ParticipACTION is a national non-profit organization that helps Canadians sit less and move more. Originally established in 1971, ParticipACTION works with its partners, which include sport, physical activity, recreation organizations, government and corporate sponsors, to make physical activity a vital part of everyday life. ParticipACTION is generously supported by the Government of Canada.

For more information, please visit www.participaction.com
The Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group (HALO) was established in 2007 in response to the escalating obesity crisis and the increasing complexity of related co-morbidities. Today the HALO team consists of 16 staff (including 6 researchers), a childhood obesity clinical team (Centre for Healthy Active Living), 12 graduate students, and many community volunteers. Since its inception in 2007, HALO has received over $8.4 million in research funding; produced more than 342 peer-reviewed publications; has given more than 696 scholarly presentations locally, nationally and internationally; and secured more than 1 billion media impressions!
Background

• The 2015 Report Card assigns letter grades to 11 different indicators grouped into three categories.

• Grades are based on an examination of current data against a benchmark along with an assessment of trends over time and the presence of disparities.

• Together, the indicators provide a robust and comprehensive assessment of physical activity of Canadian children and youth.
A child’s overall physical activity is linked to physical and mental health, maintenance of a healthy body weight, academic performance, motor skill development & physical literacy, among other benefits.
The Report Card Serves as...

- A public awareness mechanism and call to action through a nationwide media strategy
- An accountability index for all Canadians
- A surveillance synthesis mechanism
- An advocacy tool for physical activity leaders and organizations
- A policy driver
- A process for identifying research and surveillance needs
- A challenge to other countries and jurisdictions to implement similar processes to allow comparisons and facilitate improvements
Grade assignments are determined based on examination of the current data and literature for each indicator against a benchmark or optimal scenario, assessing the indicator as outlined below:

**A** = We are succeeding with a large majority of children and youth.

**B** = We are succeeding with well over half of children and youth.

**C** = We are succeeding with about half of children and youth.

**D** = We are succeeding with less than half, but some, children and youth.

**F** = We are succeeding with very few children and youth.
The Biggest Risk is
KEEPING KIDS INDOORS

2015
The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

Cover Story
Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play

- The Position Statement examined the best available scientific evidence on the net effect (e.g. balance of benefits versus harms) of outdoor and risky active play.

- The Position Statement was developed by HALO-CHEO, ParticipACTION and a group of 12 other organizations, and was supported by over 1,600 stakeholders from across Canada and around the world.

Access to active play in nature and outdoors— with its risks—is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children’s opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings—at home, at school, in child care, the community and nature.
• We need to recognize the difference between “real danger” and “risk.” We need to increase children’s opportunities for independent play outdoors in all settings - at home, at school, in child care, the community and nature.

*Kids move more and sit less when they play outdoors, and have some freedom to roam and take risks.*
Kids are more physically active when they play outside:

- Ontario preschoolers spend twice as much time being active when play is outdoors.
- Students take 35% more steps in physical education class when class is held outdoors.
- Canadian kids aged 9-17 who play outside after school get 20 more minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day, and are 3 times more likely to meet the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines.
Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play

Kids move more when they have some freedom to roam unsupervised and take risks:

- Grade 5 and 6 students who are often or always allowed to go out and explore unsupervised get 20% more moderate-to-vigorous physical activity than those who are always supervised.

- Adventure playgrounds and loose parts playgrounds, which support some exposure to “risky” elements, lead to an increase in physical activity and decrease in sedentary behaviours.

Fear of “risky” outdoor play leads us to constantly supervise kids and keep them safe indoors; this affects their long-term health and development, which should be valued just as much as their safety.
Access to active play in nature and outdoors - with its risks - is essential for healthy child development:

- Children and youth are less likely to engage in higher levels of physical activity if a parent or supervising adult is present.

- 3- to 5-year-old kids are less likely to be active on playgrounds that are designed to be “safer,” because many kids equate less challenging with boring.

- Hyper-parenting limits physical activity and can lead to increased anxiety/depression.

- Children who engage in active outdoor play in natural environments demonstrate resilience, self-regulation and develop skills for dealing with stress later in life.
Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play

Keeping children indoors is not necessarily safer:

• When children spend more time in front of screens they are more likely to be exposed to cyber-predators and violence.

• Children who spend more time in front of screens are also more likely to consume extra calories through unhealthy, energy dense/nutrient poor snacks.

• Air quality indoors is often worse than outdoors, increasing exposure to common allergens, infectious diseases and potentially leading to chronic conditions.

• Sedentary time is associated with decreased fitness, poor self-esteem, weak academic performance, obesity and increased aggression.
Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is safer than you think:

• The odds of total stranger abduction are about 1 in 14 million based on RCMP reports.

• Broken bones and head injuries unfortunately do happen, but major trauma is uncommon.

• Canadian children are eight times more likely to die as a passenger in a motor vehicle than from being hit by a vehicle when outside on foot or on a bike.

Risky outdoor play is not about courting danger – it’s about play that is thrilling and exciting where kids independently test their abilities and limits.
Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play

Recommendations

Position statement includes recommendations targeting all stakeholders that can influence opportunities for active outdoor play (e.g., parents, teachers, school administrators, municipalities, governments, the insurance sector and attorney generals.)

The Biggest Risk is KEEPING KIDS INDOORS

2015 Grades

The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth
BEHAVIOURS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OVERALL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
70% of 3- to 4-year-olds in Canada meet the daily recommendation of at least 180 minutes of physical activity at any intensity.

9% of 5- to 17-year-olds in Canada (14% of 5- to 11-year-olds and 5% of 12- to 17-year-olds) meet the daily recommendation of at least 60 minutes of MVPA.

5% of 5- to 19-year-olds in Canada take at least 12,000 steps every day of the week, which approximates the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Children and Youth.
Recommendations

- Support children and youth in adding bouts of physical activity throughout their day—before school, during school, after school, in the evenings and on the weekend.

- Remove barriers for low-income families by making access to programs simple and dignified (e.g., no proof of income, decrease complicated paperwork).

- While the geographic and cultural diversity of Canada must be recognized, stakeholders at all levels need to work together to make it easier for children and youth to make the active choice more often.
According to parents, 80-84% of children and youth in Canada participate in organized physical activities and sports.

5- to 19-year-olds in Canada who participate in organized physical activities or sports take approximately 1,700 more daily steps on average than children who do not participate in these types of activities.

According to parents, 49% of 5- to 19-year-olds in Canada participated in organized physical activity and sport during the afterschool period.
Barriers that prevent 3- to 17-year-olds in Canada from participating in organized sports (source: adapted from 2014 CIBC – KidSportTM Report).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of enrollment fees</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of equipment</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child lacks interest in sports</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<td>Location of programs/clubs/facilities is inconvenient</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work commitments of parents/guardians</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>The time of day/day of week of programs is inconvenient</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<td>Organized sports are too competitive/too much focus on winning</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<td>Lack of awareness of the programs available in the community</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Other family commitments of parents/guardians</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td>Limited access to good quality sports facilities</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<td>Organized sports are becoming too violent</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent/guardian lacks interest in sports</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>Parental under-involvement</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor coaching/leadership</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental over-involvement</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>Facilities/programs are not accessible for children with disabilities</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Recommendations

- Educate parents, coaches, officials and participants on the principles of fair play according to the True Sport Principles (www.truesportpur.ca/en/principles) and Canadian Sport 4 Life (www.canadiansportforlife.ca).

- Be cognizant of enrollment fees and equipment requirements when developing physical activity programs.
Active Play

In another survey, 65% of Canadian parents report that their 5- to 17-year-olds play outdoors during the afterschool period.

However, the actual amount of outdoor play is unknown.

Those who play outdoors during the afterschool period take 2,100 more daily steps on average than those who do not.
Recommendations

- Increase parents’ and caregivers’ awareness and understanding of the benefits versus the risks of outdoor play.

- Parents should ensure a balance between scheduled activities and free time during which children can engage in active play.

- Challenge municipal by-laws and school policies that restrict opportunities for active outdoor play.
Active Transportation

In the absence of data on active transportation to/from destinations other than school, this year’s grade remains a D due to the low percentage of children and youth who use active transportation to get to/from school. The decline in active transportation to/from school over the past decade also informs the grade.

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BENCHMARK

- A 81-100%
- B 61-80%
- C 41-60%
- D 21-40%
- F 0-20%

Figure 1. Usual modes of transportation among Canadian children and youth to/from school between 2000 and 2010 [3].

- 28% Active Modes
- 24% Mixed (Active and Inactive)
- 21% Inactive Modes

Physical literacy: is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.

In 8-12 year olds from the Canadian Assessment of Physical Literacy
✓ 39% meet or exceed the minimum level recommended for physical literacy
✓ 26% meet or exceed the minimum level recommended for the physical competence, 41% for the daily behaviour domain, 35% for the motivation and confidence domain, and 59% for the knowledge and understanding domain.
Recommendations

- Widely communicate the common definition of physical literacy, in order to enhance the overall understanding of physical literacy and each of the elements.

- Based on the definition, create key messages written in plain language that describe physical literacy in the context of each sector and in a way that makes it understandable to leaders and the general public.

- Identify and share initiatives and strategies that develop all elements of physical literacy, not just fundamental movement skills.
15% of 3- to 4-year-olds in Canada meet the Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for the Early Years (≤ 1 hour of screen time per day)

During waking hours, 3- to 4-year-olds in Canada spend an average of 7.5 hours per day being sedentary

24% of 5- to 17-year-olds in Canada (24% of 5- to 11-year-olds and 24% of 12- to 17-year-olds) meet the Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children and Youth (≤ 2 hours of screen time per day)

During waking hours, 5- to 17-year-olds in Canada spend an average of 8.5 hours per day being sedentary (7.6 hours in 5- to 11-year-olds and 9.3 hours in 12- to 17-year-olds)
Recommendations

- Limiting the number of screens available in the house, particularly in the bedroom, and restricting screen time near bedtime may be effective.

- Provide parents with the Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines and other resources as early as possible.

- Educators should plan for opportunities to break up sedentary time throughout the day.
SETTINGS & SOURCES OF INFLUENCE
Family & Peers

The benchmarks for this indicator relate to family physical activity and peer influence. Since there continues to be a lack of gradable data for peer influence, the grade is informed by family physical activity data. This year’s C+ grade is a slight improvement over last year due to new data showing that parents understand the importance of physical activity for children and youth.

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BENCHMARK
- A 81-100%
- B 61-80%
- C 41-60%
- D 21-40%
- F 0-20%
Key Findings: Family Physical Activity

✓ 79% of parents report contributing financially to their kids’ physical activity (e.g., purchasing equipment, paying membership fees)

✓ 37% of parents report playing active games with their kids often or very often

✓ 90% of high school students (grades 9-12) in Ontario and Alberta report that their parents are very supportive or supportive of them being physically active

✓ 70% of high school students (grades 9-12) in Ontario and Alberta report that their parents encourage or strongly encourage them to be physically active
Key Findings: Peer Influence

- 40% of high school students (grades 9-12) in Ontario and Alberta report that they have 5 or more friends who are physically active.

- 17% report having none or only 1 friend who is physically active.

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Physical Activity for Children and Youth
Recommendations

- Parents are encouraged to reduce their own and their children’s sedentary time, particularly sedentary time in front of screens.

- Parents are encouraged to regularly plan for physical activities for their children and family on evenings, weekends and holidays.

- Since physical inactivity is a problem for Canadians of all ages, interventions could encourage families as a whole to be physically active and reduce sedentary time together.
Barriers for parents:

- inconvenient location of programs/clubs/facilities (26%)
- lack of awareness of programs available in the community (15%)
- limited access to good quality sports facilities (13%)
- most parents in Canada do not report infrastructure and programming as barriers that prevent their child from participating in organized sports

Approximately 17,000 km of the Trans Canada Trail (75% of the proposed route) are operational.

4 out of 5 Canadians live within 30 minutes of the Trail.
Recommendations

- National guidelines/standards for the construction of protected bicycle paths and lanes are required.

- Municipalities should adopt complete streets policies which ensure that streets are designed for all ages, abilities, and modes of travel.

- Create and promote the development of natural playgrounds to supplement or replace traditional playgrounds in order to help engage children in outdoor play and enhance their connection with nature. Natural playgrounds are areas where children can play with natural elements such as sand, water, wood and living plants.
Non-Government

This year’s grade remains an A- because available data around leadership and commitment, allocation of funds, and policy work neither signal an upgrade nor downgrade of the indicator.

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Recommendations

- Non-government organizations, the private sector, philanthropic groups and foundations should maintain or increase funding and promoting active living as a way to invest in the health of children and youth, families, the community and country.

- Non-government organizations in physical activity, sport and recreation need to work together to align the actions and priorities outlined in Active Canada 20/20, A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 and the Canadian Sport Policy 2012.

- Community organizations from all sectors need to work together to develop policies that identify community assets for physical activities, and maximize the use of those assets through shared use plans and agreements.

- Investigate multisectoral opportunities to collaborate with the insurance industry to reduce real and perceived barriers to physical activity associated with liability issues.

- Organizations need to address the social determinants of health, inclusion and accessibility, culture and gender when developing all programs and policies.
Communications Tools

Visit the ParticipACTION website to download

- Highlight Report
- Full Reports
- Communications tools
- Infographic
- Media materials.

www.participactionreportcard.com
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