

Healthy Active Kids South Africa 2022 REPORT CARD



The Healthy Active Kids South Africa (HAKSA) 2022 Report Card presents the most current and best available evidence on physical activity of South African children and adolescents. The HAKSA 2022 Report Card builds on previous evidence from the 2007, 2010, 2014, 2016 and 2018 versions, focussing on research that has been published in the last three years.

The Grading

Grades for the Report Card indicators were informed using data synthesised from national and provincial/state-based surveys and local studies.

After evaluating the synthesised data, the Report Card Development Team engaged in purposeful discussions based upon each indicator and predetermined grade benchmarks in order to confirm the indicator grade as per the Global Matrix 4.0 grading rubric. The grades were determined by the % of children and adolescents meeting an evidence-based benchmark as per the grading rubric below.

A⁺ = 94%-100%	C⁻ = 40%-46%
A = We are succeeding with a large majority of children (87%-93%)	D⁺ = 34%-39%
A⁻ = 80%-86%	D = We are succeeding with less than half of children (27%-33%)
B⁺ = 74%-79%	D⁻ = 20%-26%
B = We are succeeding with well over half of children (67%-73%)	F = We are succeeding with very few of children (<20%)
B⁻ = 60%-66%	INC = Incomplete Grade, where data were not available or were insufficient/inadequate to assign a grade
C⁺ = 54%-59%	
C = We are succeeding with about half of children (47%-53%)	

Physical Activity	2018	2022
Overall Physical Activity	C	B-
Organised Sport Participation	D	D-
Active Play	INC	INC
Active Transportation	C	B-
Sedentary Behaviours	F	C-
Physical Fitness	INC	B-
Family and Peer Support	C-	C-
School	D-	D-
Community and Environment	C-	D
Government	C-	C

Table 1: Comparisons between 2018 and 2022 physical activity indicator grades

The benefits of participation in physical activity for children and adolescents are well-established, including not only physical health, but mental health and well-being, social and emotional development, fundamental motor skills and even academic achievement. It is vital that we continue to promote physical activity, at school, at home and at play, to create active citizens. As a priority, we must continue to monitor progress and create active systems to support these goals.

As a country, it is clear that an integrated approach is needed to help to improve South Africa's indicator scores. The Re - ACTION strategic plan is recommended. RE-Assess at regular intervals, Co-create strategies and solutions, Train educators and implementers, Implement to sustain and scale, Organise adequate resources, infrastructure and policy, Mobilise and recruit stakeholders for sustainability. (Details on this strategic plan are presented in the long-form report card).

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Healthy Active Kids South Africa

REPORT CARD 2022

B-

Overall Physical Activity

D-

Organised Sport Participation

INC

Active Play

B-

Active Transportation

C-

Sedentary Behaviours

B-

Physical Fitness

C-

Family and Peer Support

D-

TIMETABLE					
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
8:00					
9:00					
10:00					
11:00					
12:00					
13:00					
14:00					

School

D

Community and Environment

C

Government





Overall Physical Activity

In the absence of current nationally representative data, but recognising that in regionally based samples, between 60% and 73% of children were meeting guidelines, we have conservatively upgraded the Overall Physical Activity grade, from a C to a B-.



Physical Fitness

Although nationally representative data remains sparse, a large regional study of children between the ages 9-14 years suggests that between 60-66% have a cardiorespiratory fitness level at, or above, the 50th percentile.



Organised Sport and Physical Activity

We have allocated a conservative grade of D-, as the sample is not nationally representative. As in previous years, participation was considerably lower in girls than boys. Regular monitoring and evaluation, in partnership with sporting codes, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government will provide a clearer picture of the status of sports participation in children and youth.



Family and Peer Support

Less than 45% of South African adults are meeting physical activity recommendations. Moreover, in a recent provincial survey, 60% of parents were uncomfortable with their children walking to and from school. In another regional study, family and peer support in the form of transport to and from events, and positive encouragement, was linked to participation in sport, but was experienced by less than half of those surveyed.



Active Play

There is insufficient evidence to allocate a grade for Active Play at this time. There is a need to re-define Active Play, so that it reflects the lived experiences of children in Low- or Middle-Income Countries and disadvantaged settings, including activities such as "street play" and making use of their immediate environment. There is a need for a unified data collection method to accurately measure active play within different contexts.



School

While recent data suggests that 70% of schools offer formal structured physical education (PE), less than 80% of children are taught by a physical education specialist. Furthermore, there is no data to show that PE is implemented as intended in the curriculum. Curricular and budgetary constraints, lack of content knowledge and competencies, as well as lack of facilities, have been cited as major challenges. Therefore, the grade remains unchanged from 2018, at a D-.



Active Transport

While we are succeeding with between 60%–66% of children and youth using active transport to and from school and for other journeys, safety from traffic remains a concern. Pedestrian fatalities are the leading cause of death due to injury in children under the age of 15 years, and road traffic deaths in South African children are twice the world average.



Community and Environment

There are some community initiatives, local government, NGOs and community partnerships. However, the perception of lack of safety remains concerning. Moreover, disaffected youth and local government officials reflect a lack of community engagement and the planning and upkeep of community recreational facilities. As such, we have allocated a grade of D, indicating that we are succeeding with less than one-third of children and youth (27%–33%).



Sedentary Behaviour

While this sample is not nationally representative, it reflects the lived experience of a relatively large sample of youth. We have allocated a conservative grade of C-, as the sample is not nationally representative. We appear to be succeeding with adolescent boys. However, sedentary behaviour in adolescent girls remains a concern. More data is needed on screen time and objectively measured sedentary behaviour.



Government

Various government departments have provided financial and infrastructure support to increase opportunities for children to engage in physical activity, including the building of outdoor gyms and cycle lanes, development of recreational facilities throughout the country and support for school sport leagues. However, without ongoing monitoring and evaluation, the impact of these promising efforts remains unclear.

We have upgraded the score from a C- in 2018 to a C in the present report, as these budgetary allocations reflect government policies and strategies from 2020 onwards.