



## What is the Nova Scotia Active Smarter Kids Project?

ASK is a model for curriculum delivery developed in Norway that involves the incorporation of simple physical activities into the delivery of academic lessons. Physically Active Learning (PAL) activities are delivered by class teachers in 20-30 minutes and are well suited for math and language arts classes. Other subjects can use PAL with simple adaptation. PAL activities are usually delivered outdoors but are adaptable to any setting.

Examples of ASK lessons include relay races in which students work in teams to skip count multiplication tables or skipping while spelling sight words.

The ASK model is low-cost and simple and has been shown to contribute to students' engagement with curriculum as well as in-class cooperation and students' sense of belonging and enjoyment at school.

PAL activities are designed to engage all students and encourage collaborative and cooperative learning. Most activities occur in small groups and offer a balance between the challenge of the lesson content and of the physical activity. Activities are adapted to meet different needs of students and class dynamics. Activities are well-suited to support outdoor learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## Why Physically Active Learning (PAL)?

Imagine a teaching and learning method that allows kids to be kids! PAL encourages students to collaborate and be physically active while engaging in a meaningful way with their academic lessons! NS ASK students love their PAL lessons and ask for them regularly.

Schools that incorporate PAL into their teaching have reported increases in student academic engagement, collaboration and communication amongst their students, and the overall sense of joy and fun during instructional time. Over "brain breaks", PAL has a greater positive impact on academic achievement.

According to one NS ASK teacher, *"there is an abundance of learning going on when running an ASK lesson...because of the physical activity levels, engagement, the problem solving, the quick check-in for assessment all in one lesson."*

## Readiness for ASK /How to use this Document

The purpose of this document is to help champions who wish to support the introduction and sustained integration of of NS ASK Physically Active Lessons (PAL). This tool will help to assess the level of readiness for ASK lessons at a school level or regional level. A champion is any professional working in the fields of education, health promotion, and recreation who wishes to provide sustained leadership in the expansion of this health-promoting teaching and learning method.

Readiness towards the implementation of ASK lessons can be assessed at both the regional and school levels. The purpose of this document is to help determine if ASK physically active lessons are a good fit for your region and/or school.

To assess your region’s readiness for ASK, complete the questions on the following pages. The questions are based on results from a project evaluation that helped identify key elements to successful implementation of ASK. The first page focuses on readiness at a regional level, and the second page focuses on the school level.

If you successfully answer the majority of questions on behalf of your region or school, you’re ready to get started with this engaging and health-promoting teaching method! Please see page 5 for contact information for the project.

## Funders and Partners

The NS ASK Project is supported by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage, the Nova Scotia Health Authority, the Health Promoting Schools Committee within the South Shore, the South Shore Regional Centre for Education, and the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg.





## Regional Level Readiness for ASK

Is your region ready to start implementing ASK physically active learning?

Answer the following questions. Please reach out to the NS ASK Project Lead, Britt Vegsund, if you have any questions about what is included below.

- Does an HPS committee exist in the region and are you a member of this partnership?
- Does this HPS committee and RCE representatives support a partnership approach to improving physical activity in the school setting during instructional time?
- How does the RCE system improvement plan align with the principles of ASK?
- Have RCE administrators expressed an interest in ASK?
- Is the RCE willing to provide interested principals, schools and/or teachers with opportunities for professional learning in ASK / physically active learning?<sup>1</sup>
- Is the RCE willing to support interested principals, schools and/or teachers with on-going ASK implementation support provided by the NS ASK project?
- Is the RCE willing to showcase ASK within the region and province via communications and social media?
- Are there principals within the RCE that are willing to have multiple classrooms participate in the NS ASK Project?
- How does the HPS team and RCE champions see ASK contributing to other goals, services, and approaches of the RCE and the NS Department of Education and Early Childhood Development? (For example: how can ASK contribute to social emotional learning, culturally responsive pedagogy, etc.?)



## School Level Readiness for ASK



### Is your school ready to start implementing ASK physically active learning?

Answer the following questions. Please reach out to the NS ASK Project Lead, Britt Vegsund, if you have any questions about what is included below.

- Has the principal expressed interest in bringing ASK to the school?
- Can the principal identify teachers for whom ASK would be a good fit?
- Are there at least 2 teachers at the school who are keen to start with ASK lessons?
- To what extent does ASK align with existing or future efforts related to outdoor spaces and outdoor play at the school?
- Is there pre-existing or anticipated alignment of ASK with the School Success Plan?

Has the principal expressed a commitment to:

- permit teachers to participate in ASK PD and access on-going implementation support?
- make provisions in the school schedule for ASK lessons?
- enable ASK teachers to participate in a broader community of practice for ASK teachers?
- make provision for indoor spaces for ASK lessons in winter / inclement weather / permit the use of hallways for ASK?
- support the purchase of ASK gear if desired / necessary through discretionary budgets, and/or support teachers accessing school-based PE equipment for use during ASK lessons?
- identify a teacher who over time would become the in-school ASK champion for other teachers?
- champion ASK among all teachers so ASK teachers have a good climate for success?
- integrate or align ASK into their School Success Plan goals or strategies?
- showcase and promote ASK to parents and community via communication and social media?

## NS ASK Resources and Contacts

For general inquiries about NS ASK and physically active learning (PAL) please contact:

To schedule a NS ASK Professional Learning session at your school please contact:

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### Additional resources:



NS ASK YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAhng1dWOARBWCACeWPM9KA>

ASK Resources for Teachers:



<http://southshoreconnect.ca/ns-active-smarter-kids-ask-resources-for-teachers/>

NS ASK Background Information:



<http://southshoreconnect.ca/project/education-on-the-move-active-smarter-kids-pilot>