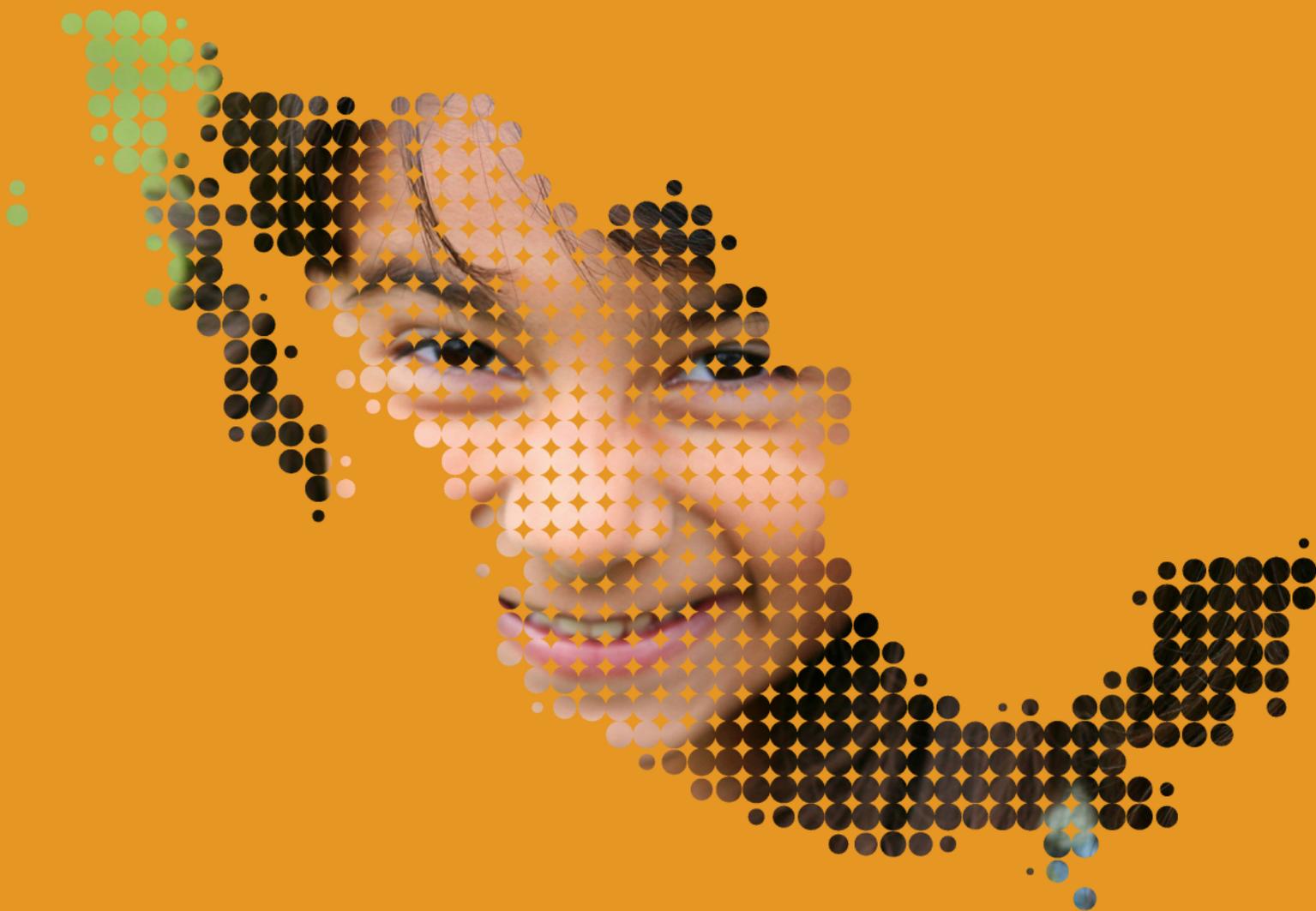


THE MEXICAN REPORT CARD

ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

2012



SHORT FORM

INTRODUCTION

About four and a half million children in Mexico aged 5 to 11 years are overweight or obese. Mexico's Institute for Public Health reports that the number of overweight or obese school-aged children increased from 18.4% in 1999 to 26.2% in 2006. Mexico, like many countries, has experienced a dramatic shift in lifestyle habits. The increasingly sedentary nature of the way Mexicans work and get around combined with increased urbanization of cities have led to a marked decrease in their levels of physical activity. In fact, Mexican children and youth are getting 70% less physical activity than they were just 30 years ago. From a public health perspective, this shift in physical activity is contributing to an alarming increase in obesity and non-communicable diseases, which are now among the leading causes death in Mexico. It is likely that if not addressed quickly, these issues might overwhelm the public health and health care systems in ways never before experienced in Mexico.

Any country's future remains in the hands of its children and youth so ensuring they grow up healthy and strong is important for everyone. There is evidence that prevention is more effective than treatment when it comes to obesity. Increasing physical activity levels and promoting healthy diets is an important investment for a healthier future for the Mexican people. Before strategies can be developed and implemented to improve the health of young people in Mexico, it is important to understand where we are starting from. This Mexican Report Card follows a Canadian Report Card Model that has been used successfully as a tool to increase awareness and identify information gaps across many sectors including government, non-governmental organizations, communities, practitioners, and researchers regarding issues relating to physical inactivity among children and youth. This synthesis of research and information can inform interventions, policy and research while enhancing advocacy capacity. The time for action is now!



**Main Indicators Reviewed
in the Mexican Report Card**

WHY A REPORT CARD ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND OBESITY?

The first of its kind, Mexico's 2012 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth provides a baseline assessment of how Mexico as a country is doing at ensuring their young people are growing up healthy. The goal is to highlight the areas where Mexico is succeeding as a nation and emphasize areas where more action is needed in order to promote healthy, active living for children and youth and ultimately improve their future health. CAMBIO plans to produce the Report Card periodically as a means of holding us all accountable for the future health of our children. The World Health Organization has identified physical inactivity as a powerful risk factor for the development of obesity and major chronic diseases. This reality touches many countries around the world, including Mexico. The United Nations (UN) recently endorsed a declaration on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (for example, diabetes and cardiovascular disease). The UN Secretary General emphasized the following:

- ▶ The epidemic of non-communicable diseases is a "slow motion disaster" requiring top-level power and action from all sectors and levels of Government
- ▶ "Addressing non-communicable diseases was critical, not just for global health, but would also be good for the economy, the environment and the global public good"

WHY IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN MEXICO?

About four and a half million children in Mexico aged 5 to 11 years are overweight or obese, which makes us the country with the highest childhood obesity rate in the world. The prevalence of overweight and obesity in Mexican adults has tripled since 1980. With good reason, these statistics are raising alarm in health sectors in Mexico.

Physical activity promotion has become a public health priority worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), unhealthy diets and physical inactivity are two powerful risk factors for major chronic degenerative diseases such as type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancers and cardiovascular diseases.

Regular physical activity is an important part of healthy child development and absolutely critical to ensure that children can grow, learn, thrive and be happy. Physical activity has many benefits for children including increased academic performance, better mental health, higher self-esteem and improved psychosocial well-being.

| INDICATOR | GRADE | SUMMARY |
|---|------------------|--|
| PHYSICAL ACTIVITY | 5 (Average) | 60% of Mexican children and youth are at least moderately active (4+ hours per week). |
| OBESITY | 2 (Very Poor) | About 4.5 million children in Mexico are overweight or obese. This is the highest childhood obesity rate in the world. |
| ORGANIZED SPORT PARTICIPATION | Unknown | Not enough data to grade - research required. |
| ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION (WALKING, BIKING) | Unknown | Not enough data to grade. Active transportation rates vary widely by city in Mexico. 64% of children in Chilpancingo, 76% of elementary school children Mexico City and 34% of middle school children in Mexico City use active transportation on a regular basis. |
| SCREEN TIME (TELEVISION, VIDEO GAMES, COMPUTER) | 5 (Average) | Mexican children accumulate an average of 14 hours of screen time per week. |
| PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS | 3 (Poor) | Children in Mexico City accumulate about 12 minutes a week of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity while at school. Most children are receiving PE once a week for 40 minutes despite a mandate for 50 minutes twice a week. |
| FAMILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY | Unknown | Not enough data to grade - research required. |
| POLICY AND PROGRAMS | 7 (Good) | Promising programs have been implemented in Mexico: Five Step Program, National Healthy Food Agreement: Strategy Against Overweight and Obesity and programs led by CONADE. |

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- ▶ Design and implement programs that foster active lifestyles in children and youth.
- ▶ Promote policies to increase the number of green spaces available where children can play.
- ▶ Provide parents with information about the importance of and how to reduce screen time at home.
- ▶ Encourage government and private organizations to carry out campaigns promoting physical activity outside school in proper secure settings.
- ▶ Develop and promote physical activity guidelines for Mexican children and youth.



THE GRADING SYSTEM

A numerical assessment system from 0 (very poor) to 10 (excellent) was used in this Report Card to provide readers with a quick picture of the physical activity levels, and some related factors, in Mexican children and youth. A comprehensive review of Mexican data was completed between 2009 and 2011, including peer-reviewed literature, government reports, federal and state laws and programs, and any websites with relevant information and/or data. A panel of experts in Mexico discussed and confirmed the grades based on a set of specific criteria and existing grading scheme from similar Report Cards in Canada, South Africa and the United States of America. Oversight to the grading procedure for this Report Card was provided by the Scientific Officers of Active Healthy Kids Canada.

GRADING TABLE

| | |
|---------|-----------|
| 9 to 10 | Excellent |
| 7 to 8 | Good |
| 5 to 6 | Average |
| 3 to 4 | Poor |
| 0 to 2 | Very Poor |

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The 2012 Mexican Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth was published by CAMBIO in collaboration with the following partners:

