky behaviour and the more likely they are to make healthy choices. According to the Halton Youth Survey 2012/2013, children with more developmental assets revealed improved physical activity, mental wellbeing, and self-esteem, than those with lesser number of assets (Statistics and Trends Physical Activity Report and Mental Health Report Halton Region, 2012-2013).

In **(Section 3: Supervisor Materials)** of the Toolkit, the P.A.L.S. Supervisor Handbook provides a description of Developmental Assets® and examples of how to practice Developmental Assets® in the P.A.L.S. Program. The Student Leader Facilitator Guide highlights the Developmental Assets® categories supported in the student training.

For additional information about Developmental Assets®, please see **(Section 7: Additional Resources-Developmental Assets)** of the Toolkit or visit the Search Institute™ at www.search-institute.org.

Enjoy the journey to being a great P.A.L.S. Supervisor!



8 Simple Steps to Implement P.A.L.S.!

As P.A.L.S. Supervisors, you will be encouraged and responsible to oversee the program and implement the following steps:

- Step 1.** Gain commitment from Administration
- Step 2.** Engage P.A.L.S. Supervisors and review program
- Step 3.** Equipment and Resources
- Step 4.** Recruit and train student leaders
- Step 5.** Develop a Schedule and Routine
- Step 6.** Promote the program and invite participants
- Step 7.** Support P.A.L.S. Supervisors and leaders
- Step 8.** Obtain feedback about the program

***Become familiar with all the materials in the P.A.L.S. Program Toolkit. The P.A.L.S. Supervisor Handbook will help facilitate these steps.**

Step 1: Gain commitment from Administration

- P.A.L.S. fits into the HDSB/HCDSB Improvement plan and School Improvement plan.
- Solicit school support with (2) other enthusiastic school staff (i.e. School Administration, Safe School Action Teams/Wellness Committees, Child and Youth Counsellor, Physical education Teacher or a parent/volunteer).
- Share the P.A.L.S. program at a staff meeting so all staff are aware of this new initiative.

Step 2. Engage P.A.L.S. Supervisors and review program

- Recruit 2-3 staff, and/or parents/volunteers, to take on the role of P.A.L.S. Supervisors to support the program.
- Review your P.A.L.S. Supervisor roles and responsibilities found in Supervisor Handbook (**Section 3: Supervisor Materials**) of Toolkit.
- Attend one 3-hour training about the P.A.L.S. Program and how to implement into your school. (**Section 2: Supervisor Training**) of the Toolkit.

Step 3. Equipment and Resources

- Understand P.A.L.S. games, required equipment, and funding opportunities to purchase equipment.
- Consider visual identifiers for P.A.L.S. leaders (i.e. Pinnies, logo t-shirts).

Step 4. Recruit and train student leaders

- Determine the grades eligible to apply as P.A.L.S. Leaders (Grades 4-6).
- Students are provided with a P.A.L.S. Application form and Parental Permission Form (**Section 4: Student Leader Materials**) of Toolkit.
- Total number of students trained depends on the number of participating students (i.e. 10-15 leaders on the schoolyard at each recess).
- P.A.L.S. Student Leader training takes about 4 hours to complete. Students will be given a Student Leader Handbook to follow (**Section 4**) of Toolkit.
- As a P.A.L.S. Supervisor, you will be facilitating this training. The P.A.L.S. Student Leader Training Facilitator Guide (**Section 3: Supervisor Materials**) of Toolkit will help you to organize the training.

The sessions of the Student Leader training cover:

- Qualities of a Leader and Leadership styles
- Communication skills
- Conflict resolution
- Games
- Safety on the Playground

Step 5: Develop a Schedule and Routine:

- Develop a schedule for the Student Leaders, and determine how many days per week the P.A.L.S. program will be offered at your school.
- Create a P.A.L.S. regular meeting schedule to regroup and touch base with P.A.L.S. Supervisors and Student Leaders (i.e. 2x per month).

Step 6. Promote the program and invite participants:

- P.A.L.S. Program, Supervisors, and Student Leaders can be introduced at an assembly. This will allow students to become familiar with the program and games.
- Promote the P.A.L.S. on P.A. announcements.
- Launch the program.

Step 7. Support P.A.L.S. Supervisors and Student Leaders:

- Provide ongoing support and mentoring during regular meetings with P.A.L.S. leaders.
- Spend time problem-solving and include them when making decisions.
- Provide incentives and celebrate successes (i.e. prizes for students participating during recess, playground leader of the week, year-end celebration).

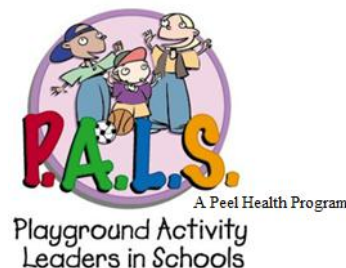
Step 8. Obtain feedback about the program:

- ☑ Feedback helps you to gain a better understanding of how to improve P.A.L.S. for the needs of students, parents, teachers, administrators of the school.
- ☑ Allow for time to regroup at the end of the program (i.e. at the end of school year) to obtain feedback from Student Leaders, P.A.L.S. Supervisors, and participants. (**Section 6: Program Feedback**) of the Toolkit provides sample feedback tools.

Tips to consider for sustaining P.A.L.S. all year round!

- ☑ Weekly leader meetings- teach leaders new games.
- ☑ Equipment readily available, and organized (i.e. storage bins).
- ☑ Keep announcements going through-out the year to remind participants of the games, rules, and the fun!
- ☑ Flexibility- allow the leaders and participants to play the games that interest them the most.
- ☑ Have interesting challenges and awards.
- ☑ Have a "Game of the week"- announce the game and where it came from, or have students create their own game!
- ☑ Spot prizes for participants and leaders when seen playing the games, once per week on playground.
- ☑ Introduce games during gym time.
- ☑ Introduce new P.A.L.S. games at each assembly.
- ☑ Keep P.A.L.S. going in the winter with winter games.

Playground Activity Leaders in Schools (P.A.L.S.) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)



1. What is the P.A.L.S. program?

Playground Activity Leaders in Schools is a playground leadership program that encourages all children to participate in activities regardless of their gender, size or ability. P.A.L.S. is a peer-led program in which children are trained to be P.A.L.S. Student Leaders to plan and lead fun and safe activities on the playground at recess.

2. Why should schools implement P.A.L.S.?

P.A.L.S. complements comprehensive school health initiatives such as bullying prevention, physical activity, youth engagement, healthy schools, in addition to supporting Safe School Action Teams/Wellness Committees. Furthermore, P.A.L.S. is a valued program that builds capacity and supports sustainability within the school community.

The objectives of the P.A.L.S program are:

1. To increase physical activity in the playground
2. To decrease conflict and reduce the incidence of playground bullying
3. To provide leadership opportunities and build Developmental Assets® for students

3. How can a school start the P.A.L.S. Pilot Program?

P.A.L.S. Supervisors are needed to implement the program. It is recommended to have at least 2-3 committed and enthusiastic school staff and/or parents/volunteers to join. The following materials are available for P.A.L.S. Supervisors:

- ✓ P.A.L.S. Toolkit and resources for review
- ✓ Telephone support (Dial 311) for more information

4. What is the role of the P.A.L.S. Supervisors?

As a P.A.L.S. Supervisor, you have the unique opportunity to build Developmental Assets® in students. You are also responsible for implementing the following P.A.L.S. Program steps:

- ✓ Step 1. Gain commitment from Administration
- ✓ Step 2. Engage P.A.L.S. Supervisors and review program
- ✓ Step 3. Obtain Equipment and Resources
- ✓ Step 4. Recruit and train student leaders
- ✓ Step 5. Develop a Schedule and Routine
- ✓ Step 6. Promote the program and invite participants
- ✓ Step 7. Support P.A.L.S. Supervisors and Student Leaders
- ✓ Step 8. Obtain feedback about the program

5. What is included in the P.A.L.S. Toolkit?

The Toolkit available to download online includes 8 Sections:

Section 1: Program Overview and Implementation Steps
(Summary and frequently asked questions)

Section 2: Supervisor Training Presentation (For School Staff only)

Section 3: Supervisor Materials (For School Staff only)

- ✓ P.A.L.S. Supervisor Handbook (1 copy)
- ✓ P.A.L.S. Student Leader Training Facilitator Guide (1 copy)

Section 4: Student Leader Materials (For students only)

- ✓ Student Leader Application Form and Parent Permission Form (1 copy)
- ✓ P.A.L.S. Leader Handbook (1 copy)
- ✓ Student certificates for training and achievement (1 copy)

Section 5: Games & Safety

- ✓ P.A.L.S. Game Book (1 copy)
- ✓ Ontario Physical Activity and Health Education (OPHEA) Safety Guidelines
(Note: *Please consider safety guidelines as per school policies).

Section 6: Program Feedback (tools)

Section 7: Additional Resources (Developmental Assets, Bullying Prevention, Youth Engagement, Funding Opportunities, Healthy Celebration Ideas)

Section 8: References (List of references)

6. Will there be further P.A.L.S. trainings offered?

We are hoping to have P.A.L.S. resources available on Halton Region's website in the new year and will reassess the need for future trainings.

For more information, please contact: Patricia Codner (codnerp@hcdsb.org) or Patricia Webber-Callaghan (Webber-CallaghanP@hcdsb.org) at Halton Catholic District School Board; or Tanya Woods (woodst@hdsb.ca) at Halton District School Board. You can also call 311 and talk to a Public Health Nurse on the Family Health Information Line at Halton Region for support.

7. Who trains the P.A.L.S. Student Leaders at each school?

The P.A.L.S. Supervisors (i.e. school staff, parents/volunteers) train the P.A.L.S. Student Leaders.

8. What does the P.A.L.S. Student Leader training cover?

- ✓ Qualities of a leader and leadership styles
- ✓ Communication Skills
- ✓ Games
- ✓ Conflict Resolution
- ✓ Safety on the playground

9. How long is the P.A.L.S. Student Leader training?

The training takes approximately 4 hours in total to complete. The training can be divided into two or more training sessions depending on your supervisor/student availability.

Examples of training day options:

Option 1: Divide the training into two sessions

- Initial training day 2.5 hours
- Second training day lunch meeting 40 min

Option 2: Divide the training into four sessions over four nutrition breaks.

10. How much does the P.A.L.S. program cost?

You should consider the following when implementing the program:

- ✓ The cost of the equipment you purchase for use on the playground.
- ✓ Time commitments of the P.A.L.S Supervisors on promoting the program, selecting leaders, arranging training, etc.

11. Where do I find P.A.L.S. resources to learn more about the program?

Dial 311 for more information.