Physical activity (PA) guidelines in Ireland, both North and South, recommend that children should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous PA (MVPA) daily for health benefits.

Despite these recommendations not all children on the island of Ireland are meeting this target. In the 2014 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth Overall Physical Activity Levels was graded a D-.

Now that we have established a set of baseline grades, we need present updated grades to take into account new data. The 2016 Report Card on Physical Activity is a document that contains all data on indicators related to children’s physical activity levels from Ireland North and South between 2011 and 2015. The evidence is ‘graded’ using a standardised grading scheme.

Surveillance of indicators related to physical activity is vital for sustainable success and, ultimately, to improve the health profile of our children.

International standardised grading scheme used in 2014 and 2016.

- GRADE A: 90% or above. You are exceeding the 2008 guidelines.
- GRADE B: 60-89%. You are exceeding the 2008 guidelines.
- GRADE C: 40-59%. You are exceeding the 2008 guidelines.
- GRADE D: 20-39%. You are exceeding the 2008 guidelines.
- GRADE E: 0-19%. You are exceeding the 2008 guidelines.
- GRADE INC: Not enough data exist to make an Inc. grade.

Research Work Group

Funding Source

Overall Gaps and Recommendations

- Agreement and implementation of a common framework for the systematic surveillance of indicators related to PA.
- The implementation of objectives in the National Physical Activity Plan in the Republic.
- Evidence on PA levels of children with disabilities and minority and marginalised groups.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions to identify best practice and to resource adequately.
- There is the danger that the good work that is being done ‘on the ground’ is not being captured in the data and therefore the grades remaining maddens or stagnant. The Report Card is an advocacy document and the RWS hopes that stakeholders, practitioners and anyone working in children’s physical activity and health will not feel discouraged by stagnant or even a small reduction in grades. It will take many iterations of the Report Card before grades may change, it will not happen overnight.
- Gaps in the data speak to the need for the collection of good quality data from large samples. We suggest that future studies collect data that align with Report Card benchmarks included herein as they follow national and international PA recommendations and are being used as global indicators of PA. Data are more likely to be included in the Report Card if it can be easily matched to the set benchmarks, have larger sample sizes and, in particular, include objective assessment of PA.

Consultations

Republic of Ireland: Department of Health, Early Childhood Ireland, Federation of Irish Sport, Fingal County Council, Galway Archaeological, Healthy Ireland, Institute of Education, Dublin City University, Irish Heart Foundation, Irish Primary PE Association, Irish South Court, Sport Ireland, Northern Ireland: Health Department, Education, Playboard/Northern Ireland Sports UNESCO chart for Adapted Physical Activity, Taken

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