

MUSCULAR FITNESS

It's time for a jump start!



Introduction

In 2014 Active Healthy Kids Australia (AHKA) launched its inaugural Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Young People. Four years on, there has been little to no change in the activity levels of Australian children with the majority of 5–17 year olds not getting the recommended 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every day.

Methods

AHKA is a collaboration consisting of 13 physical activity and health researchers from Australia, who are responsible for collating, synthesising and evaluating data that are then used to assign grades to 12 physical activity indicators using pre-determined metrics and benchmarks.

The 2018 AHKA Report Card assigned grades to 10 Global Matrix 3.0 indicators and two additional indicators, that collectively fall under one of four categories: Physical Activity Behaviours (Overall Physical Activity, Organised Sport Participation, Active Play, Active Transport, Screen Time, PA in School); Settings and Sources of Influence (Family and Peers, School, Community and the Built Environment); Strategies and Investments; and Traits (Physical Fitness, Movement Skills).

The 2018 Report Card synthesised the best available Australian data. Only national or state/territory representative data from 2013 onwards were utilised to assign grades, with national representative data taking precedence when available.

Results

As with previous Report Cards Australia again received a D- for Overall Physical Activity Levels. Poor grades (D- to D+) were also assigned to several other indicators including Active Transport, Screen Time, Strategies and Investments, Physical Fitness and Movement Skills. It is encouraging however that Australia scored better grades for settings and sources of influence (Family and Peers, School, Community and Built Environment; C+ to A-) and other physical activity behaviours (participation in organised sport and participation in physical activity in school; B- to B). See Table 1.



ACTIVE HEALTHY KIDS AUSTRALIA

Table 1:

Grades for AHKA's 2018 Physical Activity Report Card

Indicator	Grade
Overall Physical Activity	D-
Organised Sport Participation	B-
Physical Activity in School*	B
Active Transport	D+
Active Play	INC
Screen Time	D-
Family and Peers	C+
School	B+
Community and the Built Environment	A-
Strategies and Investments	D
Physical Fitness	D+
Movement Skills*	D+

Note, INC = Incomplete.

*Indicates grades that were not included in the Global Matrix 3.0.

Conclusion

The 2018 AHKA Report Card shows that, despite living in a country advantaged by good schools, programs, facilities and spaces, Australian children and young people do not move enough, lack movement skill mastery, and compare poorly to their international peers when it comes to their physical fitness. Stronger strategic commitment from government is required at all levels to drive a cultural shift to see Aussie kids moving more every day.