

Results from the 2022 Ireland and Northern Ireland Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Adolescents



ACTIVE HEALTHY KIDS IRELAND

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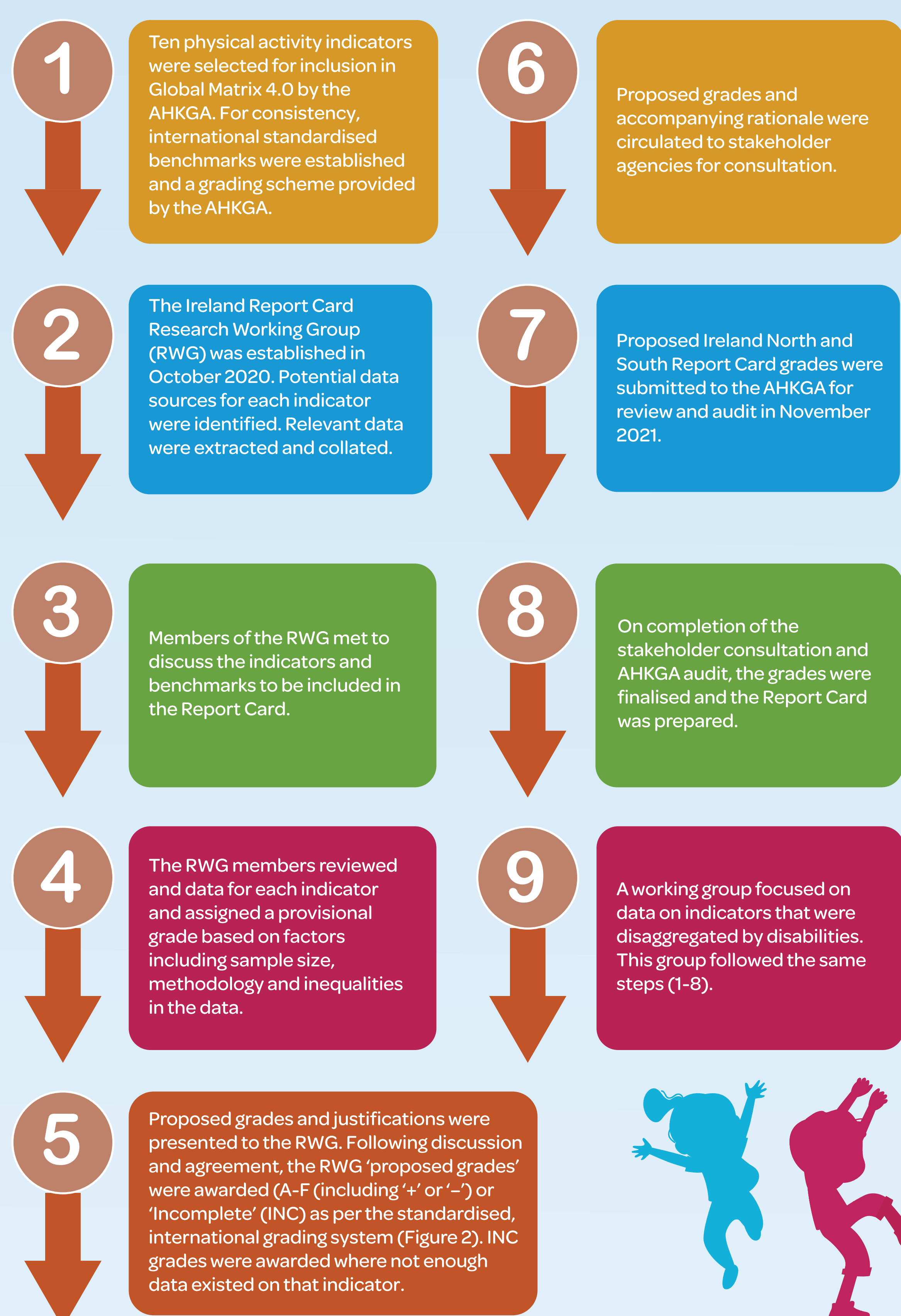
Introduction

Despite efforts to promote PA, a high prevalence of physical inactivity has been reported in children and adolescents across the island of Ireland. The aim of 2022 Ireland and Northern Ireland Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Adolescents was to provide grades across 11 PA indicators for children and adolescents and monitor changes from previous report cards. The 2022 Report Card for the first time, includes an indicator on 'Physical Fitness' and a set of grades specific to children and adolescents with disabilities.

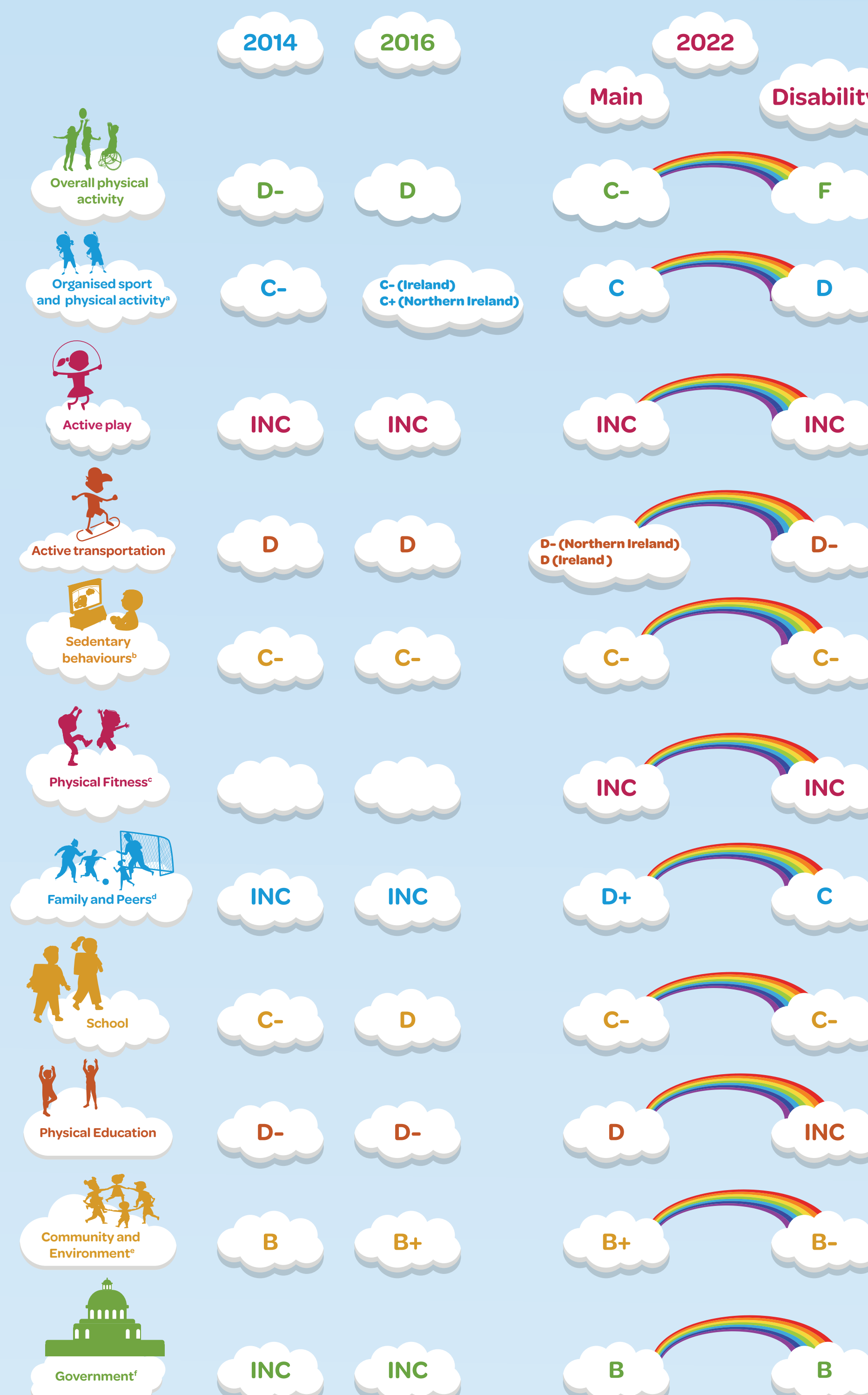
Background

Ireland and Northern Ireland are two independent countries on the same island. Due to the political landscape on the island of Ireland and continued focus on cross-border cooperation by both governments, the Ireland North and South Report Card is presented as a unified report for the whole island. In 2016, the 'National Physical Activity Plan' for Ireland set a specific target to increase the proportion of children undertaking at least 60 minutes of MVPA every day by 1% per annum (3). The new Active Living - Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland launched in March 2022, has a strong focus on children and adolescents, with the goal of providing children and young people with 'the best start in life through sport and PA opportunities' (4).

Methods



Results



Conclusion

Overall the 2022 Active Kids Report awarded a C minus grade for PA in across the Island of Ireland. This means we are succeeding in meeting the benchmark for physical activity with around half our population of children and adolescents. This is an improvement from Grade D in 2016. Positive trends were observed across several indicators, with grades for 'Overall physical activity', 'School' and 'Physical Education' increasing from 2016. Inequalities were identified and suggest that gender, socioeconomic status and age negatively impacted on PA levels in children and adolescents. Data obtained since the implementation of COVID-19 public health measures were not included, therefore future report cards will consider the impact of the pandemic on PA for children and adolescents.

Recommendations

- Continue to develop policy measures that address inequalities highlighted in the report across a range of determinants including disability, gender, socioeconomic status, and age impact on children and adolescent PA levels.
- Continue to progress the development of a framework for the systematic surveillance of indicators related to PA for children and adolescents with disabilities. These include greater representation, and consistency of measurement tools in policy.
- Prioritise research specifically designed to measure levels of activity in children and adolescents with disabilities.
- Address persistent gaps in data availability in relation to a number of indicators, for example, 'Active Play' and for some sub-groups of children and adolescents, for example, data in younger children.
- Increase the use of objective measures across the indicators to help overcome a reliance on self-reported data in relation to PA.
- Action the grade on the Government indicator (B), which was assigned a grade for the first time, to provide further rationale and support for the implementation of the National Physical Activity Plan in Ireland and "Active Living" Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland.
- Future report cards will need to consider the impact of COVID-19 public health measures on PA as data from March 2020 were not included in the grading of this Report Card. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on indicators will need to feature in subsequent Report Cards, when more robust data is available.

Acknowledgements

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