

The 2022 United States Report Card on Physical Activity for Children & Youth

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Introduction

Habitual physical activity during childhood and adolescence is essential to achieving optimal health. The U.S. National Physical Activity Plan Alliance partnered with physical activity experts to develop a Report Card that provides a comprehensive assessment of physical activity and opportunities to be active among children and youth in the U.S. The Report Card cover design is provided in **Figure 1**.

The 2022 U.S. Report Card is the fourth comprehensive assessment of physical activity in U.S. children and youth, updating the Report Cards released in 2014, 2016 and 2018. The primary goal of the 2022 U.S. Report Card is to assess levels of physical activity and sedentary behaviors in American children and youth, facilitators and barriers for physical activity, and health outcomes related to physical activity.

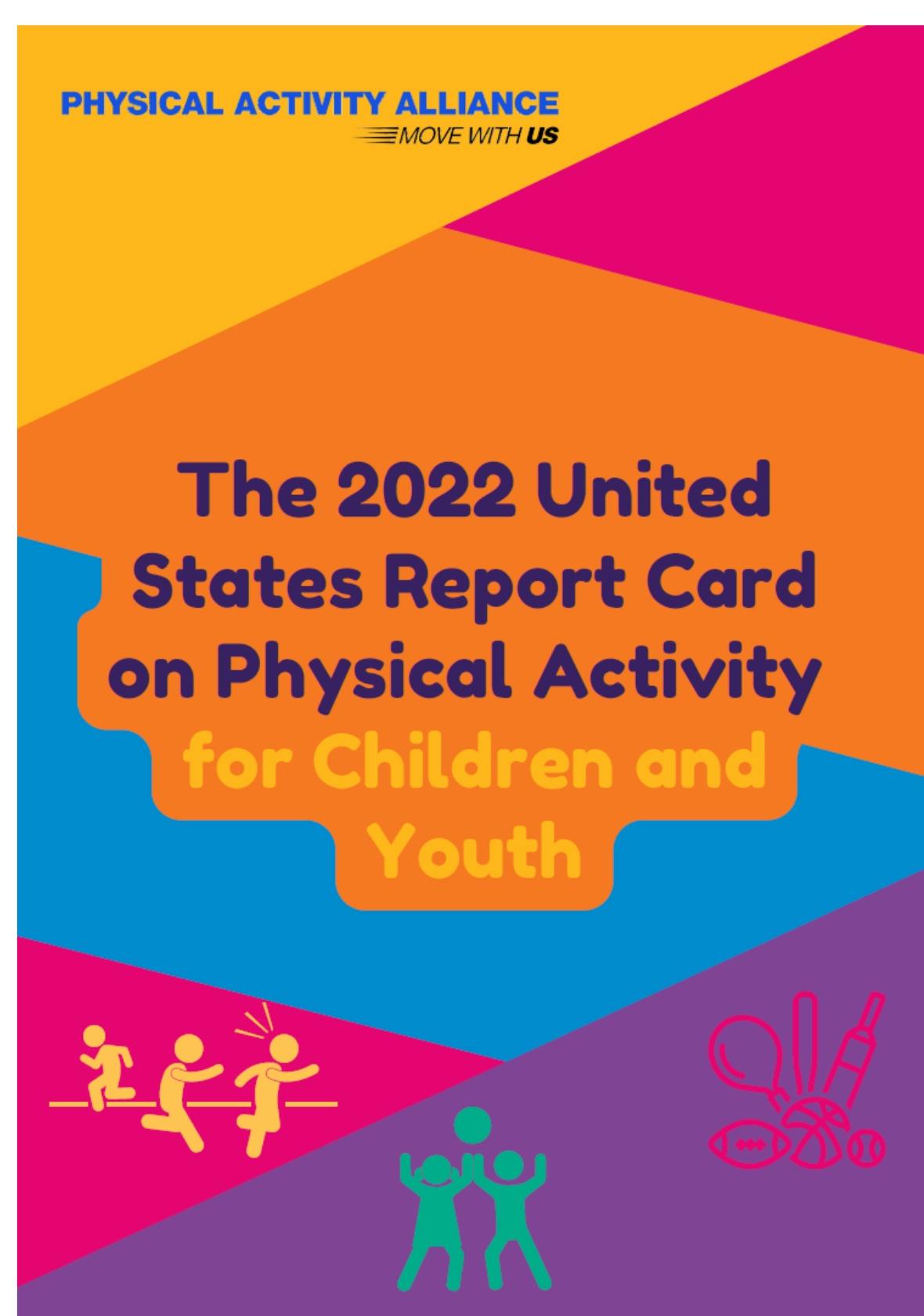


Figure 1. 2022 U.S. Report Card cover

Methodology

The U.S. Report Card Research Advisory Committee was responsible for identifying indicators, the best available data sources, and assigning a letter grade to each indicator.

Ten indicators related to physical activity were chosen: overall physical activity levels, sedentary behaviors, active transportation, organized sport participation, active play, health-related fitness, family & peers, school, community & the built environment, and sleep.

Each indicator was operationalized and data from nationally representative surveys provided an evaluation of each indicator. The best available data source was used as the “primary indicator” to inform the grade assignment. The primary data sources included the National Health and Examination Survey, National Household Travel Survey, National Survey of Children’s Health, and the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System.

Results

The grades reflect how well the U.S. is succeeding in providing children and youth opportunities or support for physical activity. The full list of indicator grades for the 2022 Report Card are provided in **Table 1**.

Figure 2 provides results for active transportation reported in the 2022 Report Card. The prevalence of walking or biking to school was 11% in 2017, which has dropped substantially since 1969.

Table 1. Grades for the 2022 U.S. Report Card.

Indicator	2022 Grades
Overall Physical Activity	D-
Sedentary Behaviors	D
Active Transportation	D-
Organized Sport Participation	C
Active Play	INC
Health-Related Fitness	C-
Family & Peers	INC
School	D-
Community & the Built Environment	C
Sleep	C+

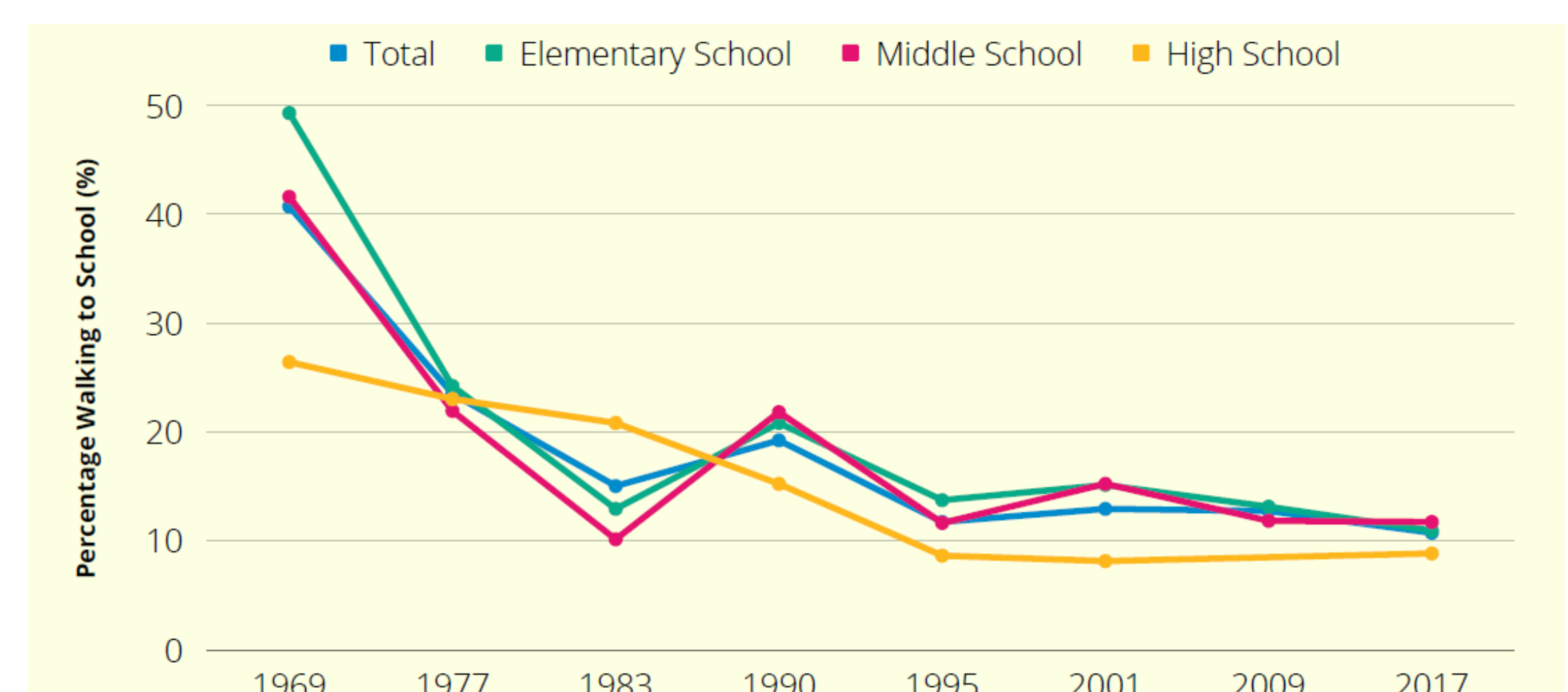


Figure 2. Percentage of children and youth aged 5-17 years of age who usually walked or biked to school from 1969 to 2017, by grade level.

Conclusion

The poor grades on the 2022 report card indicate that children and youth in the U.S. are insufficiently active, and that additional work is required to provide opportunities for children to lead active lifestyles. Unfortunately, the COVID 19 pandemic has had further negative impacts on physical activity in children and youth. There is an urgent need for concerted action from parents, teachers, school administrators, health care providers, and policymakers to put forth compelling and concerted efforts to facilitate opportunities for physical activity for children and youth.

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