

THE 2014 UNITED STATES REPORT CARD ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH



Objective of the 2014 United States Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

The primary goal of the 2014 United States Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth (the Report Card) is to assess levels of physical activity and sedentary behaviors in American children and youth, facilitators and barriers for physical activity, and related health outcomes. The Report Card is an authoritative, evidence-based document providing a comprehensive evaluation of the physical activity levels and the indicators influencing physical activity among children and youth in the United States (U.S.). The Report Card takes an “ecological approach” to the problem of physical inactivity recognizing that many influences in which our kids live such as their family, school, neighborhood, and policy environments can affect their physical activity habits and other healthy behaviors. Recognizing and understanding how multiple levels of influence can affect behavior

change toward a more active lifestyle is imperative to plan effective interventions and programs.

Furthermore, the Report Card is a resource for health statistics on children and youth in the U.S. More importantly, it is an advocacy tool which provides a level of accountability and call-to-action for adult decision makers regarding how we, as parents, teachers, health professionals, community leaders, and policy makers can help implement new initiatives, programs, and policies in support of healthy environments to improve the physical activity levels and health of our children and youth. We hope the Report Card will galvanize researchers, health professionals, community members, and policy makers across the U.S. to improve our children’s physical activity opportunities, which will improve health, prevent disease and disability, and enhance quality of life.

Making the Grade

The grades for the Report Card were assigned by the Report Card Research Advisory Committee using the best available evidence. Each grade reflects how well the U.S. is succeeding at providing children and youth opportunities and/or support for physical activity. The following table presents a general rubric for assigning grades. If gender, age, ethnic or socio-economic disparities were also observed, a lower grade may have been assigned to a particular indicator.

GRADE	DEFINITION	BENCHMARK
A ★★★★★	We are succeeding with a large majority of children and youth.	81-100%
B ★★★★☆	We are succeeding with well over half of children and youth.	61-80%
C ★★★☆☆	We are succeeding with about half of children and youth.	41-60%
D ★★★☆☆	We are succeeding with less than half, but some, children and youth.	21-40%
F ★★★☆☆	We are succeeding with very few children and youth.	0-20%
INC ★★★★★	Incomplete. At the present time there is insufficient information available to establish a grade.	---

Summary of Report Card Indicators and Grades

INDICATOR	DEFINITION	DATA SOURCE*	PREVALENCE	GRADE
OVERALL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	The proportion of U.S. children and youth attaining 60 or more minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity on at least 5 days per week.	2003-04 NHANES	6-11 y: 42% 12-15 y: 8%	D- ★☆☆☆☆
SEDENTARY BEHAVIORS	The proportion of U.S. youth engaging in 2 hours or less of screen time per day.	2009-10 NHANES	54%	D ★☆☆☆☆
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION	The percentage of U.S. children and youth who usually walk or bike to school.	2009 NHTS	13%	F ★☆☆☆☆
ORGANIZED SPORT PARTICIPATION	The proportion of U.S. high school students participating on at least 1 school or community sports team.	2011 YRBSS	58%	C- ★☆☆☆☆
ACTIVE PLAY	The proportion of U.S. children and youth participating in daily, unstructured, unorganized play.	N/A	----	INC ★☆☆☆☆
HEALTH-RELATED FITNESS	The proportion of U.S. youth meeting physical fitness standards.	N/A	----	INC ★☆☆☆☆
FAMILY & PEERS	None.	N/A	----	INC ★☆☆☆☆
SCHOOL	The proportion of U.S. high school students attending at least one physical education (PE) class in an average week.	2011 YRBSS	52%	C- ★☆☆☆☆
COMMUNITY & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	The proportion of children and youth living in neighborhoods with at least 1 park or playground area.	2011-12 NSCH	85%	B- ★☆☆☆☆
GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES & INVESTMENTS	Strategies, policies, and investments made by the U.S. federal government toward increasing physical activity levels and developing guidelines recommending healthful amounts of physical activity among American children and youth.	N/A	----	INC ★☆☆☆☆

*Complete references available in the 2014 Long Form Report Card

NHANES: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey; NHTS: National Household Travel Survey; YRBSS: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System; NSCH: National Survey of Children's Health

About the National Physical Activity Plan Alliance

The Report Card Research Advisory Committee responsible for developing this report is a sub-committee of the National Physical Activity Plan Alliance (The Alliance). The Alliance is a not-for-profit organization committed to ensuring the long term success of the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP). The Alliance is a coalition of national organizations that have come together to ensure that efforts to promote physical activity in the American population will be guided by a comprehensive, evidence-based strategic plan.

ABOUT THE NPAP

The NPAP has a vision: One day, all Americans will be physically active and they will live, work, and play in environments that facilitate regular physical activity. The NPAP is a comprehensive set of policies, programs, and initiatives that aim to increase physical activity in all segments of the American population.

The NPAP is the product of a private-public sector collaborative. Hundreds of organizations are working together to change our communities in ways that will enable every American to be sufficiently physically active. With the NPAP, The Alliance aims to create a national culture that supports physically active lifestyles. Its ultimate purpose is to improve health, prevent disease and disability, and enhance quality of life.

METHODOLOGY

The Report Card Research Advisory Committee (the Committee) included experts in physical activity and healthy behaviors from academic institutions across the country. The Committee was charged with the development and dissemination of the Report Card, which included determining which indicators to include, identifying the best available data sources(s) for each indicator, and assigning a letter grade to each indicator based on the best available evidence. Data from multiple nationally representative surveys were used to provide a comprehensive evaluation of physical activity for children

and youth. The Committee selected the best available data source as the “primary indicator” to inform the grade, and “secondary data sources” were included to provide context and clarity. The grades for the Report Card were assigned by the Committee using the most recent and accurate data available with consideration of recent published scientific literature and reports. Each grade reflects how well the U.S. is succeeding at providing children and youth opportunities and/or support for physical activity.

The Committee (in alphabetical order) included: Kim Beals, PhD, RD, CSSD, LDN (University of Pittsburgh), Scott Crouter, PhD, FACSM (The University of Tennessee), Kara N. Dentre, MPH (Pennington Biomedical Research Center), Joey C. Eisenmann, PhD (Michigan State University), Peter T. Katzmarzyk, PhD, FACSM, FAHA (Pennington Biomedical Research Center), Thomas L. McKenzie, PhD, FACSM (San Diego State University), Russell R. Pate, PhD (University of South Carolina), Brian E. Saelens, PhD (University of Washington), Susan B. Sisson, PhD, RDN, CHES (University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center), Melinda S. Sothorn, PhD, CEP (Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center), Donna Spruijt-Metz, PhD, MFA (University of Southern California). Production and design of the 2014 Report Card was supported by Timothy Nguyen, Mary Hendon, Cindy Nguyen, Danielle Diluzio, and Nhi Nguyen (Pennington Biomedical Research Center).

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