



How-To Guide



2nd Edition—updated 2016

supporting the
Live 5-2-1-0 campaign by **SCOPE**
www.scopebc.ca

Background

What are SCOPE and Live 5-2-1-0?

SCOPE (Sustainable Childhood Obesity Prevention through Community Engagement) is an initiative that partners with communities across BC to promote healthy behaviours among children. SCOPE endorses and coordinates Live 5-2-1-0, and provides the expertise, support and tools that local decision-makers need to make the healthy choice the easy choice for children.

Live 5-2-1-0 is a simple, easy-to-remember message to help kids and families adopt healthy habits. We know that hearing a consistent message supported by a healthy community environment is important. By bringing community stakeholders together to share and support this common message, Live 5-2-1-0 helps build partnerships and create healthy environments where kids can eat well and be active every day.



What are Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes?

Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes are industrial metal jobsite boxes that are installed in community parks and contain equipment and ideas for active play. The boxes are wrapped with colourful vinyl graphics and secured with combination locks; the code to open a Playbox is freely accessible to families through local community websites and/or recreation centres.

Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes offer parents and caregivers new ideas on how to play with their kids, supply the necessary games and sports equipment, and provide unlimited access and opportunity for families to get outdoors and engage with other families through active play. Playboxes help to enhance environments and remove some of the barriers to access for active outdoor play, as well as foster social connectedness.



Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes are only one part of a larger prevention initiative

Many communities in BC have been very enthusiastic about the idea of Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes – however it is also critical to understand that they are simply one example of local action implementation as part of a wider whole-of-community Live 5-2-1-0 prevention initiative. There is nothing to stop communities from implementing Playboxes without the wider multi-sector initiative, but we do know that the Playboxes tend to be more successful in achieving the intention behind them when they're part of a broader multi-sectoral community approach to support Live 5-2-1-0.

To help provide local partners with an overall understanding of the Live 5-2-1-0 initiative and how each sector of a community can play a role, download and share the Live 5-2-1-0 Overview two-page information sheet available here: <http://www.live5210.ca/resources/downloads/>. This is a quick summary that provides some background, as well as explanation of how communities are sharing and supporting Live 5-2-1-0 (including Playboxes) across different sectors, and how SCOPE supports knowledge-sharing between these communities.

Where and why were the Playboxes invented?

The City of Abbotsford has been a SCOPE partner community since 2009. Through the Healthy Abbotsford Partners Group (The City of Abbotsford, Fraser Health, Abbotsford School District, The Abbotsford News, the University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford Community Services and Pacific Sport Fraser Valley), Abbotsford had an opportunity to access funding from SCOPE to engage in an activity in the community that would help to support children and families to Live 5-2-1-0.

When considering barriers to healthy active lifestyles, Healthy Abbotsford identified a number of challenges that families face when trying to 'live 5-2-1-0':

- **Many parents don't know how to play with their kids.** They perhaps grew up in a family that didn't engage in play or they are so busy trying to keep up with everything that they don't have the time to think about how to play with their kids.
- **Lack of money** – buying toys and props to play with outside isn't within the financial reach of many families in Abbotsford.
- **Lack of convenience of programs** – signing kids up for programs can present a number of barriers for parents:
 - » Cost
 - » Location – it's yet another place they have to take their child to/from.
 - » Scheduling – it can be tough to try and fit the program schedule, life is unpredictable
 - » Commitment – for many families, committing to a 6 or 8 week program just feels like it's too much.
 - » Isolation – with busy schedules, lack of interaction with neighbours, and lack of family close-by, social isolation is becoming a significant problem in our community. How do you meet new people? Where do you meet new people? How do you make the time to meet new people? Not only does this lead to social isolation, it also starts to erode the fabric of our sense of community and belonging.



The solution – Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes

In October of 2014, these boxes were installed in three City of Abbotsford parks in three different socio-economic areas. The idea is that by providing parents with ideas on how to play with their kids, the equipment they need, unlimited access and the opportunity to get out and engage with other families, that we can start to make a significant improvement in the quality of life in these families. In this way, Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes are making it easier for families to get outside and get active.

Since that first launch, more than 400 families have signed up for the code to unlock the Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes in Abbotsford. Feedback from families has been positive, and local partners continue to support the maintenance and upkeep of the boxes.

"Hi there, I wanted to let you know what a lifesaver the Live 5-2-1-0 box was. I had dropped my car off to be fixed and had a couple of hours to kill with my two boys so we went to Grant Park to burn off some steam. I had never heard of this before so when I noticed the box I registered online in order to obtain the lock code. I was amazed at the contents inside. My son loves playing ball games and had lots of fun. Thanks so much for this initiative. We will for sure be using it again."

~FAMILY IN ABBOTSFORD

What are the benefits of Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes?

Social benefits of the Playboxes: many social benefits from the Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes have been observed since their installation in Abbotsford; some were anticipated, while others were a surprise:

- Kids are playing with each other with the equipment from the Playboxes. This in turn is breaking down barriers for parents so that they are now meeting and talking with other parents in a way they have not done before.
- For the residents in the area, the increase in children and families in the parks is creating a new energy, a new vibrancy. There are several at-home daycares that are now bringing the children to the park more often to play.
- The Playboxes have also given some of the residents a cause to support, something to take ownership of. The residents are the first to close the Playboxes back up if someone forgets, or to open the Playbox up if a piece of equipment has been left out.
- In one location, the Playbox is on the same property where several soccer teams practice. The coaches encourage the spectating families to go and use the Playboxes and if any soccer equipment is left out, residents put the equipment in the Playbox for the coach to retrieve later.



"I live a block up the road from Pepin Brook Park. When we first moved there the park was actually very quiet, but as of the last few months I cannot believe how busy it is every day. It is great to see all ages playing together."

~FAMILY IN ABBOTSFORD

Local stakeholder engagement benefits: This project allowed the Healthy Abbotsford Partners Group to actively work together on a tangible outcome. The partners contributed in a variety of ways:

- The conceptual design and operational logistics for the Playboxes;
- Design of the games and equipment lists for the boxes;
- Sourcing out local vendors for the various components that were needed;
- Design of more culturally diverse games (currently in progress);
- Research of best practices for this type of project (none were found).

Planning

Local partners

Successful implementation of Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes requires buy-in and collaboration from multiple community partners, who provide input, commitment and support for various aspects of the project. This can include participation in community assessments for location selection, in-kind and funding support for costs (initial and ongoing), donations of the box and equipment, hosting the sign-up registration process to distribute the access code to families, permission and operational support for physical installation of the boxes in parks, promotion of the boxes to families, and personnel support for ongoing maintenance.

- Which partners need to be involved to ensure success? The support and participation of the local Parks & Recreation department is often necessary to allow Playboxes to be placed in municipal parks, as well as to help with physical installation of the boxes. Then, as mentioned above, it's beneficial to involve as many representatives from local sectors as possible to support costs and maintenance, as well as promote the boxes and support their use with kids and families. Reaching out to local children's programs can also be helpful, as they can integrate use of the Playboxes into their programming as appropriate (i.e. childcare providers often use the boxes during the day; Rec Centres can run community programs using the boxes). For example, the MEND program has collaborated on co-promotion of the Playboxes and MEND programming and MEND facilitators have run games & activity nights at the Playboxes.
- This is where the overall Live 5-2-1-0 initiative comes in - the more that Live 5-2-1-0 is already integrated into the community in terms of there being a pre-existing multi-sector stakeholder group that is sharing and supporting the Live 5-2-1-0 message, the more successful these Playboxes are likely to be. If there are already multiple partners across different sectors that are sharing the message with families, are engaged to make



supportive changes to their own practices, policies and environments, and are ‘in the loop’ as part of a coordinated community approach, then families see & hear a consistent and reinforced message in many places, and are also aware of the boxes and encouraged to make use of them by many partners (i.e. family physicians ‘prescribing’ physical activity using the boxes, community services promoting them to families who may struggle to access Rec Centre programs, etc).

Deciding on location

- Ideally, a community needs-assessment process would be carried out, involving engagement of relevant local partners such as community services, childcare facilities, child & youth committees, etc., to gather input on the best locations for potential Playboxes - to see where boxes would make the most difference to families and organizations that might use them.
- Input from the local Parks & Recreation department that would be installing the boxes in local parks (or, alternately, from whatever group is responsible for the grounds where boxes would be located) is important.
- In some communities, a Playbox is installed on the grounds of a host organization (that has sufficient play space on their grounds, and welcomes the public to use it), and the staff of that organization lock and unlock the box each day, which can reduce potential challenges around monitoring and management.

Cost & Logistics

Cost

Cost of the Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes depends a little on what is purchased to put into the box, but on average a box has tended to cost approximately \$1200-\$1500 each. That doesn’t include the cost of installation, which in almost all cases has been covered in-kind by the local Parks department. In some communities, sponsorship from local businesses has been found to help through donations of the jobsite box and sports equipment.

Average cost breakdown per box usually looks something like the following:

- Box - \$450-700
- Heavy-duty combination lock - \$30-40
- Wrapping - \$400-500
- Equipment and toys - \$300 (initial stock)

Box

- The box used in most Playbox installations has been the Knaack 48” Jobsite box, which can be bought through KMS Tools and other retailers.
- Recently, the design of the Knaack 48” box seems to have been slightly altered - grooves and handles are placed slightly differently than they had been previously, and a small hydraulic arm has been added to aid in opening and closing the lid. These changes affect the measurements for the design template for the wrap, because logos and designs need to be correctly placed in relation to grooves and handles. Also, the hydraulic arm which helps to prevent the lid slamming down may help to alleviate concerns about safety. Make sure you check which model of box your supplier is offering.



Wraps

The boxes are wrapped with vinyl wrap signage that is designed to incorporate the Live 5-2-1-0 logo and icons in a way that is bright and fun. Local partner logos are also included on each wrap. The vinyl wrap material is similar to what is often used on local hydro boxes, and should be weather and tamper resistant.

SCOPE can assist with the development of the vinyl wrap signage that covers the boxes. We have a template for the graphic design file for the wraps (including Live 5-2-1-0 logos), and can work with new communities to add their local logos and information to help liaise with local sign companies to ease the process. Contact us at info@live5210.ca if you would like to use Live 5-2-1-0 branded wraps for your Playboxes.



The information that needs to be gathered for the wraps includes:

- Local partner logos in vector file format (EPS, PDF, AI or similar – not JPG)
- Local website URL where people can register for the code to unlock the box
- Local sign company that will be printing and applying the wraps
- Confirmation of box measurements, including grooves and handles

Signs

It's important to have signs inside and/or outside the box to explain to children and families what a Playbox is and how to properly use it.

Chilliwack has experimented with different signs and found its best to include one large sign on the inside lid of the Playbox with these simple, clear instructions:

Here's how to use this box:

- 1) Sign up for free at <URL link> to receive code and Playbox updates
- 2) Play with the toys and RETURN them when you're done... don't forget to LOCK the box!
- 3) Help keep this program running by donating good condition, age-appropriate equipment
- 4) Let us know if this box needs attention by emailing <email address>
- 5) Have fun!



In Abbotsford they also have signs with instructions on how to lock the lock in an effort to deter theft from an unsecured Playbox.



Locking mechanism

- The Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes are usually kept locked with heavy-duty combination locks (though some locations leave the boxes unlocked during the day, with a local partner providing oversight and locking the boxes up each night).
- Originally in Abbotsford, two locks were used on the recessed lock mechanisms that are part of the box; however it was found that these were difficult for users to access. Subsequent versions of the Playboxes in different communities tried other locking approaches, and one of the popular solutions (developed by the community of Hope) is to bolt a hasp directly to the center of the lid/box (see picture). Abbotsford has now revised their boxes and uses a hasp to lock their boxes, and has found it has worked well. Several communities have also welded the lock to a chain that is then welded to the box to ensure the lock itself is not misplaced.



Ordering equipment

- The sports equipment and play items placed in the boxes have varied between communities and over time as communities top up the items in the boxes. Local partners can also contribute valuable ideas for equipment and games that would be suitable for local environments and populations. Each box within a community can have slightly different contents, and often contents are changed periodically (and sometimes surprise seasonal pieces are added) to keep up the excitement and interest in the boxes.
- Labelling the equipment clearly with 'Live 5-2-1-0' in large letters using a permanent marker may help to deter theft (intentional or unintentional).
- Selection of equipment depends greatly on pieces being water resistant and durable, the cost of items, what in-kind donations are available through community partners, and the features of the park - for example:
 - » Large, open grass areas: soccer balls and small pop-up nets, Frisbees, capture the flag flags, baseball gloves
 - » Basketball court: basketballs, street hockey, pickleball nets
 - » Smaller park areas: hula hoops, skipping ropes, playground balls, bubbles
 - » Ping pong paddles and balls for parks with tables

Registration website

Playboxes are usually locked with a heavy-duty combination lock, and the code to unlock the box is shared via a sign-up page hosted on a local partner's website. Most communities require some basic information for registrants to receive the code (i.e. email address); collecting email addresses of registrants allows coordinators to update registrants about changes to the code, as well as upcoming community events or news about the Playboxes. It also facilitates obtaining periodic feedback on the Playboxes through online surveys. The URL of the sign-up website page is included on the wrapping for the Playbox.



Examples of registration pages for Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes in Abbotsford and Chilliwack can be viewed at these links:

<http://www.healthyabbotsford.ca/Live-5210-Login?tkcmd=register>
<https://www.divisionsbc.ca/chilliwack/hkiaccess>

Installation process

In most communities, the local Parks and Recreation Department has provided the in-kind contribution of transporting and installing the boxes. Boxes have been installed by bolting them to pre-existing concrete areas within parks, or pouring concrete pads as needed.

People & Process

Launch events

- Abbotsford's official launch of the Playboxes was on October 7, 2014 at Grant Park. "We had a Grade 2 and a Grade 3 class from a local school attend. The school was close enough that they were able to walk to the park. We had the project lead and project manager from SCOPE, the Mayor, members of City Council and members of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission in attendance as well as a videographer from Global TV. After the official speeches we unveiled the Playbox and let the kids go crazy with the equipment. We had initially planned a series of games to play with them but once that box opened, they self-organized and had a blast. It was a great reminder that all you need to do is give kids equipment and the time and space to play."
- Chilliwack also found that it was helpful to have a core group of kids confirmed to attend the launch event – this also makes a great photo opportunity for any media people who may be attending.
- Some communities have found it beneficial to coincide the Playbox launch with another family-friendly event happening nearby (i.e. farmer's market, neighbourhood block party, fall fair) to increase attendance and to support cross-promotion of community initiatives.
- Engaging community partners to contribute and participate in the Playbox launch is a great way to increase awareness and promotion of the event. Local businesses and organizations may also be able to provide in-kind items (i.e. balloons, flyer printing, non sugar-sweetened beverages) to further support the success of the launch.

Monitoring, maintenance, restocking

Playbox monitoring, maintenance, and restocking is handled slightly differently within each community:

- The Division of Family Practice in Nanaimo oversees the maintenance and restocking of their community's three Playboxes with staff routinely visiting the sites to perform these duties. However, once initial funding for the project is done there are plans in place to transition these responsibilities over to local Neighbourhood Associations who will fulfill this role in the long-term.
- Delta Gymnastics implemented a movable Playbox on their site that allows staff to set the box outside in the morning and bring it back in during the evening. This allows for close monitoring and the regular restocking of equipment.



- Chilliwack put a call out online through their website, e-newsletter, and social media for volunteers to help monitor, maintain and restock the Playboxes. They also partnered with organizations that are located close to the Playboxes to monitor activities in an effort to deter theft and vandalism. They find that by including the community members who use and enjoy this community resource they encourage shared ownership.

Abbotsford's suggested Playbox Stock up Kit (all in a Rubbermaid bin):

- Scissors (to cut the packing off any replacement items that may be bought)
- Ball pump
- BIG permanent markers for marking all the equipment
- Baby wipes for cleaning the inside/outside of the box
- Small equipment – Frisbees, sidewalk chalk, skipping ropes, bubbles etc.
- Extra lock – we had a lock go missing on a box (ours are now welded on with a chain so we don't really need this anymore)
- Any flyers/handouts that we want to put in the boxes
- Extra needles for the ball pump (they tend to break easily)
- Couple of plastic bags in case there is garbage in the box
- Small hand broom/dustpan for the sweeping the inside of the box (they get pretty dirty sometimes)



Vandalism and equipment theft

- In terms of vandalism and theft, there have been some instances, but generally these are not constant and have not occurred to a degree that has undermined community commitment to continue maintaining them. Usually vandalism/theft has occurred at one particular box in communities that have several, rather than the problem being distributed among boxes.
- Abbotsford reports: "We were very aware of the risks of vandalism, theft or damage of the equipment, however, we decided that helping families get active was way too important to not try something like this. One box has been vandalized twice and some of the equipment has been stolen by the same young boy. The interesting thing is that this vandalism and theft has actually increased the community engagement. More of the retired residents who frequently walk in that park are keeping an eye on the box and helping to monitor it. One resident suggested that if we replace the stolen soccer balls and basketballs with ones that were pink the young boys would be less likely to steal them. We took that advice and two months later the pink balls are still in the Playbox."
- As Brenda Adams from Abbotsford, who led the original idea and implementation of 3 boxes there, points out, the average annual maintenance cost to replace equipment, broken locks, etc., has been about \$1500 per year; compared to the annual operating cost of most year-round recreation programs that promote outdoor physical activity for kids,



this is very good value. In addition, because of the joint community partnership needed for the boxes to be successful (and the great opportunity to showcase the support of those partners on the wrapping on the box), communities have had great success in gaining commitment from local partners to support the ongoing cost of equipment replenishment.

- Nanaimo changes the lock codes on their Playboxes routinely (every two months) which they've found to be effective at deterring theft. The new code is automatically emailed to families so they are not required to re-register each time. Nanaimo has also formed a relationship with the local RCMP department who patrol the Playbox area more frequently, especially in the evening and overnight.
- In Chilliwack one particular Playbox in the downtown core experienced repeated thefts that unfortunately lead to the equipment being permanently removed. To ensure local kids still have the opportunity to play, a partnership was formed with the YMCA who host facilitated play nights. A YMCA staff member brings out the equipment, supervises the activities, and then re-collects everything at the end of the session for safekeeping. Chilliwack has also found that it is important to have clear signage both inside and outside each Playbox that explains how to properly lock the box after each use (see photos for examples). In addition, Chilliwack changed their locks to a model that had less space between the body and arm of the lock where equipment could be wedged in to pry it open – which seems to have helped prevent lock damage and break-ins.
- Many communities are exploring a youth ambassador program that would engage local youth to be stewards of the Playboxes.

Evaluation

Tracking the usage and impact of the Live 5-2-1-0 Playboxes is important to know whether they are creating an effective and positive change. Three different methods of evaluation have been carried out:

- Log sheet inside Playbox: a simple paper log sheet and pen/pencil can be attached to the inside of the Playbox lid (inside a clear plastic envelope), so that families can write down the date, how many people were using the Playbox, how long they played for, and any feedback or suggestions they may have.
- Online survey: SCOPE and Abbotsford worked together to design and send out a simple, short online survey to all families who had registered for the code to the Playboxes (as each registrant must provide an email when registering). The questions asked about frequency and location of use, what respondents liked best about the Playboxes, and what they would change. The Abbotsford survey garnered 43 responses (a 15% response rate) and responses were very valuable for refining and improving the Playboxes.
- SCOPE has partnered with Chilliwack and Maple Ridge to carry out a more rigorous pre- and post-observational evaluation of their Playboxes. Data collection is based on the validated SOPLAY and SOCARP frameworks to measure changes in amount of children's physical activity, group/play behaviours and interactions at the Live 5-2-1-0 Playbox locations. This evaluation is currently underway and results will be available upon completion.

For more information and updates about the Playboxes:

Please contact the SCOPE Central Office at info@scopebc.ca or 604-875-2000 x5519.

