

The 2018 United States Report Card on

# Physical Activity for Children and Youth

## SUMMARY



**BRIDGING THE GAP**

# 2018 U.S. Report Card Objective and Methodology

The 2018 United States (U.S.) Report Card is the third comprehensive assessment of physical activity in U.S. children and youth, updating the first Report Card released in 2014 and second released in 2016. The primary goal of the 2018 U.S. Report Card is to assess the levels of physical activity and sedentary behaviors in American children and youth, facilitators and barriers for physical activity, and health outcomes related to physical activity. The tracking of physical activity indicators over time is an important surveillance tactic that allows for an assessment of population-level changes in behavior. The Report Card is a resource that summarizes health statistics related to physical activity levels among children and youth in the U.S. More importantly, the Report Card is an advocacy tool that provides a level of accountability and call-to-action for decision makers regarding how we, as parents, teachers, health professionals, community leaders, and policy makers, can implement new initiatives, programs, and policies in support of healthy environments to improve the physical activity levels and health of our children and youth.



## Making the Grade

The Report Card Research Advisory Committee identified the best available data from multiple nationally representative surveys to provide a comprehensive evaluation of physical activity for children and youth. The committee assigned a letter grade to each indicator based on the evidence. Each grade reflects how well the U.S. is succeeding at providing children and youth opportunities and/or support for physical activity. The rubric to the right presents the standard rubric the Committee used to determine a grade for each indicator.

GRADE	INTERPRETATION	BENCHMARK
<b>A</b>	We are succeeding with a large majority of children and youth (≥ 80%)	A+ = 94-100% A = 87-93% A- = 80-86%
<b>B</b>	We are succeeding with well over half of children and youth (60-79%)	B+ = 74-79% B = 67-73% B- = 60-66%
<b>C</b>	We are succeeding with about half of children and youth (40-59%)	C+ = 54-59% C = 47-53% C- = 40-46%
<b>D</b>	We are succeeding with less than half but some children and youth (20-39%)	D+ = 34-39% D = 27-33% D- = 20-26%
<b>F</b>	We are succeeding with very few children and youth (< 20%)	F = 0-19%
<b>INC</b>	Incomplete—insufficient or inadequate information to assign a grade	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>24% of U.S. children and youth ages 6 to 17</b> meet the guideline of 60 minutes of physical activity every day.<sup>2016 NSCH</sup></li> <li>• <b>There is a significant drop</b> in physical activity levels with increasing age: 42.5%, 7.5% and 5.1% of 6 to 11 year olds, 12 to 15 year olds and 16 to 19 year olds meet physical activity guidelines.<sup>2005-06 NHANES</sup></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approximately 33%</b> of U.S. children and youth ages 6 to 19 adhere to the recommendation of 2 hours or less of screen time per day.<sup>2015-16 NHANES</sup></li> <li>• <b>Significant race/ethnicity differences exist:</b> 35%, 32%, 30%, and 25% of White, Hispanic/Mexican American, Asian, and African American children ages 6 to 19 years meet screen time guidelines, respectively.<sup>2015-16 NHANES</sup></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Among U.S. youth ages 12 to 19, <b>38% walk or bike</b> at least once per week to get to and from various places in their community.<sup>2015-16 NHANES</sup></li> <li>• <b>There are differences in the number of days per week youth engage in active transportation:</b> 62%, 15%, and 23% of youth ages 12 to 19 walk or bike for travel on 0, 1-4, and 5-7 days per week, respectively.<sup>2015-16 NHANES</sup></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>56% and 50% of 6 to 12 year old children</b> report playing a team sport or an individual sport, respectively, at least once a year. However, 37% of 6-12 year old children report playing a team sport on a regular basis.<sup>2017 State of Play Report</sup></li> <li>• <b>There is a significant socioeconomic disparity in sport participation:</b> 12% of children from high-income households compared to 30% of children from low-income households engage in no sport activity during the year.<sup>2017 State of Play Report</sup></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>There is no benchmark or guideline</b> related to the level of active play among U.S. children and youth.</li> <li>• <b>65% of school districts</b> require elementary schools to provide regularly scheduled recess, which is an opportunity for children to engage in active play.<sup>2016 SHPPS</sup></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>42% of 12 to 15 year old youth</b> have adequate cardiorespiratory fitness levels, based on a treadmill exercise test.<sup>2012 NNYFS</sup></li> <li>• <b>There are gender differences in fitness levels:</b> 5.3% of boys and 12.1% of girls aged 15 to 19 years are in the “excellent” Health Benefit Zone for grip strength.<sup>2011-12 NHANES</sup></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>There are no nationally representative data or benchmarks</b> for the impact of family and peers on U.S. children and youth physical activity.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>3.0% of U.S. secondary schools</b> established and implemented a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program.<sup>2016 School Health Profiles</sup></li> <li>• <b>Among high school students, 30% attend PE classes</b> 5 days a week, while 52% attended PE classes 1 day a week.<sup>2017 YRBSS</sup></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>77% of 6 to 17 year old U.S. children</b> live in a neighborhood with a park or playground.<sup>2016 NSCH</sup></li> <li>• <b>64% of 6 to 17 year old children</b> live in a safe environment. However, there are disparities in this indicator: 72% of white children, 53% of African American children and 54% of Hispanic children live in safe environments.<sup>2016 NSCH</sup></li> </ul>

# About the National Physical Activity Plan

The U.S. Report Card Research Advisory Committee responsible for developing this report is a sub-committee of the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) Alliance, a 501c3 nonprofit organization. The Alliance is committed to ensuring the long-term success of the 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. The Alliance is governed by a Board of Directors composed of representatives of organizational partners and at-large experts on physical activity and public health (see the NPAP's website link below for a complete list of partners).

The NPAP is a comprehensive set of policies, programs, and initiatives that aim to increase physical activity in all segments of the American population. It is the product of a private-public sector collaborative. Hundreds of organizations are working together to change 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.

The NPAP has a vision: **One day, all Americans will be physically active, and they will live, work, and play in environments that encourage and support regular physical activity.**

The first U.S. NPAP was released in 2010 and was recently updated and re-released in 2016 with the addition of faith-based settings and sport as new societal sectors. Societal sectors are areas of opportunity for physical activity promotion that provide the infrastructure for the Plan. The NPAP is comprised of recommendations organized in nine societal sectors: Business and Industry; Community Recreation, Fitness and Parks; Education; Faith-based Settings; Healthcare; Mass Media; Public Health; Sport; and Transportation, Land Use and Community Design. Each sector presents strategies aimed at promoting physical activity. Each strategy outlines specific tactics that communities, organizations, agencies, and individuals can use to implement the strategy. Recognizing that some strategies encompass multiple sectors, the NPAP has several overarching priorities focusing on initiatives that aim to increase physical activity.

For more information on the NPAP or the NPAP Alliance, visit: [www.physicalactivityplan.org](http://www.physicalactivityplan.org).



## 2018 REPORT CARD RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Committee included: Kim Beals, PhD, RD, CSSD, LDN (University of Pittsburgh), Jordan Carlson, PhD (Children's Mercy Kansas City), Scott Crouter, PhD, FACSM (The University of Tennessee), Kara D. Denstel, MPH (Pennington Biomedical Research Center), Peter T. Katzmarzyk, PhD, FACSM, FAHA (Chair, Pennington Biomedical), Thomas L. McKenzie, PhD, FACSM (San Diego State University), Russell R. Pate, PhD (University of South Carolina), Susan B. Sisson, PhD, RDN, CHES (University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center), Amanda E. Staiano (Pennington Biomedical), Heidi I. Stanish (University of Massachusetts, Boston), Dianne S. Ward, PhD (University of North Carolina Gillings), Melicia Whitt-Glover, PhD (Gramercy Research Group), Carly Wright (SHAPE America). 2018 Report Card Committee Consultants include Maura Kepper, PhD, MPH (Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis) Emily Mire, MS (Pennington Biomedical).

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This is the Summary Report. To download the full (long-version) of the Report Card, please visit [www.physicalactivityplan.org](http://www.physicalactivityplan.org).