



A kayaking program for youth

Introducing kayaking at the pool or local lake is an excellent way to engage youth in a healthy outdoor pursuit that can become a lifelong interest. With the newly developed Kayak 4 Life program, we can help you organize a tremendously fun program that:

- covers curriculum outcomes,
- introduces kids to a new competitive or recreational sport,
- teaches water safety,
- challenges all students.

Developing fundamental paddling skills at an early age will give individuals the ability to stay active throughout their youth and into adulthood. It will enable individuals to enjoy a variety of water sports activities later in life, including: canoeing, sailing, rowing, rafting, sailboarding, paddleboarding, surfing and general boating.



When the basic paddling skills are taught along with the safety and health & wellness components, it becomes a well-rounded program that brings students out into the community. Connections between the school and the local facilities (usually the pool, but sometimes lakes or rivers) are made and help students to become active for life.

This program can be delivered by pool staff, local volunteers, or teachers who take the CKC Pool Kayak Instructor course. It can be set up to supplement the Physical Education curriculum or can be an extra-curricular program run by the local pool.



Outcomes

The **Kayak 4 Life** program covers Physical Education curriculum outcomes from all provinces, including Alberta.

Alberta Physical Education K-12 (2000) Program of Studies			
			
<p>General Outcome A: Students will acquire skills through a variety of developmentally appropriate movement activities; dance, games, types of gymnastics, individual activities and activities in an alternative environment; e.g., aquatics and outdoor pursuits</p>	<p>General Outcome B: Students will understand, experience and appreciate the health benefits that result from physical activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional Fitness • Body Image • Well-being 	<p>General Outcome C: Students will interact positively with others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Fair Play • Leadership • Teamwork 	<p>General Outcome D: Students will assume personal responsibility to lead an active way of life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effort • Safety • Goal Setting / Personal Challenge • Active Living in the Community

There are three distinct levels in the Kayak 4 Life program that relate to the physical maturity of the students:

1. **Elementary Students** (Grades 4-6, ages 9-11)

Focus on Fundamental Movement Skills: Developing balance, propulsion and steering control for boats, confidence in water, water safety skills and having fun on the water.

2. **Junior High Students** (Grades 7-9, ages 12-15)

Focus on Physical Health and Wellness: Creating opportunities for active sport participation, especially children with weight issues, physical inactivity problems and disinterest in team sports. Building open water safety skills and having fun on the water.

3. **Senior High Students** (Grades 10-12, ages 15-18)

Focus on Outdoor & Environmental Realms: Integrating paddling into individual recreational sports, outdoor programs, environmental awareness and water management strategies. Building river safety skills and having fun on the water.

Timeline

A kayaking unit can be as simple as an introductory 1 hour session, or as involved as a multi-week program, which can ultimately get the students ready for an overnight outdoor excursion.

Ideally, we would recommend as much time in the pool as possible, but here are some guidelines:

- Sessions should generally be 45 minutes to an hour and a half in length. Less than 45 minutes is not usually long enough to have everyone fully active in the pool. There is a lot involved in getting the students ready to paddle, including choosing the right boats, demonstrating wet exits, etc.
- Don't forget to factor in the time students will need to change into their bathing suits and towel off and change after the session.
- 2 - 5 hours of pool time, with students in the pool for at least 45 minutes at a time, would be ideal if you were planning on having the students complete 1 or 2 levels in the *Passports to Paddlesports*.
- **Teachers:** If you are planning to bring your class to the pool during the school day, you may need to plan with another teacher so as to have enough time to get there, do the activities in the pool, and return to school. There are lots of curriculum connections that can be made by combining a kayaking unit in P.E. with a language arts or science unit that deals with rivers, the water cycle, ecosystems, etc.
- If you aren't sure how comfortable your students are in the water, it is recommended that you take your class to the pool to swim prior to the kayaking sessions. Use this time to identify any non-swimmers or students who are uncomfortable around water.



Logistics

Kayaking is a natural fit for kids after grade three, that can be easily integrated into the pool's and the school's programming functions. The local swimming pool provides a great facility that can be used for this purpose. In communities without an indoor pool, an outdoor pool or beachfront area can be used in June and September when the water temperature rises sufficiently to provide a comfortable experience.

The big question is **Who is going to teach the skills?** Over the past couple of years, CanoeKayak Canada and the Alberta Whitewater Association have worked very hard to revamp the kayaking instructor program. Now, there are kayak instructor courses which have been designed specifically to train teachers, pool staff and community members to teach kids kayaking at their local pool or lake.

Just as pools train their staff to be swimming instructors and aquafit instructors, we are encouraging them to train one or more staff members to be CKC Pool Kayak Instructors. Certification courses are run throughout the year, throughout the province. If you or someone you employ has the desire to become a certified instructor, check out our website for training courses; it can take as little as one weekend to get the certification and you don't have to be a kayaker to teach kayaking in the pool.



The second question that comes up is **Where do we find kayaks to use?** Check with your local pool or kayak club who either have a fleet of kayaks and gear that may be available for use, or who might be able to point you in the right direction. Or consider doing what some pools and clubs have done: Apply for a grant from the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation and build up a fleet of your own kayaks. Local kayaking businesses also offer courses that include all necessary boats & gear.

Logistics for Teachers - *At the Pool*

The standard 25 meter – 6 lane pool is capable of handling 15 kayaks comfortably and this allows ½ of a class to get on the water at one time. The ratio of instructors to students in a pool environment with a lifeguard on duty is 1:15 but an assistant is highly recommended to assist with equipment issues. Some pools have other facility-specific limits, which may be different depending on the age of participants or activity (i.e. adult kayak polo may be different from the grade four P.E. class). It will be important to ask the facility what their limit will be for your class. Depending on your situation, you may have to divide your class into two or three groups. Some suggestions of how this can be managed include:

- The whole class together on the pool deck for the intro talk about gear, safety, etc. then break into two groups. Depending on the number of boats permitted in the pool, you may have only a few students who need to sit out. Rotate these students through and have them sit in the hot tub or work on the pool deck on another project while waiting. (See p. 9 for other examples from teachers.)
- Use the buddy system, where each group of 2 students gets one boat. They help each other with the equipment and the boat, and switch off when the instructor asks.

Logistics for Teachers - *At the Lake*

The ratios and safety concerns are increased, but if you have the opportunity to get your students kayaking at a local lake, it will be a more intense, authentic experience within the natural environment. Check out the ***Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools - July 2008*** for more detailed information, and also see what your school division's policies are on outdoor education activities. See the appendix for local paddling clubs in Alberta who could assist you in putting on a session outdoors.

Transportation Issues for Teachers

Transportation is always an issue, as it eats up class time and money. If you are at one of the lucky schools within walking distance of a pool, you've got it made. If you have to bus the students, it makes sense to book the pool for as long as possible each time you go, so talk to the other teachers in your school to work out some flexible scheduling during your kayaking unit.



Service Providers & Local Clubs

There are several kayaking businesses in Alberta who will put on a fantastic kayaking unit for a fee. This can cover anything from transportation to pool rentals to instruction by certified coaches to gear rental.

There are also local clubs in many communities who have gear and instructors that are potentially available during the school year.

See the appendix for contact information for clubs and kayaking businesses.

Considerations for Pool Managers

Pools play a key role in the teaching of kayaking. The first experiences in a kayak in the warm water of a swimming pool helps students to learn the basics of the wet exit without the "cold water response" that often happens in our Alberta lakes and rivers. If students can practice getting in and out of the kayak in a warm, friendly setting like their local swimming pool, they are more likely to want to continue developing their paddlesport skills.

- We see pools as our first partners in the development of paddlesport skills, knowledge and attitudes, so we have developed this document and the *Passports to Paddlesports* to help you develop kayaking programs in your community pool.
- Safe boating skills and water safety messages are an integral part of the Kayak 4 Life program, and we hope students will take this knowledge with them from the pool to the lakes and rivers around them as they grow up.
- You can run after school programs on your own or courses in conjunction with local P. E. teachers - each community and facility is different so we encourage flexibility in the programming.
- Teaming up with a school group is a great way to have more people using your facility during the school day.
- Consider having at least one of your staff certified at the CKC Pool Kayak Instructor level 1. See our website for more information on training courses (www.albertawhitewater.ca).



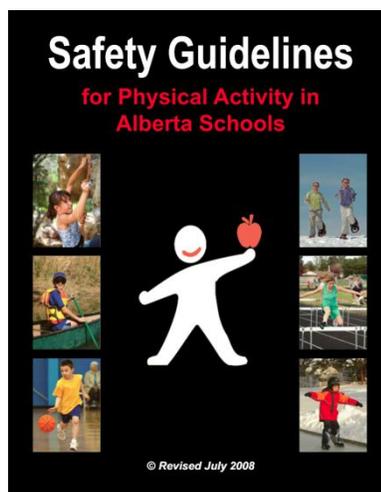
Qualifications & Supervision

Considerations for Teachers

Many teachers wonder how to adequately supervise students when they can't fit the whole class in the pool at once. Others want to integrate a kayaking unit but lack the skills and experience themselves to teach kayaking. Here are a few points to consider:

- When at the pool, a certified NLS lifeguard will always be on deck watching the pools. This should be an employee of the pool who is familiar with all the safety protocols and procedures specific to that pool. This is what you pay for with your pool rental. Some municipalities have joint use agreements with the schools, so often the only cost you will have is the guard fee (as little as \$35 in some cases).
- Many swimming pools are starting to train their lifeguards to be Pool Kayak instructors, similar to how some are swimming instructors, aquasize instructors, etc. Ask at your local pool if they have anyone available to teach your class. If they don't have anyone, suggest that they look into training a staff member and give them the Alberta Whitewater Association website for more info on the Kayak 4 Life program.
- Many communities have local kayak clubs who sometimes have instructors available during the school day. These instructors may be able to come out and teach your class. They may also have kayaks and gear available for use. See the appendix for contact info.
- Contact the Alberta Whitewater Association for information on when and where you can get certified to teach kayaking on your own. There are usually several training sessions each spring & summer around the province. If there are enough people in your community who want to become certified, you can arrange a training session in your town/city.
- Everyone teaching Physical Education in Alberta as well as anyone taking students on field trips should be familiar with the *Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools* (2008). Look online for this important document which will help you become aware of the things to consider when taking students kayaking. It is also your responsibility to ensure that you are familiar with your school & board policies for field trips and the provincial guidelines for P.E.





The **Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools** (2008) states:

- Prior to giving students access to deep water (above chest height) for swimming or other activities in which a PFD will not be worn, students must be able to meet the Swim to Survive Standard, a sequence of three skills: roll into deep water, tread water for 1 minute, and swim 50 m.
- A properly fitting lifejacket/PFD should be used to support weak or non-swimmers in water deeper than chest height.

Usually at the pool, younger students are all required to wear PFDs when kayaking, but this changes with older students and is up to the instructor's discretion. If you know there is a weak swimmer in your group, it's a good idea to have everyone in a PFD at first. When at the lake, PFDs are always required to be worn.

The *Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools* also describes three categories of supervision which are based on principles of general and specific supervision, taking into consideration the risk level of the activity, skill level of the participant, maturity of the participant and the participant's ability to monitor the risk to themselves:

1. "Constant visual" supervision means that the teacher is physically present and watching the specific activity in question.
2. "On-site" supervision entails teacher presence but not necessarily the constant viewing of one specific activity.
3. "In-the-area" supervision means that the teacher could be in the gymnasium or room while another activity is taking place in an area nearby the gymnasium or room. Note that in-the-area supervision is not adequate for ECS Program students.

Here are some examples of situations which have worked for different teachers:



Elementary

One grade 5 class with 26 students does a Kayaking and Health & Wellness unit. Prior to going to the pool, the teacher, (who is a CKC certified Pool Kayak Instructor) explains the assigned activities that are to be completed at the pool. Once at the pool, the whole group listens to the safety talk and introduction to kayaking while on the pool deck.

Since this pool only fits 10 kayaks at a time, the teacher has divided the students into 3 groups (9 -9 -8). One group gets to go kayaking while the other two are on the pool deck/in the viewing area. They are working on cooperative activities; the written components are collected at the end of each day to check on their progress.

Depending on the pool's schedule, the pool is booked for 1.5 hours or 2 hours per day, giving the students just enough time for a brief intro to kayaking. They return to the pool 3 times during the week.

The lifeguard provides "constant visual" supervision, and the teacher provides "on-site" supervision while getting equipment ready, instructing, and supervising in the change rooms and on deck/in the viewing area. Depending on the group, the teacher may ask for a few parent volunteers to assist with supervision in the change rooms and on deck on these days.



Junior High

Grade 7 and 8 teachers team up to deliver a combined unit on Water to students in both their P.E and Science classes. The P.E. teacher takes 10 students to the local pool for an hour and a half. This gives them enough time for travel, changing, and paddling. Meanwhile, the science teacher stays at school and facilitates a group project which covers science outcomes in both grades 7 and 8. The next day, 10 more students go to the pool with the P.E. teacher... this is repeated until all the students have the chance to go to the pool.

In this situation, students get the opportunity for small-group instruction with one teacher, and cooperative learning in a large group with another teacher. The lifeguard provides "constant visual" supervision, and the P.E. teacher provides "on-site" supervision while getting equipment ready, instructing, and supervising in the change rooms.



Senior High

One grade 10 class goes to the nearby recreation facility 5 days in a row. The first day is spent as a large group (24 students), going over the week's activities. The teacher brings them around the fitness facility (the gym) and demonstrates the proper use of the equipment. They also tour the pool deck, looking at the facility and the kayaking equipment they will be using next. Assignments are handed out and discussed.

For the next 4 days, the class is divided into two groups of 12 students each: One group goes to the fitness centre, the other goes to the pool. The students in the fitness centre are supervised by a volunteer who is familiar with the facility. The other group at the pool is taught by the teacher and supervised by a lifeguard. Since both the pool and fitness centre are in the same building, "in-the-area" supervision is possible for the fitness facility, and "constant visual" supervision is possible at the pool. After the first week, the groups switch facilities for 4 more days of activities.



All Ages

One teacher teams up with a local yoga instructor. The pool provides a CKC Pool Kayak Instructor who, in conjunction with the supervising teacher, instructs 10 kids in the pool at a time, while the yoga instructor does a 20 - 30 minute yoga session on the pool deck or in the viewing area with the remaining students. There is always a lifeguard on duty, watching the pool. After 20 or 30 minutes, the groups switch.

On the following day at the pool, the students who are not paddling watch (and actively follow) a yoga video in the viewing area, while the teacher keeps an eye on both groups.

On the third day, the students who are not paddling watch a kayak video and complete a kayak vocabulary crossword. The lifeguard provides "constant visual" supervision, the instructor and yoga expert teach, and the teacher provides "on-site" supervision while getting equipment ready, supervising in the change rooms and on deck/in the viewing area. Depending on the group, the teacher will ask for a few parent volunteers to assist with supervision on these days.



Costs



Appendix

Contact Information

Clubs

Calgary

Bow Waters Canoe Club <http://www.bowwaters.org>
info@bowwaters.org
(403) 235-2922

Calgary Kayak Club <http://www.calgarykayakclub.com/ckc/main/about.asp>
dampyak@yahoo.com

Paddle Junkies <http://www.paddlejunkies.com/>
info@paddlejunkies.com

Waterwerks Kayak Club <http://waterwerks.ca/>
info@waterwerks.ca

Go to the Alberta Whitewater Association website to find all the kayak clubs in your area.

<http://www.albertawhitewater.ca/find-club>

Calgary Area Kayak Businesses

Aquabatics Calgary <http://www.aquabatics.com/instruction/>

Rocky Mountain Paddling Centre <http://www.calgarypaddlingcentre.com/>

Undercurrents <http://www.undercurrents.ca/lessons.html>

