

ParticipACTION Child and Youth Report Card Fact Sheet of Key Findings and Recommendations

The **2020 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth** is the most comprehensive assessment of child and youth physical activity in Canada, synthesizing data from multiple sources, including the best available peer-reviewed research, to assign evidence-informed grades across 14 indicators.

The 2020 Child and Youth Report Card shows Canadian families are critical influencers in children and youth's healthy habits and overall physical activity.

Families play a crucial role in shaping and influencing all areas of kids' lives – including their physical activity, sedentary and sleep behaviours. Regardless of the family dynamic, family members are direct role models for how young Canadians develop, especially when it comes to healthy movement behaviours.¹ That is why a comprehensive Consensus Statement is included in this year's Report Card to help inform and guide families in practicing healthy movement behaviours together.

Highlights of Report Card Grades:

D+ for Overall Physical Activity

Only 39% of children and youth in Canada meet the national physical activity guidelines of 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day.¹

D+ for Sedentary Behaviours

Family screen time is on the rise. By age 11, over half (53%) of children have their own smartphone, and this increases to 69% by age 12.¹ In 2019, 52% of parents said they spend too much time themselves on their mobile devices, up from 29% in 2016. The proportion of children and youth who thought their parent(s) was addicted to their mobile devices and wished their parent(s) would get off their device increased from 28% in 2016 to 39% in 2019.¹

B for Sleep

Approximately 70% of school-aged children and youth in Canada meet the sleep recommendation within the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth.¹

F for 24-Hour Movement Behaviours

Less than 1 in 5 children and youth in Canada meet all three recommendations within the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth.¹

Additional grades

Active Play: F

Active Transportation: D-

Organized Sport: B

Physical Education: D+

Physical Literacy: D+

Physical Fitness: D

Household: C

School: B-

Community & Environment: B+

Government: B-

How the COVID-19 pandemic impacts movement behaviours among Canadian children and youth:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been both more crucial and more challenging than ever for families to develop and maintain healthy habits at-home. A recent study commissioned by ParticipACTION to support the Report Card release found:

- Only 4.8% of children and 0.8% of youth were meeting 24-hour movement behaviour guidelines during COVID-19 restrictions, compared to 15 per cent prior to the pandemic.
- Since COVID-19, children and youth had lower physical activity levels, less outside time, higher sedentary behaviour, and more sleep.
- Fortunately, parental encouragement and support and parental engagement in physical activity were positively associated with their kids' healthy movement behaviours.

The power of the family:

Regardless the family dynamic, family members are direct role models for how young Canadians develop – especially when it comes to healthy movement behaviours.

- The Report Card highlights that each additional 20 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity by a parent adds 5+ minutes to their child's average daily physical activity.ⁱ
- Children also spend less time engaged in screen-based behaviours if they live in households with screen time restrictions.ⁱ
- Research shows parents who measure as “active” are more likely to have children who also measure as “active”.ⁱⁱ

Making physical activity a regular part of family life does not have to be complicated and it's a great way to build strong social bonds, get hearts pumping and have fun together. The Report Card shares the following 3 tips to help families get more active:

1. Be an active role model

Incorporate physical activity into daily routines and look for opportunities to be active as a family when possible. You can make the most of indoor time by trying at-home workouts, family dance parties and Pilates or yoga.

2. Create a family media plan

Set limits around screen viewing, prioritize screen-free family time and use “device baskets” (bins for personal mobile devices).

3. Encourage outdoor time

Spending time outdoors as a family according to physical distancing guidance is an easy and effective way to increase physical activity, improve mental health, decrease sedentary behaviour and improve sleep quality. Try getting some fresh air each day by going for a walk or even just doing yard work around the house.

ⁱ ParticipACTION. (2020). Family influence: The Role of the Family in the Physical Activity, Sedentary and Sleep Behaviours of Children and Youth. Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth.

ⁱⁱ Tremblay et al [Expert Panel]. (2020). Consensus Statement on the Role of the Family in the Physical Activity, Sedentary and Sleep Behaviours of Children and Youth.