1. **What is Come Out and Play?**

To address the prevalence of limited recreation and play opportunities for youth in Michigan, mParks developed Come Out and Play (COAP), an evidence-based and robust curriculum designed for parks and recreation agencies, schools, community centers, and Out-of-School Time (OST) programs, to name a few, to create a culture of play using the great outdoors.

COAP aims to provide the CDC’s recommended 60-minutes or more of daily physical activity in children ages 6-12, creates a culture of evaluation and pre and post measurements, and promotes public parks and the great outdoors as places to become physically active, fit and healthy while having fun. COAP focuses on youth empowerment, goal setting, motivation and community engagement to support an intergenerational use of area parks and public spaces to foster healthy communities.

**Background**

Developed in 2015, COAP has been implemented statewide across parks and recreation agencies, schools, community centers, summer camps, and campgrounds. COAP has been identified by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and the Michigan After School Association as being an evidence-based program with measurable and specific outcomes necessary to improve youth health.

2. **What are the program goals?**

Goal 1: to provide programming that meets the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. Youth should get 60 minutes or more of moderate-or vigorous-intensity aerobic activity daily. Regular physical activity provides many long-term health benefits. Being physically active in nature improves health and fitness, reduces stress, and creates a sense of well-being.

Goal 2: to get youth outside and educate them about nature and Michigan assets through fun physical activities. Benefits connecting nature and health have not been identified in any other physical activity/fitness programs known to date.

3. **What’s the age group for this program?**

While developed for youth ages 6-12 years old, the program has been implemented successfully with youth as young as 5 and as old as 17 years. As a flexible and modifiable program, COAP is applicable to a wide-age range.

4. **How did the program earn “evidence-base”?**

25 parks and recreation agencies across Michigan pilot the COAP program from 2015-2017 as a summer and/or afterschool program. Step and fitness assessment data was collected and analyzed, resulting in statistical significance across daily step count and fitness assessments.
5. **What are the basic program components?**

The main components of COAP include:

- **Facilitators Manual**: step-by-step user manual to implement COAP. Designed to be as user-friendly as possible, the manual explains everything about COAP from how, where, when and why to implement the COAP program. Included in the Manual are sample calendars for implementing the activities, quests, make-and-plays and how to best leverage the great outdoors to improve youth and family play in our parks, trails and recreation.
- **Activity Records & Stickers**: Fun and interactive way for youth to track their steps during COAP and at home with family and friends. The Records have placeholders for youth to get stickers during their COAP program and place them on the records.
- **Quests**: Integrating a family component to COAP is critical to encourage youth and their families to be active in their parks, trails and recreation. Quests allow families to complete various challenges and games in their local greenspaces. Quests were developed for broad use at any park or trail in both a rural and urban setting. Some COAP programs offer incentives for youth and their families to complete the quests, such as t-shirts, water bottles, or free recreation classes.

Other Components of COAP include:

- **Importance of being physically active**
  - Week one of COAP covers topics of healthy living and using the outdoors to get active and be fit.
  - There are 3 lessons during the first week that teach youth about quality physical activity (i.e., reaching 10,000 steps per day), how to use a pedometer, and the importance of bone and muscle strength.

- **Assessments**
  - Youth complete a series of pre (week 1) and post (week 8) assessments to measure cardiovascular endurance, bone strength and muscular strength using the following assessments:
    - 1-mile run/walk
    - Tree sit (wall sit)
    - Push-ups (1-min)
  - COAP leaders will complete a training provided by mParks to assess youth, while also provided video and written instructions for each assessment.

6. **How does it work?**

Each COAP program looks different, and that’s one of the many great things about this versatile program. Having been implemented in afterschool programs, summer camps, drop-in programs, one-time events, and many more, COAP offers many deviations from traditional “play” programs. COAP is not intended to be a stand-alone program rather a program that can be embedded into other events/programs.
This variation in implementation means that COAP works differently in each community. But the backbone of the program is to have youth tracking steps through a basic pedometer device while they play at least 60-minutes of “Activities” (often done as 3 different 20-minute Activities). After school programs and summer camps often complete the full 8-week long program with pre and post assessments. But other camps and one-time event programs have simply selected Activities for youth to play and recorded steps.

Another flexible aspect of COAP is that you don’t have to be a summer camp, after school program, have equipment, be based outdoors, or located near a park or greenspace. The idea of COAP is to be active and have fun doing it! This can be achieved in a parking lot, gym or any other open and safe space!

7. **What is the recommended COAP program size?**
   COAP is provided in packages for 25 youth, but most partners often have multiple COAP groups going at once. In some instances, one summer camp can have over 700 youth participating in COAP.

8. **Is this program only offered during certain times of the year?**
   No, COAP can be offered year round, from summer camps to after school programs. While COAP is intended to be an outdoor-based play program, almost all activities can be done indoors or modified to be done indoors.

9. **Is COAP only for 8-weeks? What if I want a longer program?**
   To show impact, COAP was designed to be 8-weeks in duration for pre/post assessments (week 1, week 8) evaluation. Simply put, view every 8 weeks to be *testing dates* to gain valuable data on program impact- cardiovascular endurance, bone strength and muscular strength. Otherwise, you can operate COAP as a continuous program. With over 50 Activities, each with at least 2 modifies, the program really provides over 100 different activities for youth.

10. **How is the program evaluated?**
    Partners provide a majority of the data that mParks will evaluate post-program, including:
    - Step count
    - Pre/post assessments
    - Survey (5 questions, pre/post)
    COAP leaders will also be given a 10-question post-program evaluation.

    Given this information, mParks will run analysis on the data provided and return a report on total step count, statistical significance of the program on health and wellness, and participant/leaders outcomes.

11. **What are the reporting requirements for implementing agencies (aside from the evaluation level selected)?**
    Depending on the level of evaluation you request, reporting varies. At minimum, COAP requires a final report to gather data on impact and best practices. The required one-page report will ask questions regarding:
FAQs

- Program dates
- Number of participants (including age and gender)
- Total steps completed over the program period (cumulative)
- Any new partnerships generated by the program (i.e., connecting with a youth center to implement programming, summer camp, etc.)
- Successes & Barriers
- 10-question post-survey for COAP leaders
- Any additional comments

Otherwise, the evaluation level each agency selects will dictate the type of data collection and reporting you will submit to mParks for analysis. Each participant will be provided a step tracking log/diary to record steps and pre/post assessments. Again, depending on the level of evaluation selected, data reporting varies. Below is a snapshot of what each level requires:

Bronze: Each participant's tracking log
Silver: Tracking logs + pre/post assessment data
Gold: Tracking logs + pre/post assessment + 5 question survey (pre/post)

12. How do I promote the program?
Any way you can! Schools, youth programs, summer camps, playgrounds, after school programs are all great avenues. You can also work through your local organization, partners, social media, press releases, word of mouth, etc. Learn where youth and their families congregate and spread the news!

13. What are the program costs?
Pricing is based off mParks membership level, and any additional evaluation costs and add-ons.
Sold in packages for 25 youth participants, costs for each package include:
- Premier members: $299
- Basic: $349
- Non-members: $399

Evaluation costs:
- Bronze (step count): $100
- Silver (step count + pre/post assessment): $250
- Gold (step count + pre/post assessment + additional surveys): $400

14. I have more than 25 participants. How do I purchase additional packages?
Additional packages are discounted at 25% each.

For example, if you’re a Premier Member ($299) and want the Silver Evaluation ($250), your total cost is $549.
With an additional package for 25 participants at a discount of 25%, your cost would be $411.75 ($549 *.25).