

2016 REPORT CARD ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PHYSICAL LITERACY:  
DO OUR KIDS HAVE  
ALL THE TOOLS?

BACKGROUND

This year marks the release of Active Healthy Kids Australia’s (AHKA) second Report Card on Physical Activity of Children and Young People. The purposes of the Report Card are: to improve the health of all young Australians by encouraging them to be more physically active; to inform policy decisions; and to identify where more research is needed.

METHODS

The 2016 AHKA Report Card was developed using the best available national- and state/territory-based physical activity data, which were evaluated by the AHKA Research Working Group (13 children’s physical activity and health researchers from 9 universities) using pre-determined weighting criteria and benchmarks in order to assign letter grades to 12 Report Card indicators.

KEY FINDINGS

As in 2014, Australia was assigned a failing grade (D-) for Overall Physical Activity Levels, with less than 20 per cent of 5–17 year olds meeting the recommended national physical activity guidelines of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. Organised Sport and Physical Activity Participation improved to a B (from a B- in 2014) while Active Transport declined to a C- (was C). Australia continued to perform well in the settings and sources of influence (ranging from a C+ to an A-), however Strategies and Investments declined from a C+ in 2014 to a D in 2016. The traits associated with physical activity (e.g., Physical Fitness and Movement Skills) were also graded poorly (C- to a D) (see Table 1).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Australia is lucky in having excellent physical activity facilities in both communities and in schools: we are well equipped with grassed playing fields, indoor and outdoor courts, and swimming pools, with an abundance of play areas and walk- and cycle-ways.

But why are we still failing when it comes to our children and young people “moving more and sitting less”? Perhaps we need to ask: “Do our kids have all the tools they need to be physically literate and engage in physical activity now and in the future?”

Active Healthy Kids Australia advocates for a coordinated national response to the current physical inactivity pandemic. There is no single solution to this problem. We need a united effort across many sectors in order to see real improvement in children’s physical activity levels. Specifically, an overarching National Physical Activity Plan would unify the country and help encourage the cultural shift needed to make physical activity a daily priority. We need to develop the Physical Literacy ‘toolkits’ of all Australian children and young people so they acquire the physical, social, emotional and cognitive capabilities they need to make the choice to be active (for fun, enjoyment, and better health and wellbeing) at an appropriate level throughout their life.

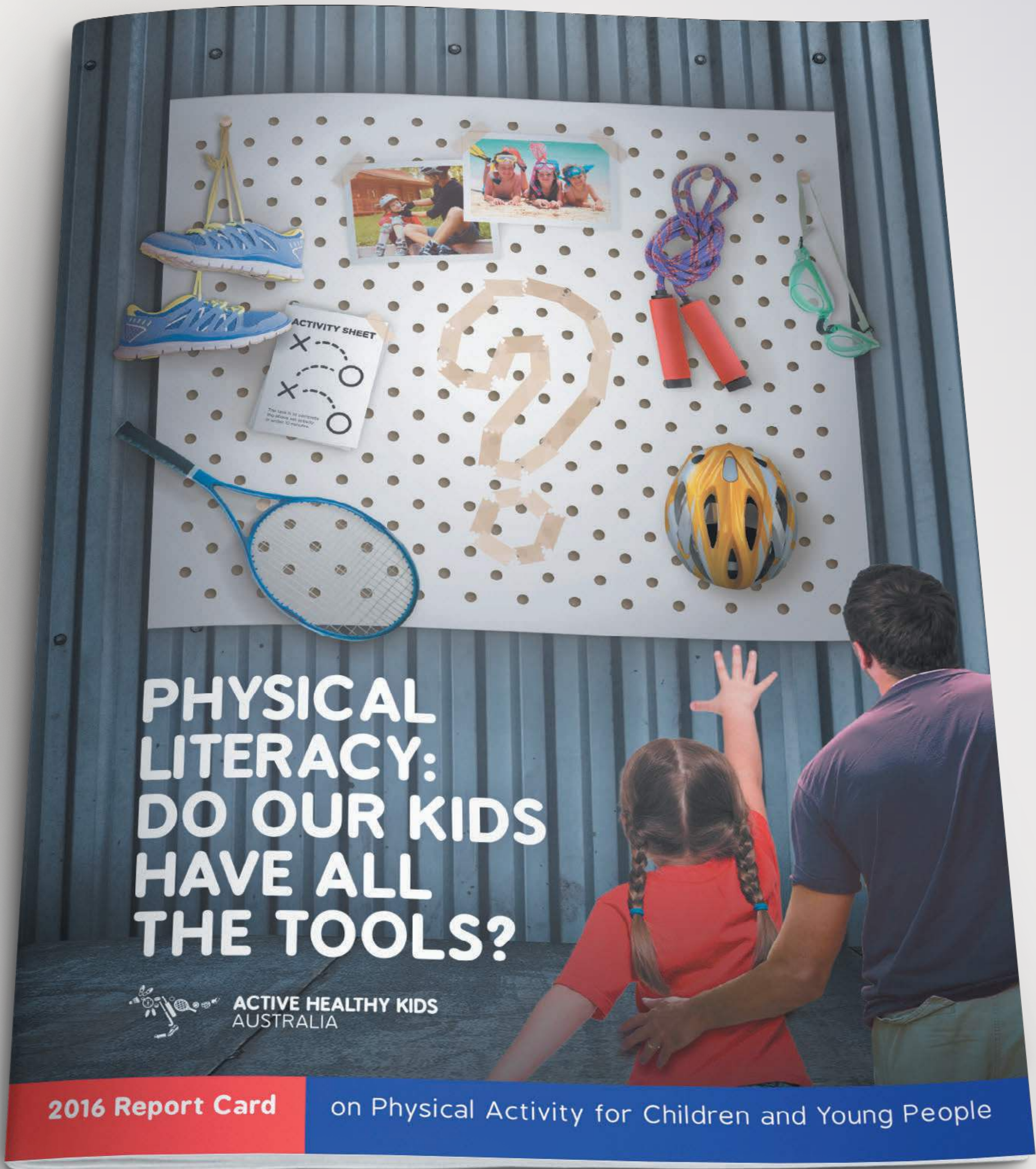


Table 1. Summary of the grades assigned to each indicator in the 2016 Active Healthy Kids Australia Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Young People.

INDICATOR	GRADE	CONFIDENCE RATING *
Overall Physical Activity Levels	D-	☆☆
Organised Sport and Physical Activity Participation	B	☆☆
Physical Activity in Schools#	INC	N/A
Active Transport	C-	☆☆
Active Play	INC	N/A
Sedentary Behaviours	D-	☆☆
Family and Peers	C+	☆
School	B-	☆☆
Community and the Built Environment	A-	☆
Strategies and Investments	D	N/A
Physical Fitness#	C-	☆☆
Movement Skills#	D	☆☆

Note. The grade for each indicator was based on the percentage of children and young people meeting a defined benchmark: A is 81%–100%; B is 61%–80%; C is 41%–60%; D is 21%–40%; F is 0%–20%; INC is incomplete data.  
\* The confidence rating (a 3-star rating system was used) was assigned by the Research Working Group to reflect the representativeness and robustness of the data.  
# Indicators in addition to the core indicators used by Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance.



ACTIVE HEALTHY KIDS  
AUSTRALIA



The University of South Australia is the Lead Research University for the Report Card initiative and the Administering Organisation of Active Healthy Kids Australia.

The 2016 AHKA Report Card was developed via a harmonised process as a part of the Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance.



The National Heart Foundation of Australia is the endorsing partner of Active Healthy Kids Australia, assisting in the dissemination and communication of the 2016 Active Healthy Kids Australia Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Young People.

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