

BOKS Frequently Asked Questions

Overview Questions

Question: *What is BOKS?*

Answer: BOKS stands for **Build Our Kids' Success** and is a FREE morning physical activity program designed for elementary school age children. Led by school community volunteer trainers, BOKS aims to make physical activity a priority in the morning to help mentally prepare children for a day of productive learning.

Mission: To promote the profound impact of physical activity on a child's mind, body and community.

Goals:

1. Begin the morning with active play to jump start kids' brains
2. Increase opportunities for children to be physically active and gain nutritional knowledge; so that in turn they may develop healthy, life-long habits;
3. Empower communities to collaborate and make a positive difference in children's lives.

Question: *Why was BOKS developed?*

Answer: In 2009 Kathleen Tullie, mom, co-founder and Executive Director of BOKS, read the book *Spark*, by Dr. John Ratey, which states "exercise is the single most powerful tool that we have to optimize the function of our brains." *Spark*, which clearly defines why kids should be active before school, inspired Kathleen to create a morning physical activity program at her children's elementary school. With school approval and a group of passionate volunteer moms, BOKS was launched.

Question: *Who are the program partners and what role do they play?*

Answer: BOKS is initiated by Reebok and the Reebok Canada Fitness Foundation, and is funded in partnership with the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Canadian Football League and PROPEL Centre for Population Health Impact. BOKS offers a unique program to help curb the inactivity and growing chronic health and behavioral issues for children across Canada. Together, the partners of BOKS are able to offer the tools, user-friendly resources and mentorship that enable BOKS to deliver a robust fun physical activity program.

Question: *What makes BOKS unique?*

Answer: BOKS is designed to be a FREE turnkey grassroots program that enables communities to offer access to more physical exercise at our schools. The premise of BOKS is to ensure that kids are active in the morning to realize the greatest impact on their academic abilities. BOKS is an ongoing program throughout the school year that offers a 24 week curriculum of fun fitness classes



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and celebrates student achievement along the way. BOKS offers a unique mentorship program through the Canadian Football League and empowers kids around the world to discover their potential through the effects of being physically active.

Program Questions

Question: *Does the program have to run before school or can it run during or after school?*

Answer: The premise of the program is Active Kids = Active Minds. The BOKS program is intended to occur in the morning as numerous studies have shown that the effects of being physically active are most impactful when performed at the beginning of the day. We highly recommend running first thing in the morning.

Question: *Our school already has P.E. Is BOKS meant to supplement or replace P.E.?*

Answer: BOKS provides the opportunity for children to increase their daily physical activity in an effort to achieve the medically recommended amount of 60 minutes of MVPA (Moderate to vigorous physical activity) every day. BOKS focuses on having fun in a non-competitive environment. We have found that P.E. teachers who also work as BOKS trainers incorporate elements into their PE classes. BOKS encourages P.E. teachers to work with the BOKS team in your community as it can be mutually beneficial for the students and the school!

Question: *How much space is necessary for BOKS?*

Answer: BOKS kids are very active in class so it is important to determine an adequate class space for both inside and outside. While you may be able to have the entire school population participate in BOKS outside, you need to consider how many students will safely fit inside during bad weather days. We also suggest you measure out a 400 meter course for running. This course can be utilized as the physical activity metric/assessment tool to see how the program is impacting children.

Question: *Can we combine BOKS with our already established before-school program?*

Answer: If there is a before school program already in place, then encourage the children to join BOKS a couple of days a week. This is a great way to involve children that are already at school early in the morning and energize them for the school day.

Question: *What time will the program start and how long will it run?*

Answer: Many BOKS classes start one hour before the start of school. However, you can back into your answer based on the start of the school day. Make sure to allow at least 5 minutes for drop off in the morning and 10 minutes to transition to class with at least 40 minutes of physical activity. If breakfast is served, children can transition right to the cafeteria without much difficulty.

Question: *How many weeks does the BOKS program run for?*



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Answer: We provide a 24 week curriculum, divided into two 12 week sessions that contains 3 unique lesson plans per week, thus allowing a school to run the program all year. BOKS can be started at any time throughout the school year. However, we recommend that the program be consecutively run no less than 8 weeks, 2 times per week for the participants to get the full benefits of physical activity prior to academics.

Question: *Is the program for all elementary students or just a few grades?*

Answer: The BOKS program was originally designed for grades K-6, however we have expanded programming for grades K-8. In K-8 schools, we recommend the children in grades 6-8 materials offer suggestions on how to utilize senior students as Junior Trainers.

Question: *How does student registration for BOKS work?*

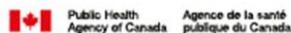
Answer: Suggested registration materials are downloadable from the Trainer Hub. Registration forms should include all pertinent information about the participant including emergency contact information and medical information. It is important to provide potential participants with detailed instructions about when and where to return the registration forms. Once you have established your participants, you can send out a Welcome Letter and Weather Protocol documents, so parents know the specific details surrounding the program. It is a good idea to share the participant/contact list with your school nurse so that he/she can cross-reference it to the emergency information she has on file as well.

Question: *How many kids participate in the program?*

Answer: BOKS strongly recommends a 1:20 ratio, however this ratio may fluctuate depending on the space available and the trainers comfort level with the size of the group.

Question: *How should participants be chosen if there are more applications than available spots?*

Answer: Spots available should be determined by how many Volunteer Leaders your program has, keeping in mind the recommended 1:20 ratio. BOKS recommends registering participants based on a lottery system rather than first-come first serve. If more children apply than spots are available, create a waiting list. If students that have registered for the program do not show up, advise that you will be removing their name off the attendance list to allow a child from the waiting list into the program. Be sure to communicate the process with the school community (i.e. let them know if their child misses a full week without communication, they risk losing their spot in the program). If you don't feel comfortable with this or you have no attendance issues, children on the wait list can have priority for spots at the next session.



Question: *If a family has more than one child interested in participating, what happens if the class reaches capacity?*

Answer: BOKS should guarantee that either all siblings will get into the session or none will.

Question: *Is attendance taken every class?*

Answer: Taking attendance is important because through regular attendance and participation, you can measure the program's impact on the participants. Trainers will want to follow up with parents or guardians if too many classes are missed. Schools need to know if the children have shown improvements from the program or if their lack of improvement is from poor attendance. Having strong attendance is more important than having a vast enrollment list with few attending participants.

Question: *What type of equipment is needed?*

Answer: The critical equipment needed to run BOKS is pretty minimal. Cones, balls, stop watches, whistles and a first aid kit. Every school is different and the program offers the flexibility needed to modify any lesson plan to accommodate the needs of the school. BOKS makes every effort to supply schools with start-up equipment. If equipment and supplies are a concern for your school, please contact us at boksCanada@bokskids.org to see how we can help.

Question: *What about injuries?*

Answer: The lead trainer should have a first aid kit. Trainers (at least the Lead Trainer) should be certified in CPR. Additionally, the BOKS Trainer Hub provides an Emergency Action Plan to be used as a guideline if there is a critical situation. The EAP should be reviewed with all trainers. Lastly, when in doubt always call 911. There is an accident report form, also found on the Trainer Hub that should be filled out with a copy going home with the child and a copy going to the school nurse. If the nurse is not available during BOKS hours each lead trainer is responsible for knowing where children's inhalers or other medical needs are stored in case of an emergency. If the child's medical needs are serious it is recommended that a parent or guardian is present during class time.

Question: *Do participants have to attend every class?*

Answer: It is advised that children attend as many classes as possible. In order to see the benefits of the program, consistent attendance is critical. Additionally, classes are staffed for the maximum number of children and it will be unfair for children that want to participate but can't because of space limitations.

Question: *Will the BOKS program be provided in English and French?*

Answer: The BOKS program will be available to both English and French speaking schools over the course of the Canadian rollout.



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Funding Questions

Question: *If the program is free, do we need to worry about additional funding?*

Answer: BOKS provides the curriculum and training for free. BOKS is also making every effort to supply schools with start-up equipment where needed. However, there are certain costs associated with the program for things such as first aid supplies, and copying documents. Schools may also choose to enhance the program with optional items like sound equipment and megaphones etc. Program costs typically decrease significantly after the first session because all of the program materials will have been acquired.

Question: *What kind of results do you have to support the theory of the program?*

Answer: BOKS has collected survey results from teachers and parents since the program started in 2009. Some of these results are included in the school power point presentation. Additionally, BOKS has engaged with PROPEL (University of Waterloo) and NIOST (National Institute of Out of School Time) to perform ongoing evaluations of the program with select schools to obtain further evidence on the positive impact of physical activity on a child's mind.

Question: *What kind of evaluation has BOKS performed?*

Answer: There are two kinds of evaluations being performed:

- 1. Process:** Reviews the process of rolling out and running the program. The evaluator conducts site visits, focus groups with trainers and participants and interviews with principals, PE teachers and school nurses.
- 2. Impact:** Accesses the impact the program is making on the participants. This includes using pedometers or accelerometers to measure MVPA (moderate to vigorous activity), 400M metrics, the surveys (teacher, parent, participant and survey), looking at standardized test results, demographics, attendance and behavior records.

Question: *Can we use your evaluation results in our materials?*

Answer: Yes, we prepared a summary for your use. Please reach out to boksCanada@bokskids.org with your contact information requesting the results.

Trainer Questions

Question: *How is the lead trainer identified?*

Answer: Principals, teachers, school faculty are all encouraged to get involved in the program. The Lead Trainer has historically been the BOKS advocate who pitched the program to the school or was identified specifically by the principal as a good candidate for the position. The Lead Trainer should be identified as someone who can be responsible for both administration of the program and classroom leadership if that is helpful for the schools specific situation. All



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designated Trainers can only advance to have continuous contact with the children and school community after supplying the Principal with proof of a Vulnerable Sector Screening from the Regional Police.

Question: *Does a staff member from the school need to be the Lead Trainer?*

Answer: While principals, teachers and school faculty are equally encouraged to get involved in the program, BOKS does not need to be led by a staff member of the school. BOKS can be led by any Champion of Change in a community; a parent, grandparent, volunteer or other community member. Many schools and school divisions however do require a staff member to be present on the premise for the BOKS classes to take place. Be sure to check-in with the principal at your school to ensure proper supervision requirements are being met.

Question: *What kind of qualifications does a lead trainer need to possess?*

Answer: The lead trainer does not need to be a fitness professional, however he or she should be able to demonstrate the movements in the program themselves. The most important characteristics for a lead trainer to possess are:

1. Enthusiasm and excitement for the program
2. Ability to manage a large group of children
3. Good organizational and communication skills
4. Reliable and passionate towards working with kids.

Question: *How will the trainers be trained?*

Answer: In person trainings can be arranged through your Regional Coordinator, or by reaching out to BoksCanada@bokskids.org. In addition, all trainers are given access to our Virtual Training Platform, which provides training on how to set up the program, how to run a BOKS class, as well as how to safely and effectively perform the skills of the weeks.

Question: *Is it hard to manage children with such varying ages altogether in the program?*

Answer: In our experiences so far, this has not been an issue. The older children can act as mentors for the younger children. This provides leadership opportunities for them in addition to being role models. The lesson plans are designed to appeal to all elementary school age children. During the end of class game(s), children can be divided by grades to enable a fast or slow paced game. Depending on the lesson plan, children may also choose between two different games at the end of class.

Question: *What happens when BOKS needs to run inside because of weather?*

Answer: BOKS anticipates the need for indoor activity. Most BOKS classes can be adapted to be run both outdoors or indoors. There are also lesson plans that take into account varying school space (i.e. no gym, utilizing classroom space and hallways) that accommodates.

General Questions



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Question: *Did BOKS adhere to a certain philosophy when designing its program?*

Answer: **There are four core pillars that define BOKS values:**

Team work: Team activities and games are a large part of the curriculum. We want children to learn that their individual contribution to the team is important. Children can learn that winning is not the only object but rather putting forth best effort and support for the other team members is equally important. Working as a team will help children develop problem-solving skills and promote social interactions that will help them cope with different situations in life and break traditional peer groups.

Individual Performance: We believe individual performance is a key contributor to confidence and self-esteem. Children should be strongly encouraged to give their best efforts during individual activities, such as running. Trainers can track individual performance over the course of the session. For instance, at the beginning and the end of each session, the trainers can have the children perform a timed run as a benchmark for ability and improvement. By creating the desire for personal improvement, children will be inspired to work as hard as they can.

Leadership: BOKS strives to provide and promote leadership opportunities in the program. Children can gain confidence and develop a sense of self-worth by being given additional responsibilities or privileges during class. Additionally, in K-8 schools, children in the upper grades can act as junior trainers.

Fun: The cornerstone of BOKS. We want children to look forward to BOKS. It is our goal to create a program that all children can enjoy regardless of their age or ability level. So, if something isn't working, put your plans aside and play a game, change things up, keep the children moving and smiling. We want children to associate fun with being active.

Question: *How do we spread the word about the program?*

Answer: There are several ways to "spread the word" about BOKS. At the school level, you could offer to speak at a PTO/PTA meeting, teacher staff meeting, or school committee meeting. Offer to hold a demo class one morning, afternoon or evening to showcase BOKS. Some towns offer district or town wide physical activity events where BOKS would be a great fit. BOKS flyers for school bulletin boards and take home, insert BOKS updates in school email communications and highlight the BOKS kids of the week. Consider contacting a local paper to get some press around the program, participate in community events or offer the opportunity to demo the program one morning, afternoon or weekend to show what it is all about. Some schools have piloted a class, inviting parents and teachers to come with their kids to learn more about the program.

Question: *I have a great BOKS story, how do I get press?*

Answer: Please keep the BOKS community in the loop! If you have a great story, share it with us. If you have something you think would make a great PR story, reach out to the BOKS team. All inquiries should be sent to boksCanada@bokskids.org



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