

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE GRADE

While the evidence has been mounting for some time, this overall assessment makes it clear that when it comes to keeping our kids physically active, Canada is dropping the ball. The responsibility to do better for our kids rests with all of us — parents, policymakers, and all the support systems that lie in between. We must move from awareness to action, and provide our kids with the physical activity opportunities they deserve. This Report Card is designed to help.

What's next? We will be engaging key stakeholders from a variety of sectors in discussions, and in the development of an action plan that will build on existing initiatives to further inform and improve Canada's grade on future report cards.

Active Healthy Kids Canada is dedicated to advocating the importance of high quality, accessible, and enjoyable physical activity experiences for children and youth. We are committed to working with partners in all sectors in a collaborative effort to increase the number and quality of physical activity opportunities for Canada's kids.

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The Power to Move Kids™

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DROPPING THE BALL

CANADA'S REPORT CARD ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

2005

OVERALL GRADE

D

Canada is not making the grade in ensuring that its children and youth are active enough each day to ensure optimal growth and development. Less than half of our kids are expending the energy required to maintain a healthy weight, and to develop healthy hearts, lungs, muscles, and bones.

What we know:

- Growing evidence demonstrates alarming increases in childhood obesity, and forecasts show dramatic increases in type 2 diabetes and risk factors for various other chronic diseases.
- In many of the categories, girls and children of lower income families are particularly vulnerable.
- Canada's kids need to move more and sit less. Data indicates a decline in daily physical activity and increased time in front of televisions and computers.
- Physical activity opportunities in homes, schools and communities are not sufficient. Policies and programs need to be better resourced, and more effectively implemented and monitored.

What we need to know:

- There is much we still must learn about how we are doing and how we can improve as a nation in providing physical activity opportunities for our kids.
- We need more current and comprehensive data to effectively assess and enhance our knowledge in the categories listed in this report.
- Accessing research in progress, and developing new research, are essential to ensuring that each annual Report Card tells us how we are doing and how we can improve.

The first annual Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth provides a snapshot of the state of our nation regarding physical activity behaviours and opportunities for children and youth where they live, learn, and play. The picture is not good, and the pervasive impact on the health of our kids is clear.

REPORT CARD DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first step in the development of the 2005 Report Card was a National Physical Activity Symposium of leading experts from various disciplines. These experts discussed evidence and proposed a variety of indicators that must be assessed to determine Canada's ability to promote and support physical activity participation among children and youth.

The 2005 Report Card is only the beginning. There are areas where national data required for proper assessment does not exist, and are therefore marked on the report card by "INC" for incomplete. Further refinement of indicators and data gathering methodology will be undertaken for subsequent versions of the Report Card, involving input from various issue experts and stakeholders.

The grade assignments reflected here are based on data that currently exists, and include analyses of information gathered from multiple cycles of the *National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth*, the most current results of *The Health Behaviour of School Children Survey* and the *Canadian Community Health Survey*, the *Physical Activity Monitor* from the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, and select research studies and data in the category areas.

The Proceedings of the National Physical Activity Symposium, and a more detailed version of the Report Card that provides further explanation and commentary, are available at www.activehealthykids.ca

CATEGORY – PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/INACTIVITY

INDICATOR	GRADE	COMMENTS
Activity Levels	D	Only half of Canada's kids are active enough each day for basic healthy development. Unstructured and "day-to-day living" activities, shown to have the most health benefit, have been in a steady decline.
"Screen Time"	C-	Half of our kids are spending two or more hours a day watching TV, and they rank among the highest in the world for computer time. Children who watch TV more than 2 hours per day are more likely to be overweight and obese.
Sport Participation	C+	Only 55-60% of children from lower income families participate in sport compared to those from 70-80% of middle and higher income families.

CATEGORY – FAMILY

INDICATOR	GRADE	COMMENTS
Family Physical Activity	D	On average, only 43% of parents are regularly active with their children.
Ensuring Kids are Active	C-	Only half of low income families take their children to physical activities, compared to an average of 60% among all Canadian families.

CATEGORY – COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

INDICATOR	GRADE	COMMENTS
Access and Quality of Programs	C	While community recreation and sport programs are available and make provisions to ensure affordability, assessments of quality of delivery and participation are not consistent.
Community Infrastructure	INC	Evidence demonstrates that the ways in which communities are designed can support or inhibit physical activity participation, but there is no current research underway to assess Canada's neighborhoods.

CATEGORY – SCHOOL

INDICATOR	GRADE	COMMENTS
Daily Physical Education	F	A 1998 Gallup poll reported that 74% of Canadians favour instituting 30 minutes of daily physical education in schools, yet in 2000 only 14% of elementary and 4% of secondary schools provided daily physical education.
Trained Personnel	D-	Only half of elementary and secondary schools report having a formal policy in place to use qualified physical educators.
School-based Physical Activity Opportunities	INC	Current self-report measures are not sufficient to assess what is actually delivered and experienced by students during class time, recess or extra-curricular activities.

CATEGORY – POLICY

INDICATOR	GRADE	COMMENTS
Federal Strategies and Investments	C-	While there is increased attention to physical activity, current strategies are progressing slowly and the funding for the Physical Activity Unit of Health Canada has decreased to 25% of its budget in the early 1990s.
Provincial/Territorial/Municipal Strategies and Investments	INC	Some promising provincial/territorial and municipal strategies are in place, but at this time, there is no nation-wide picture of investment and outcomes.

CATEGORY – HEALTH

INDICATOR	GRADE	COMMENTS
Overweight/Obesity	F	The prevalence of obesity in Canadian children has increased from 2% in 1981 to 10% in 2001.
Chronic Disease Risk Factors	INC	National data that would allow for a full assessment of the long-term implications of prevalence of heart disease and type 2 diabetes are not available.