

Ethiopia's 2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for children and youth



ACTIVE HEALTHY KIDS ETHIOPIA

Table of contents

Cover page	I
Table of contents	II
Executive Summary	III
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. What is physical activity?	1
1.2. Why physical activity for children and youth?	1
1.3. Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance.....	1
1.4. Active Healthy Kids Ethiopia	2
2. Methodology	2
3. Report Card findings	4
3.1. Overall physical activity	5
3.2. Organized Sport Participation	6
3.3. Active Play	7
3.4. Active Transportation	8
3.5. Sedentary Behaviors	9
3.6. Physical Fitness	10
3.7. Family and Peers	11
3.8. Schools	12
3.9. Community and Environment	13
3.10. Government	14
4. Next Steps.....	15
5. Conclusion	15
6. References	16
7. Acknowledgment	17
8. List of Ethiopia Report Card committee	18

Executive Summary

Physical activity defined as any movements of the body parts that can expend energies. Children and youth aged from 5-17 years old are advised to participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic activities daily. However, technologies such as smartphone, play game, TVs and others are discouraging children & youth to move, stay in sitting for long hours in a day. Physical activity experts in Ethiopia were understood this problem and engaged in Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance initiative. The Ethiopia's 2018 Report Card was developed for the first time as the part of Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance. The Ethiopia Report Card committee were evaluated the available evidences and assigned grade for 10 core indicators of physical activity among children and youth. Children and youth aged from 5-17 years were included in the report card. The findings of our Report Card showed that there is a huge visible policy, practice and research gaps on physical activity among children and youth in Ethiopia. Thus, further work should be expected from government, policy makers, researchers and organizations working on children and youth in Ethiopia to reverse this situation through multi-sectoral collaboration.

We are therefore delighted to expand physical activity advocacy and research among children and youth in Ethiopia. We look forward to work with all stakeholders across Ethiopia to create more active, healthy and productive generation.



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. What is physical activity?

Physical activity defined as any movements of the body parts that can expend energies. Physical activity is crucial for all ages including children and youth. For children, types of physical activity include active play, walking or biking, exercising, recreational activities, school based activities, etc. Children and youth aged from 5-17 years old are advised to participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic activities daily. Not fitting this guideline is considered that children and youths are physically inactive.¹⁻⁴

1.2. Why physical activity for children and youth?

Evidence showed that technologies such as smartphone, play game, TVs and others are discouraging children & youth to move, stay in sitting for long hours in a day.^{5, 6} Besides, childhood obesity is risking the health of many children and youth in all countries including Ethiopia. Evidences that showed that the pandemic of physical inactivity is spreading across the world.⁷ As a result, childhood obesity and physical inactivity are on rapid rise that push children and youth for greater risk of non-communicable diseases later in life. The Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance was established to reverse this global burden and aware a countries to take evidence-based actions. In Ethiopia, data are limited on physical activity for children and youth. Thus, developing Ethiopia's 2018 Report Card can to put a ground basis on physical activity among children and youth for governments, researchers, policy makers and organizations working on children and youth in Ethiopia.

1.3. Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance

Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance (www.activehealthykids.org) is a network of researchers, healthcare professionals and stakeholders those working to advance physical activity and sedentary behavior among children and youth across the globe. It

is strongly committed to empower the global movement for move through advocacy and research. It was established on 2014 then, released Global Matrix 1.0 and 2.0 by 2014 and 2016 respectively. Initially, only 15 countries were participated for the development of their Report Card on 2014. Then, 38 countries were participated and developed their Report Card on 2016. Unfortunately, Ethiopia was not participated on the development of Report Card on 2014 and 2016. Ethiopia was participated for the first time in Global Matrix 3.0 initiative among the 49 countries.⁸

1.4. Active Healthy Kids Ethiopia

Active Healthy Kids Ethiopia is the local body of Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance that focuses on advocacy and research for physical activity among children and youth in order to develop Report Card for Ethiopia. Ethiopia's Report Card will serve as physical activity archive for the policy makers, researchers and community at large. Our ultimate goal is to create more active, healthy and productive children and youth in Ethiopia. Active Healthy Kids Ethiopia will work to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary behavior in children and youth in Ethiopia. Our teams believe that if we create opportunities and support our children and youth to get more active and sit less, Ethiopia's children and youth can move.

2. METHODOLOGY

A review of literatures, policy documents and panel of expert interview were made to collect data on physical activity among children and youth in Ethiopia. A relevant physical activity data and government policy documents were searched systematically. Data were collected from December 2017 to April 2018. Children and youth aged from 5-17 years were included in the report card. The Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance standard guideline and grading system were followed during the Report Card development. The Ethiopia Report Card committee were evaluated the available evidences and assigned grade for 10 core indicators (Overall Physical Activity, Organized

Sport and Physical Activity, Active Play, Active Transportation, Sedentary Behaviors, Physical Fitness, Family and Peers, School, Community and Environment, and Government). The Ethiopia Sport policy document was used in the report card development.⁹

A panel of interview was done whenever data was unavailable to assign a grade for the indicator. Each grade reveals that how well Ethiopia is succeeding by creating physical activity opportunities for children and youth following standard rubric of Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance as shown on Table 1 below.

Table 1: Report Card grading rubric*

Grade	Benchmarks	Explanation
A	A ⁺ =94% - 100% A = 87% - 93% A ⁻ = 80% - 86%	We are succeeding with a large majority of children and youth ($\geq 80\%$)
B	B ⁺ =74% - 79% B = 67% - 73% B ⁻ = 60% - 66%	We are succeeding with well over half of children and youth (60% - 79%)
C	C ⁺ =54% - 59% C = 47% - 53% C ⁻ = 40% - 46%	We are succeeding with about half of children and youth (40% - 59%)
D	D ⁺ =34% - 39% D = 27% - 33% D ⁻ = 20% - 26%	We are succeeding with less than half with some children and youth (20% - 39%)
F	F = 0% -19%	We are succeeding with very few of children and youth (<20%)
INC	INC = Incomplete	Insufficient or inadequate information to assign a grade

*Taken from Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance

3. REPORT CARD FINDINGS

Even though evidence was limited, major efforts were made to develop Ethiopia's first Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. Our result showed that there is low physical activity participation among children and youth in Ethiopia. All other indicators were graded using available data and/or expert estimation. Active play indicator scored the highest grade among the 10 core indicators. The grade and detail of each indicator was elaborated below.

Summary of Ethiopia's 2018 Report Card

Indicators	Grade
Overall Physical Activity	D
Organized Sport Participation	C
Active Play	B
Active Transportation	C
Sedentary Behaviors	F
Physical Fitness	INC
Family and Peers	F
School	D
Community and Environment	F
Government	D

Overall Physical Activity

Indicator: Percentage of children and youth who meet the World Health Organization recommendations on physical activity for health in Ethiopia.

Grade:



It is any activities of our body that needs energy expenditures. World Health Organization (WHO) recommended that children aged from 5-17 years must engage in a minimum of 60 minutes moderate to vigorous aerobic physical activity every day. This can be achieved through active play, active transportation, organized sport activities, etc.¹ There is no recorded evidence on the national prevalence of physical activity among children and youth aged 5-17 years yet in Ethiopia. Even though evidence was limited, expert interview was made in order to estimate the average number of children can meet WHO physical activity guideline. Accordingly, majority of Ethiopian children and youth take part in home chores and light work every day for family help. Our team estimated that about 28% of children and youth (17% urban & 39% rural) meet 60 minutes moderate physical activity every day.

Recommendations

- Conduct national level physical activity prevalence for children and youth aged from 5-17 years old.
- Integrate physical activity survey into Ethiopia Health and Demographic Survey (EDHS)

- Develop national physical activity guideline and policy for children including children with disabilities
- Empower children and youth to engage in recommended physical activity
- Developing physical activity initiative for children in Ethiopia

Organized Sport Participation

Indicator: Percentage of children and youth who participated in organized Sport and/or physical activity programs in Ethiopia.

Grade:



It is structured physical activities that contain goal oriented and competition. There is no recorded evidence for this indicator yet in Ethiopia. Our experts estimated from their observation as almost 50% of children and youth are participating in school athletics, handball, volleyball and football competitions at all levels for several times in a year in Ethiopia.

Recommendations

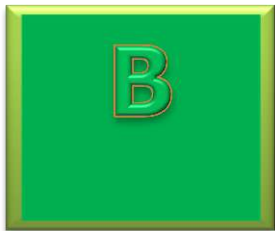
- Expand organized Sport and/or physical activity programs in schools, recreational places, etc at all settings in Ethiopia
- Increase the number of organized Sport and/or physical activity programs during physical education class in Ethiopia
- Create physical activity friendly spaces for children and youth at schools, in the village, etc in Ethiopia.

- Conduct studies on organized Sport and/or physical activity participation in Ethiopia

Active Play

Indicator: Percentage of children and youth who engaged in unstructured physical activity active play at any intensity for more than two hours a day in Ethiopia.

Grade:



Active play is any unstructured physical activity or games that can engage in alone or with friends or family members without any rules. There is no available evidence for this indicator in Ethiopia yet. But, our experts estimated that about 71% of children and youth might be involved in active play for a minimum of 2 hours a day before, during and after school in Ethiopia.

Recommendations

- Regular promotion of active play through mass media in Ethiopia
- Family/peers support for active play at schools, home, etc in Ethiopia
- Developing active play physical activity programs for children and youth in Ethiopia.
- Conduct studies on active play in Ethiopia

Active Transportation

Indicator: Percentage of children and youth who use active transportation to get to and from places in the form of walking and biking to go to school or friend's home, etc.

Grade:



It is any form of human powered transportation such as walking, cycling, move with wheelchair, etc. We did not found any evidence related to this indicator. Our experts approximate that about 48% of children and youth (31% in urban and 65% rural) are walking to and from school.

Recommendations

- Conduct studies on active transportation in Ethiopia
- Built sidewalks to encourage active transportation all cities in Ethiopia
- Encourage and support children and youth to travel to and from school through active transportation.

Sedentary Behaviors

Indicator: Percentage of children and youth who engage in 2 hours or less of screen-time or sitting a day in Ethiopia.

Grade:



Sedentary behavior is any waking activities with energy expenditures of ≤ 1.5 metabolic equivalents while in sitting, reclining or lying posture. Not include the sleep time. Again there is not available evidence for sedentary behavior among children and youth in Ethiopia. Thus, our expert predicted that about 13% of children and youth might be spend on screen time such as mobile game, play station and TV views for no more than 2 hours per day.

Recommendations

- Conducting studies on sedentary behavior among children and youth in Ethiopia
- Empower and support children and youth to limit their sitting or screen viewing time through mass media and other printed materials.
- Develop national guideline for sedentary behavior among children and youth in Ethiopia.

Physical Fitness

Indicator: Percentage of children and youth who meet criterion-referenced standards for cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength and endurance in Ethiopia.

Grade:



It is the ability to perform any tasks without fatigue and with motive energy. Our experts were unable to get available evidence and feel difficulty to grade this indicator. Hence, we concluded with there is no adequate information in the country to assign a grade for this indicator.

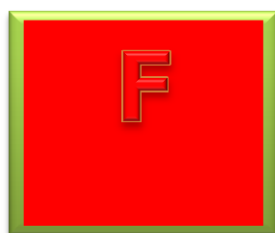
Recommendations

- Conducting studies on physical fitness among children and youth in Ethiopia with focus on cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength and endurance.
- Empower and support children and youth to engage in physical fitness

Family and Peers

Indicator: Percentage of children and youth who get support from their friends, peers and families to get physically active in Ethiopia.

Grade:



It is when any member within the family who encourage and support children and youth for physical activity opportunities and participation in their environment. There is no data about this indicator in Ethiopia. Our experts decided that approximately 14% of children and youth are encouraged and get support from their family members like buying bike, handball or football for their child to move.

Recommendations

- Conduct studies on family and peer support for physical activity among children and youth in Ethiopia
- Empower and support families to encourage their children and youth for engagement of physical activity.
- Encourage families to get physical activity with their children and youth in Ethiopia.

Schools

Indicator: Percentage of schools with active policies and infrastructures that support physical activity participation with trained physical education specialists in the school.

Grade:



It is any policies, organizational or student factors in the school environment that influence physical activity opportunity and participation for children and youth in the school. There is no recorded data of this indicator in Ethiopia. Thus, our experts estimated that about 32% of schools in the country have access of infrastructures like sport field, outdoor playground, multi-purpose spaces for physical activity.

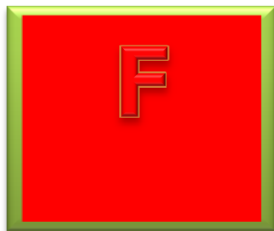
Recommendations

- Conduct studies on school physical activity among children and youth in Ethiopia
- Empower and support children and youth to participate in school physical activity in Ethiopia.
- Develop policies and infrastructures such gymnasium, outdoor playground, Sport fields, etc that support school physical activity for children and youth in Ethiopia.

Community and Environment

Indicator: Percentage of communities/municipalities that create opportunities for physical activity among children and youth in Ethiopia.

Grade:



It is any policies or organizational factors in the municipal environment that influence physical activity opportunity and participation for children and youth. There is no available data of this indicator in Ethiopia. Thus, our experts approximate that about 8% of children and youth live in environment that have inevitable infrastructure like sidewalks to engage in physical activity.

Recommendations

- Develop policies and infrastructures that support physical activity participation for children and youth in Ethiopia.
- Conduct studies on community and environment accessibility for physical activity of children and youth in Ethiopia
- Built accessible environment for physical activity among children and youth in Ethiopia
- Built physical activity parks for children and youth in Ethiopia
- Empower communities to create opportunities for physical activity of children and youth in Ethiopia

Government

Indicator: Evidences of government policy that allocate resources to support and implement physical activity initiative for children and youth in Ethiopia

Grade:



It is any government body with authority to influence physical activity opportunities or participation for children and youth through policy, legislation or regulation. Our team found only policy exists for physical activity strategies and investment in the country's non-communicable diseases (NCDs) agenda. However, it is not implemented yet.

Recommendations

- Develop national physical activity plan and guideline for children and youth in Ethiopia
- Built physical activity parks for children and youth in Ethiopia
- Establish physical activity research and surveillance center in Ethiopia
- Conduct studies on innovative physical activity policy for children and youth in Ethiopia
- Allocate financial resources for physical activity initiative and implement the WHO Global Action Plan for Physical Activity 2018-2030 in Ethiopia.⁴

4. NEXT STEPS

This first Ethiopia's 2018 Report Card provides important baseline information about physical activity for children and youth. It lays a foundation for future policy, research and surveillance system for physical activity and sedentary behavior among children and youth in Ethiopia. The following top three priorities should be taken into consideration in order to improve the Ethiopia's 2018 Report Card:-

- 1) Development and implementation of a consistent national Research and Surveillance system of physical activity and sedentary behavior.
- 2) Policy formulation and resource allocation for physical activity interventions.
- 3) Increase physical activity participation and limit time stay on screen-based technologies.

Besides, conducting studies with representative samples on 10 core indicators of physical activity among children and youth in Ethiopia should another priority for the next work. Furthermore, establishing Active Healthy Kids Ethiopia is another priority to have a local representative of Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance that focuses on development of Report Card, advocacy and research for physical activity among children and youth in Ethiopia. Finally, we will work producing Ethiopia's Report Card every two years with other countries in the world.

5. CONCLUSION

Our physical activity experts worked hard to develop the first Ethiopia's Report Card without any financial support in the past two years. The findings of Ethiopia's 2018 Report Card showed that there is large visible gap on policy, research, surveillance and practice of physical activity among children and youth in Ethiopia. Thus, further work should be done to reverse this situation through multi-sectoral collaboration with sufficient funds.

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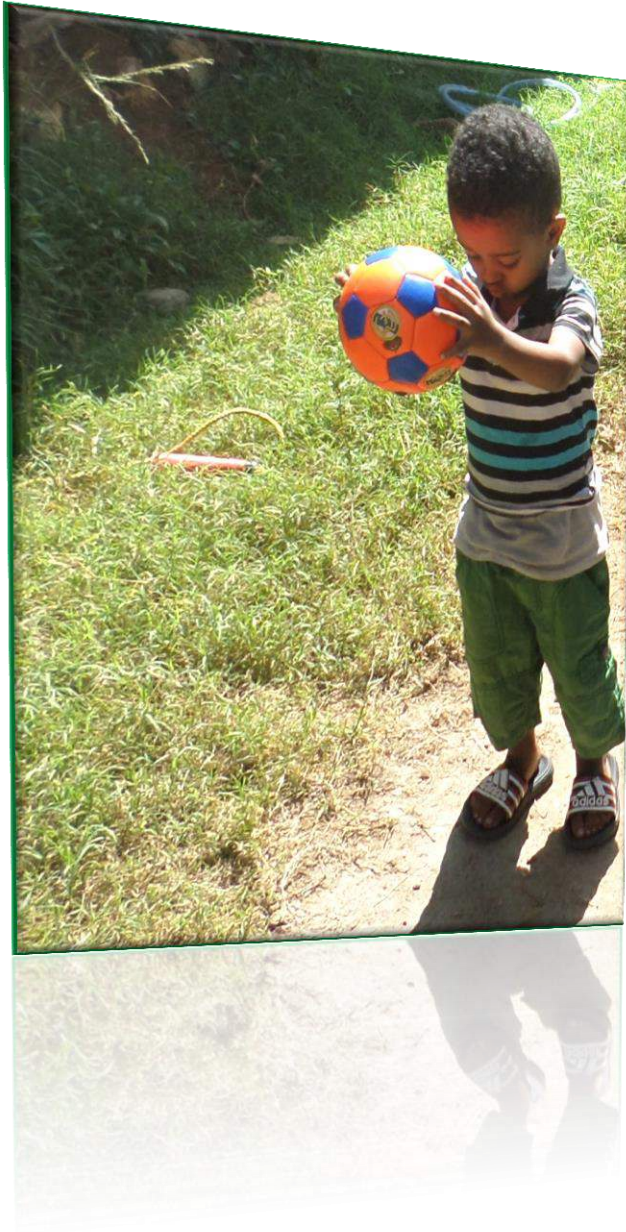
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**Together, we can create more
Active Healthy Ethiopian Kids!**