



Kids CAN PLAY!

ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO BE ACTIVE AT HOME, AT SCHOOL, AND IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Purpose of after school programming

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute studies the physical activity levels of children and youth through a study called CANPLAY (the Canadian Physical Activity Levels Among Youth Study) using pedometers to measure daily steps. In addition to the measurement of physical activity levels, factors associated with physical activity are also assessed in the study. Earlier bulletins in this Research Bulletin Series summarized results of a subsample of Canadian parents asking about access to a supervised after school program for children and youth (see Bulletin 6 in this series), the amount of days attending an after school program (Bulletin 6), where it is offered (Bulletin 7), and whether there is a fee associated with the program (Bulletin 7). Moreover, parents were asked about the primary purpose of the after school programming, and this bulletin summarizes the findings in this regard.

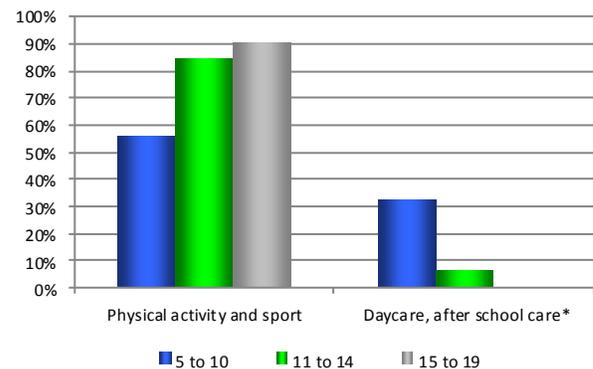
Among the 52% of parents of children aged 5 to 19 who report that their children have access to a supervised program during the after school time period, the majority of parents (73%) indicate that the primary purpose of the programming is focused on physical activity and sport. In addition, 16% of parents cite day care or after school care as the primary purpose and less than 5% of parents indicated other purposes such as arts, crafts, drama, and music (4%), a combination of purposes (3%), homework, academic instruction and tutoring, culture, and language (2%), and some other reasons (<2%).

Compared to the national average,

- relatively fewer parents living in the West and North indicate daycare or after school care as the primary purpose of after school programming.
- parents residing in the West are more likely to report physical activity or sport as the primary purpose.
- a greater proportion of parents living in the Atlantic indicate several purposes.

FIGURE 1

Primary purpose of after school program by child's age



*Data not available for older youth due to sample size.

CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI

Child characteristics

There are no significant gender differences with respect to the primary purpose of after school programming, although the type of programming does vary by age. Relatively more parents of 5 to 10 year olds indicate that the primary purpose is for daycare or after school care compared to youth, aged 11 to 14 years. On the contrary, physical activity and sport programming is least prevalent among the youngest children (5 to 10 year olds) compared to those 11 years and older. A greater proportion of children who participate in organized physical activity and sport more generally indicate that physical activity and sport is the primary purpose of the after school programming, whereas those who do not participate in organized physical activity and sport are more likely to indicate that the primary purpose of the after school programming is for arts, crafts, drama and music.



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Bulletin 8: Purpose of after school programming

Parent and household characteristics

Compared to parents who have graduated from secondary school, university educated parents are more likely to report daycare or after school care, yet are less likely to indicate physical activity or sport as the primary purpose of their children's after school programming

Primary purpose of after school programming by steps taken daily

Although the finding is most likely associated with age, children and youth who indicate that the primary purpose of the after school programming is for daycare or after school care take more steps compared to those who indicate physical activity, sport, or the arts as the purpose. Generally speaking, the relationship between steps and child or parent characteristics are consistent regardless of the purpose of the after school programming, with one exception. Among those who cite day care or after school care as the primary purpose of the programming, there are no significant differences in steps between those who participate in organized physical activity and sport more globally and those who do not, whereas are significant differences in steps among those citing physical activity and sport as the primary purpose.

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