



**CANADA'S REPORT CARD ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH – 2006**

# CANADA'S OVERALL GRADE 2006: **D**

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The first annual Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth was released in May 2005. As a national snapshot of the physical activity behaviours and opportunities for children and youth, last year's grade of D sounded the alarm and underscored the need for action.

One year later, we're continuing to produce a poor grade. While one year is clearly too brief a period to have yielded the desired grade improvements, we have to double our efforts to ensure that the picture brightens from this point on. Canadians need to know that physical activity is a crucial contributor to the healthy physical, social and emotional development of children and youth.

Although the overall grade remains the same, the 2006 Report Card reveals new data and includes new indicators, together demonstrating where we aren't improving, where we're actually getting worse, and where there are promising areas of opportunity on which we can build.

Most importantly, the Report Card closes with specific recommendations detailing immediate action, so that we can start making a difference right now, while larger scale recommendations and strategies are being put into place. Together, we can help our kids to improve the grade.

## Report Card Development and Research Methodology

Grade assignments reflected in the Report Card are based on current research, and also include analyses of nationwide data sets including multiple cycles of the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Survey, the Canadian Community Health Survey, the Physical Activity Monitor from the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute,

and the 2006 "Tell Them From Me" national online evaluation system. A cross-discipline set of research advisors guided the report card development, which was also informed by a multi-sectoral planning forum. Further information on the methodology can be found in the detailed version of the 2006 Report Card at [www.activehealthykids.ca](http://www.activehealthykids.ca)

## Physical Activity / Inactivity

### GRADE Physical Activity Levels

**D** Less than half of Canada's children meet the minimum daily physical activity requirements to support basic healthy growth and development.

in 2005: D

### GRADE Screen Time

**D-** Less than 20% of children are meeting the Canadian Paediatric Society guideline of two hours or less of screen time daily. More than half are watching 2-4 hours of television daily, and approximately a third are spending two hours or more in front of the computer.

in 2005: C-

### GRADE Organized Sport Participation

**C-** Nearly half of kids participate in organized sport 2-3 times per week, but girls and those from low income families report lower participation.

in 2005: C+

### GRADE Unstructured Sport Participation

**C** Almost two-thirds of kids participate in unstructured sport 2-3 times per week, but girls are nearly 20% less likely to participate. In both cases there is significant decline at adolescence.

in 2005: C+

## Health

### GRADE Overweight and Obesity

**F** New direct measure data indicates obesity in children continues to rise, most notably among adolescents aged 12-17.

in 2005: F

### GRADE Overall Physical and Psychological Well-Being

**C** Approximately one quarter of kids report physical and psychological health complaints — those with higher physical activity level report less complaints.

new

## Policy

### GRADE Progress on Government Strategies and Investments

**C-** Only 17% of Canadian municipalities have a physical activity strategy. Previous federal commitments did not survive election, but 1% of the federal health budget has been promised to physical activity and some tax credits are being implemented. Federal/Provincial/Territorial commitments to increase activity by 10% by 2010 are being implemented, but progress is unclear.

in 2005: C-

## Family

### GRADE Parent Perspectives on Activity

**D** Less than one-third of parents are aware of the recommended guideline for daily physical activity outlined in *Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines for Children and Youth*.

new

### GRADE Ensuring Kids Are Active

**D** Only 55% of parents take their children to physical activities, a drop from 60% in 2000 — low income families are particularly challenged.

in 2005: C-

### GRADE Family Physical Activity

**D-** Only 36% of parents regularly engage in physical activity with their children, and as many as 32% report that they rarely or never play active games or sport with their kids.

in 2005: D

## School and Community

### GRADE Neighbourhood Safety & Support

**B** Canadian families consistently report satisfaction with the level of social support, quality, and safety of their neighbourhoods.

new

### GRADE Built Environment

**INC** Studies have shown links between community design and physical activity, but at present there is still insufficient national data to provide a grade assessment in relation to kids.

in 2005: INC

### GRADE Proximity to Parks and Playgrounds

**B-** Nearly 72% of Canadians report living within one kilometre of a park or playground, and 43% within 2 blocks, but usage and maintenance of these spaces is unknown.

new

### GRADE Access to and Quality of Recreation Programs

**C** 93% of municipalities report programs targeted at kids, with an increase in subsidies for low income families, but low income parents report difficulty in accessing those subsidies.

in 2005: C

### GRADE Active Transportation

**D** Less than a quarter of kids regularly walk to school and less than 10% ride their bike to school.

new

### GRADE Physical Activity at School

**INC** Recent regional studies report low opportunity for daily physical activity in schools, but nationwide data will not be available until fall 2006. Provincial policies have begun implementation in Alberta and Ontario.

in 2005: F

# IMPROVING THE GRADE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

The 2006 Report Card is more than a repeat performance of last year's inadequate grade. It's a message that our society isn't doing well enough to keep our kids physically active and healthy. And while there are some promising long-term strategies being put into place to deal with the problem, we still need ways to address this crisis right now.

We believe the key is to focus on parents to help them engage their families in unstructured physical activity and play. That's why Active Healthy Kids Canada is calling on leaders from government, non-government and corporate sectors to work with us in turning the following recommendations into action:

## 1 Parents aren't seeing the connection between unstructured physical activity and their kids' health.

We need a national, multi-faceted awareness initiative. One that educates, communicates and connects the dots for parents, so that they not only know why unstructured physical activity is so vital, but how to build it into their kids' daily lives.

## 2 Kids are spending too much time in front of the screen.

Let's arm key players who have a direct impact on parents with the guidelines and information they need to help parents limit screen time to a healthy minimum.

## 3 Daily physical activity is not consistent across the nation's schools.

We're inviting provincial governments and non-profit groups to help us support a national commitment to regular daily physical activity in schools, as part of a quality physical education program. In turn, this will give parents a base upon which they can build healthier behaviours at home.

These recommendations, when brought to life through the combined efforts of all sectors working together with Active Healthy Kids Canada, will produce profound, positive change for the nation's children and youth. Be part of the solution. And take this opportunity to make a lasting mark on our kids' health.

To access the detailed version of this Report Card containing more information about the overall grade, indicators and recommendations, please visit [www.activehealthykids.ca](http://www.activehealthykids.ca)



**The Power to Move Kids™**

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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