



# Kids CAN PLAY!

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

## Active pursuits after school

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute examines the physical activity levels of children and youth using pedometers to measure daily steps through a study called CANPLAY (Canadian Physical Activity Levels Among Youth Study). This study also asks about other factors associated with physical activity, including time spent in active pursuits during the period that school ends and dinner. This bulletin represents data collected during the two year time period from 2014 to 2016.

According to the 2014-2016 CANPLAY study, children between the ages of 5 to 19 engage in the following active pursuits during the period when school ends and dinner:

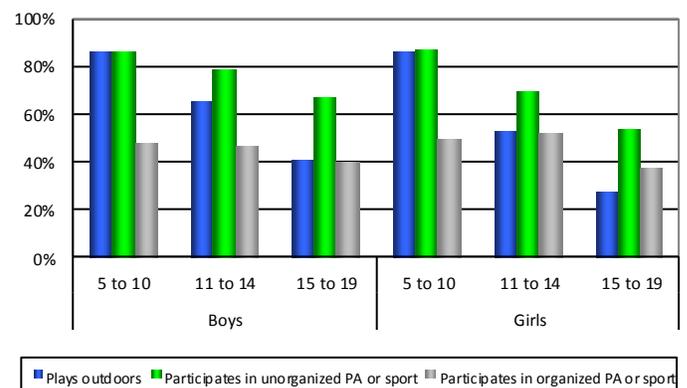
- 75% participate in unorganized physical activities and sports;
- 62% play outdoors;
- 60% do chores; and
- 46% participate in organized physical activities and sports.

### Canada and Regions

There are a number of regional differences with respect to the types of active pursuits that children engage in after school. More specifically, children living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba are more likely than the national average to report doing chores during the after school time period. Children from Newfoundland and Labrador, British Columbia and the Yukon are more likely, whereas, those from Quebec are less likely than the average to report playing outdoors. Similarly, a higher percentage of children living in Newfoundland and Labrador, British Columbia, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, whereas relatively fewer living in New Brunswick and Quebec participate in organized physical activities and sports after school. Children living in the Yukon are also more likely to report participating in unorganized physical activities and sports compared to the national average.

FIGURE 1

Children's active pursuits after school by child's gender and age



CANPLAY study, 2014-2016, CFLRI

PA = physical activity

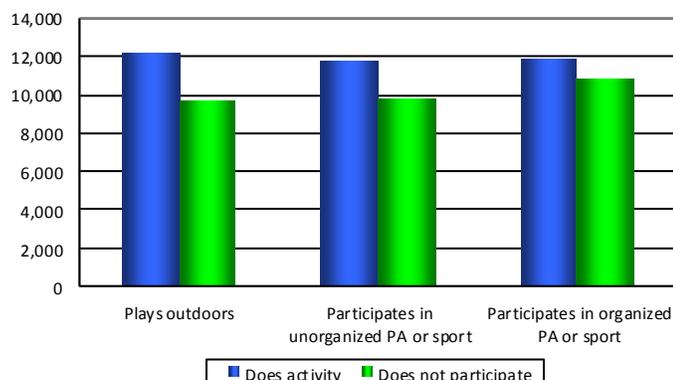
### Child characteristics

Boys and girls are equally as likely to do chores or participate in organized physical activities or sports during this time period. On the contrary, more boys reportedly play outdoors or participate in unorganized physical activities or sports after school compared to girls. Older children (those aged 11 to 14) are more likely than younger children (those aged 5 to 10) to do chores during this time period, however, this finding is generally significant among girls but not among boys. Older children (aged 15 to 19), however, are less likely than those who are younger (aged 5 to 14) to participate in organized physical activities and sports, and this is significant among both boys and girls. In a similar way, there is a substantial decrease in the proportion of children and youth who play outdoors (86% of 5 to 10 and 34% of 15 to 19 year olds) or participate in unorganized physical activities or sports (87% of 5 to 10 year olds and 61% of 15 to 19 year olds) with increasing age. Both of these findings are significant among boys and girls.



FIGURE 2

Active pursuits after school by steps taken



CANPLAY study, 2014-2016, CFLRI

PA = physical activity

### Parent and household characteristics

There are no differences in the percentage of children who reportedly do chores, play outdoors or participate in unorganized physical activities or sports by parental self-perceived activity level. On the contrary, children whose parents indicate that they are *substantially* or *slightly more active* than their peers are more likely to participate in organized physical activities and sports compared to parents who perceive their activity level as being just as, or less active than their peers.

The types of activities children pursue after school also varies by parental education. Namely, a higher percentage of children whose parents have graduated from secondary school participate in unorganized physical activities and sports compared to children whose parents have a post-secondary education. In a somewhat similar fashion, a greater proportion of children whose parents have *not* graduated from secondary school spend time after school playing outdoors compared to those whose parents are university educated. Children whose parents have a university education are most likely to participate in organized physical activities and sports, yet are least likely to participate in chores during the after school time period.

Children and youth living in higher income households ( $\geq \$80,000$  annually) are more likely than those living in lower income households ( $< \$60,000$  annually) to participate in organized physical activities and sports. On the contrary, a higher percentage of children living in lower income households ( $\$20,000$  to  $\$29,999$  annually) spend time after school doing chores than those living in the highest income households ( $\geq \$100,000$  annually).

### Participation in active pursuits by steps taken daily

There are no step differences between those who **do** chores after school and those who **do not**, and this pattern is consistent regardless of child, parent and household characteristics. A difference in average daily steps overall was observed for children and youth who play outdoors, participate in organized or unorganized physical activities and sports after school compared to those who **do not**. Children who engage in these activities during this time period take roughly 1,100 to 2,500 more steps than those who **do not**. This difference in average steps is generally evident across most child, parent and household characteristics studied, with a couple of exceptions. There are no step differences between those who participate in unorganized or organized physical activities and sports and those who **do not** among two particular groups: children and youth whose parents have not graduated from secondary school; and, those whose parents perceive themselves as substantially less active. In a similar way, there are no step differences among children and youth who play outdoors and those who do not and whose parents have less than a secondary level education.

In addition to examining differences in steps between those who participate in an activity after school and those who **do not**, the general relationships or patterns between children, parental, and household factors can be examined to see if they are similar among those who **do** and those who **do not** participate in an activity. For the most part, patterns related to these factors by average daily steps taken did not generally differ between children and youth who reportedly do chores, play outdoors or who participate in unorganized physical activities and sports after school, and those who do not. Two exceptions to this are some slight regional differences among those who participate in unorganized physical activities and sports, and gender differences among those who do chores, whereas these relationships are not significant among counterparts who **do not** do these types of activities.

There were some differences in step patterns among those who participate in organized physical activities and sports during the after school period and those who **do not**. The following relationships were only observed among children and youth who **do not** participate in organized activities: children and youth whose parents perceived themselves as slightly more active take more steps than those who see themselves as less active than their peers; those living in the highest income households ( $\geq$ \$100,000 annually) take more steps than those from lower income households (\$20,000 to \$29,999 annually); and, children and youth whose parents have a university education take more steps than those whose parents have a college education. Among those who **do** participate in organized physical activity and sport after school, these relationships with self-perceived parental activity level and parental education are not significant, and the relationship with household income is less clear.

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