



Kids CAN PLAY!

Encouraging children to be active at home, at school, and in their communities

Physical Activity Levels of Canadian Children and Youth

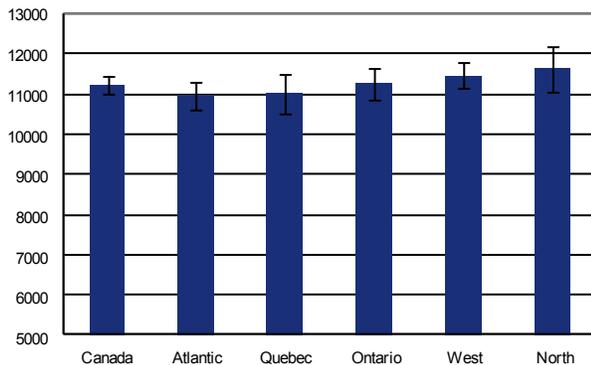
Since 2005, the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute's CANPLAY study (*Canadian Physical Activity Levels Among Youth* study) has been used to measure the physical activity levels of children and youth, by using pedometers to measure daily steps. This bulletin reflects data collected in year 7 of data collection which was collected in 2011/2012, and also compares this data to those collected in previous years. The CANPLAY study shows that Canadian children, aged 5 to 19, take approximately 11,220 daily steps on average.

Region

Compared to the national average, there are no significant differences in average steps taken by region.

FIGURE 1

Average daily steps of children and youth by region



CANPLAY 2011/2012, CFLRI

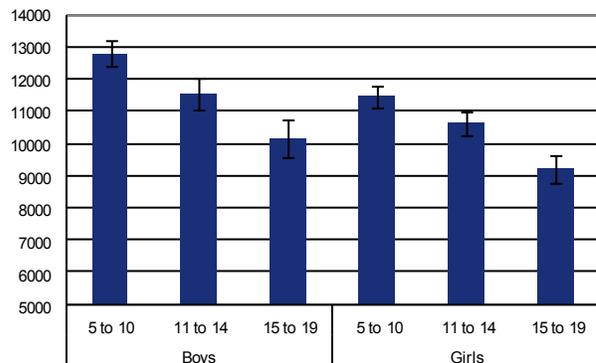
Child Characteristics

Boys take more daily steps on average than girls do. Younger children take more steps per day than older teens, and steps decrease with each increasing age group. These gender differences appear at the younger age groups (there are no significant differences among 15 to 19 year olds) and the age-related decrease in steps appears for both boys and girls.

Children who participate in organized physical activities and sport take on average almost 1,500 more daily steps than children who do not participate in these types of activities.

FIGURE 2

Average daily steps of children and youth by age and sex of child



CANPLAY 2011/2012, CFLRI

Parent and household characteristics

Children from the highest income households ($\geq \$100,000$ /year) take more steps than those from low income households ($\$20,000$ to $\$29,999$ /year). Children whose parents have a university education take more steps than those with a college education.

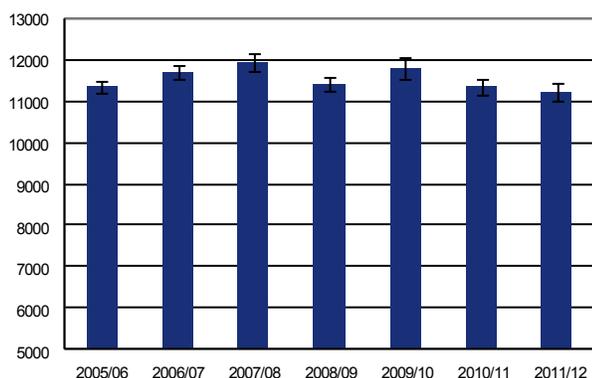


Trends in activity level over time

In 2011/12 (year 7 of data collection), children and youth aged 5 to 19 take roughly an average of 11,220 steps. The average number of steps taken in 2011/12 is slightly lower than the average during year 2, 3 and 5 of the CANPLAY study, however, it is not significantly different from year 1, 4 or 6 (see figure 3). The following analyses looks at trends over time examining each survey year independently.

FIGURE 3

Average daily steps of children and youth over time, 2005-2012



CANPLAY 2005-2012, CFLRI

Generally speaking, there has not been a significant change in daily steps since 2005 among children and youth living in the Atlantic. Slight changes over time appear among the other regions, as follows:

- In Quebec, the number of steps taken by children and youth in year 7 did not differ significantly from any other year. Previously, the only difference over time is the higher number of steps taken in year 3 compared to year 1.
- In Ontario, the number of steps taken in year 7 is lower than the number of steps taken by children in year 3 and 5 of the study. This is similar to previous findings where lower steps appeared in year 1 and year 6 of the study compared to both year 3 and year 5.

- In the West, the number of steps taken by children who participated in year 7 of the study is lower than steps taken by children in year 2 and 3 of CANPLAY.
- In the North, steps taken by children in the current year (year 7) of the study are lower than those taken by children in year 1.

Child Characteristics

Certain patterns appear consistently over time, namely:

- boys take more steps than girls;
- the number of steps decrease with increasing age;
- the age- and sex- relationships generally persists over time; and,
- children participating in organized physical activity and sport take more steps compared to those who do not.

Parent and Household Characteristics

Less consistent over time are differences with respect to parent and household characteristics. Although an association between a child's average daily steps and parent's education level existed in earlier years of the CANPLAY study, this relationship is less consistent in later years of data collection. In earlier survey years (years 1, 2 and 4), children and youth who lived in the highest income households took more steps compared to those from the lower income households (\$20,000 to \$29,999/year), and this relationship occurs again in year 7. The association between a child's average daily steps and parental perceived activity level appeared in the first two years of CANPLAY, but does not appear in year 7.

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