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# New play equipment

**By Sarah Sobanski**

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge Hastings Prince Edward has delivered new play equipment to the North Hastings Children's Centre.

Outdoor natural play equipment from was installed in eighteen childcare centres throughout the county. It was purchased as a part of the programs Run. Jump. Play. Every Day initiative which encouraged kids to get active.

?Natural play equipment is playground equipment that comes from or integrates into the natural environment,? said local project manager for the Healthy Kids Community Challenge Hastings Prince Edward Emma Pillsworth. ?Research indicates that children prefer natural play spaces to those that are man-made, which is why we selected this equipment over typical man-made play structures. It is important to reconnect children with their natural environment to encourage outdoor active play.?

The centres were chosen based on their participation in the challenge's Bringing Nature to Life workshop earlier this summer. As many as 80 early childhood educators attended to learn about reconnecting children with nature.

The challenge reported equipment was selected based on the unique needs of each childcare centre. North Hastings Children's Centre selected a trough and block system.

?The trough and block system encourages problem solving, social development, and gross motor movement in outdoor spaces,? explained Pillsworth. ?In combination with the portable water pump, children are able to manipulate the system and work together create a path for water to flow.?

She added, ?When children are outside, they move more, sit less, and play longer. This equipment will encourage children to move in new and creative ways, and make it easier for local Early Childhood Educators to engage children in outdoor, active play from a young age.?