

The 2014 Active Healthy Kids England Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

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Active Healthy Kids England (AHKE) was set up in 2014 to provide a “state of the nation” resource on how England is performing in regard to provision of, and support for, physical activity opportunities for children and young people. AHKE consists of a group of researchers who have collaborated to produce England’s first Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Young People. This work follows the Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card model.”

This Report Card can be used by Local Authorities and policy makers as well as researchers, funders, teachers and public health practitioners to develop physical activity programmes and communications with children and youth, parents and community members.

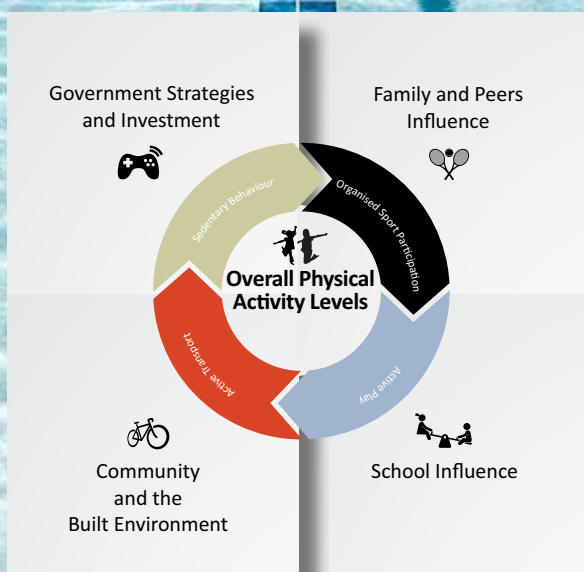
The following four behaviours that contribute to overall physical activity levels have been evaluated:

- Organised Sport Participation
- Active Play
- Active Transport
- Sedentary Behaviour

Different settings and levels of influence that can have an impact on children and young people's physical activity participation have also been assessed:

- Family and Peers
- School Influence
- Community and the Built Environment
- Government Investment and Strategies

Each indicator was awarded a grade (i.e. A, B, C, D, or F) which was agreed among a panel of researchers using available evidence, to show how we are doing in terms of promoting opportunities for physical activity participation in this country.



Our facilities were not built for display, so why are they not being used?

There is very good provision of parks, playgrounds and sports facilities within schools and in the neighbourhood in England to support physical activity opportunities for children and young people. There are also ample opportunities for them to engage in organised sport during and outside of school time. Despite these provisions and opportunities, children and young people's overall physical activity levels received a 'C/D' grade. A major challenge therefore, and one highlighted in this Report Card, is how best do we motivate children and young people to engage with current resource and provision. Similarly, and although sedentary behaviour was graded as incomplete, children and young people seem to be spending long periods of time in sedentary pursuits^{HSE (2008)} and improvement is required across all four physical activity behaviours which have been assessed in this Report Card (i.e. active transport, organised sport, active play and sedentary behaviour).

The proportion of children and young people travelling to school by foot has declined while the proportion of those travelling by car has increased over the past two decades,^{NTS (2012)} and the development of technology has resulted in more children and young people engaging in screen-based leisure pursuits.^{Ogunleye et al. (2012)} Furthermore, there has been no increase in the proportion of 5-15 year olds doing sport since 2008/09 even though London hosted the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.^{TPS (2012-13)} However, it may take some time before we can gauge whether its legacy has been realised and it is encouraging that there are several strategies and initiatives in place to encourage increased sport participation.^{www.gov.uk/dcms} It is imperative, however, to evaluate such initiatives in order to inform, refine, and improve future interventions and policies.

In addition, children and young people and their parents face a number of barriers that may hinder their access to physical activity opportunities (e.g. a lack of time, cost, transport, parental safety concerns etc.).^{Bentley et al. (2012)} These can differ according to specific groups of children and young people and there are certain groups who are more at risk of physical inactivity. Interventions that target such groups are required and should be tailored to their needs and preferences for physical activity.

A number of recommendations have been proposed, as follows, to try and increase physical activity levels in England.



Recommendations for...

...schools

- A variety of physical activity based clubs in addition to organised sport should be offered after school (as sports clubs may not appeal to all children and young people).
- The transition period between primary and secondary school presents an important timeframe (and "window of opportunity") when changes in physical activity levels can occur.^{Jago et al. (2012)}
- Schools need to ensure that PE lessons and physical activity opportunities offer fun and enjoyable experiences that allow for social interaction, particularly for girls,^{Slater & Tiggemann (2010)} to encourage greater physical activity participation both within and outside of school.
- Schools should encourage outdoor play during breaks, make use of 'park and stride' schemes^{van Sluijs et al. (2011)} and cycle safety training opportunities and should work with parents to try and promote increased physical activity levels.

...the neighbourhood and built environment

- There should be more opportunities for physical activity programmes in the community. Mobile youth projects that involve activity instructors promoting and delivering sport and physical activity sessions and providing equipment in community spaces where children and young people hang out may prove useful. This would enable children to access such programmes more easily and barriers regarding transport and cost etc. can be avoided.
- Local councils should arrange opportunities such as community fun days to enhance social interaction and subsequently increase children's peer networks in the neighbourhood so that they have more friends nearby to play outside with.^{Veitch et al. (2010)}
- Policy makers should aim to develop and maintain open and green spaces in communities and provide opportunities for physical activity in urban environments.^{Wheeler et al. (2010)}

...parents and guardians

- Parents need to be made aware of the importance of physical activity regardless of their child's weight^{Corder et al. (2010)} and policy makers need to promote increased awareness of the physical activity guidelines.
- Parent-child interventions that use strategies which aim to incorporate physical activity into everyday life (through active transport for example) are required.
- Interventions that inform parents about risks and how their perceptions compare to reality are required in order to promote independent activity.^{Veitch et al. (2010)}

Summary of indicators and awarded grades

Indicator	Benchmark	Data Source	Prevalence	Grade
Overall Physical Activity	% of children meeting the Government guidelines (for 5-18 year olds) of at least 60 minutes moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity per day. ^{DoH (2011)}	MCS4	7-8 Years: 50.9%	C/D
		HBSC	11, 13, 15 Years: Boys - 28%	
			Girls - 15%	
Behaviours that contribute to physical activity				
Organised Sport	% of children participating in organised sport or physical activity programmes outside school on at least one occasion per week.	Omnibus Survey	57%	C-
Active Play	% of children that engage in unstructured/unorganised active play for several hours a day.	-	-	INC
Active Transport	% of children who use active transport to get to and from school.	NTS	By foot: 42% By bike: 2%	C
Sedentary Behaviour	% of children meeting government guidelines for sedentary behaviour.	-	-	INC
Settings that influence children and young people’s physical activity				
Family and Peers	% of parents/peers who support their children’s physical activity and sport opportunities.	-	-	INC
School	School PE: A- % of schools allocating at least 120 minutes of curriculum PE per week.	PESS	84%	A-
	School Policy: B % of schools offering physical activity opportunities excluding PE.	PESS	49%-78%	
	School Facilities and Equipment: A % of children who have access to facilities and equipment that support physical activity.	School Legislation	N/A	
Community and the Built Environment	Availability of facilities for sport and physical activity: A % of children and young people with access to parks and facilities for physical activity and sport.	MCS4 Extended Schools	71%-90.5%	B
	Use of facilities for physical activity and sport: C % of children and young people who use parks and facilities.	TELLUS4 FACS	41%-66%	
	Satisfaction of facilities: INC % of children and young people who are satisfied with parks and facilities.	-	-	
	Neighbourhood Safety: B- % of children and parents who perceive their neighbourhood as safe.	HBSC TELLUS4	70%-80%	
Policy influence				
The Government	Demonstrated progress through the key stages of public policy making; allocated funds and resources and shown evidence of commitment in providing physical activity opportunities and promoting strategies and initiatives for all children and youth.	-	-	INC



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The Research Work Group consisted of the following researchers who worked together to assign the grades awarded for the 2014 England Report Card:

- Hannah Wilkie (University of Bath)
- Dr Martyn Standage (University of Bath)
- Dr Charlie Foster (University of Oxford)
- Professor Russ Jago (University of Bristol)
- Mary Goad (Loughborough University)
- Dr Sean Cumming (University of Bath)



The long form of the Report Card includes a more detailed review of key findings as well as recommendations for policy makers, public health practitioners, and information on data trends and disparities (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity etc.). You can also find out more details regarding the methodology and data sources that have been used to inform the grades including a full list of references.

Both the short and long form versions of the Report Card can be viewed online at:

www.activehealthykidsengland.co.uk

Next Step

We plan to publish the next Active Healthy Kids England Report Card in May 2015. To do so we need further funding and are seeking partnerships with individuals or organisations that might consider providing financial or other support. Please contact Dr. Martyn Standage of the University of Bath (M.Standage@Bath.ac.uk) for further information.