



Kids CAN PLAY!

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

Parents' perspectives about the availability of after school programs

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute studies 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, related factors of physical activity are also explored in the study. The CANPLAY study asked a subsample of Canadian parents about access to a supervised after school program for children and youth and the amount of days attending such a program. This bulletin summarizes the findings in this regard. Subsequent bulletins in this series also explore the primary purpose and location of the programming and if there is an associated programming fee.

Access to a supervised after school program

Overall, slightly more than half of parents (52%) indicate that their children (aged 5 to 19) have access to a supervised program during the after school time period. Compared to the national average, children living in Quebec are less likely and

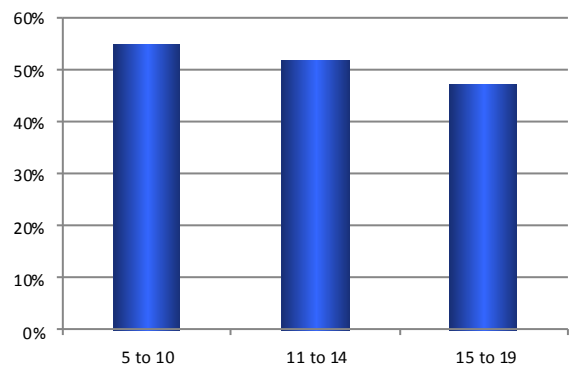
those living in the North are more likely to have access to a program.

Child characteristics

Although there are no gender differences in the proportion of children who have access to a supervised program during the after school time period, access does vary by age. Relatively more 5 to 10 year olds have access to a program compared to older youth (aged 15 to 19). A greater proportion of children who participate in organized physical activity and sport generally have access to a supervised after school program compared to those who do not participate.

FIGURE 2

Access to a supervised after school program by age of child



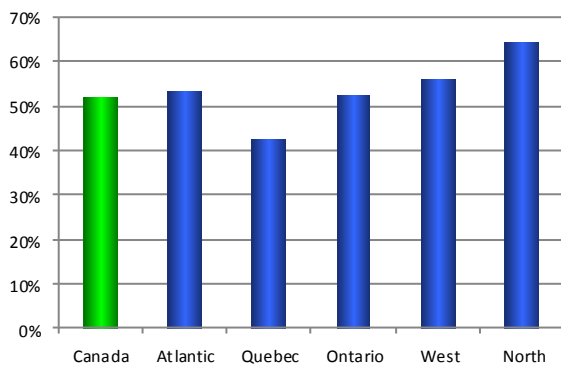
CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI

Parent and household characteristics

Compared to parents who are *just as* active or slightly *less* active than other adults of the same age and sex, a greater proportion of parents who consider themselves substantially *more* active say that their children have access to a supervised after school program.

FIGURE 1

Access to a supervised after school program by region



CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI

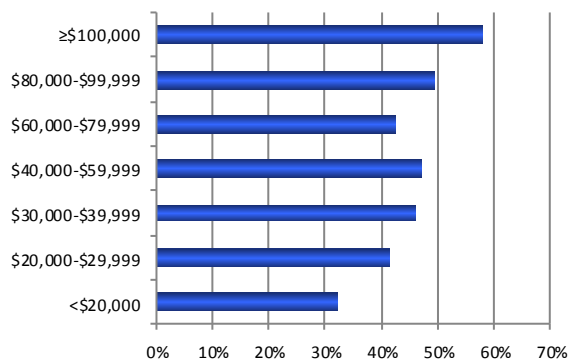


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FIGURE 3

Access to a supervised after school program by household income



CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI

Children who live in the highest income households (\$100,000 or more per year) are most likely to have access to a program.

Access to a supervised after school program by steps taken daily

Although there are no overall significant differences in steps taken between children who have access to a supervised after school program and those who do not, there are significant differences when looking at specific population groups. For example, girls, children living in the highest income households, and children living in the Atlantic take more steps if they have access to an after school program compared to those who do not. The relationships between steps taken and child, parent, and household characteristics are generally the same regardless of access to an after school program, except that there are some minor regional differences between those who have access and those who do not.

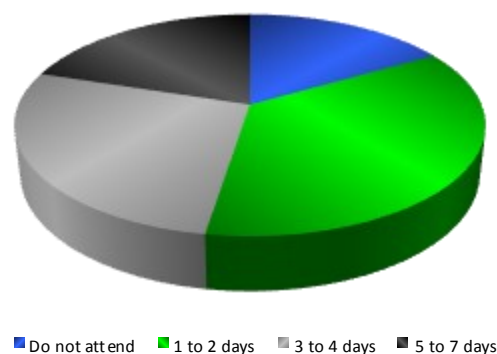
Number of days attending after school programs

Among the 52% of children and youth who have access to a supervised after school program, the number of days attending a program was also asked. In a typical week:

- 17% of these children do not attend an after school program
- 36% attend 1 to 2 days a week
- 27% attend 3 to 4 days a week and,
- 20% attend daily.

FIGURE 4

Number of days attending after school programs, overall



CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI

Regional differences appear with respect to the number of days attending after school programs. Compared to the national average,

- children living in Ontario are more likely to never attend these types of programs, and
- children living in Quebec are more likely, whereas those living in the North are less likely to attend on a less frequent basis (1 or 2 days a week).

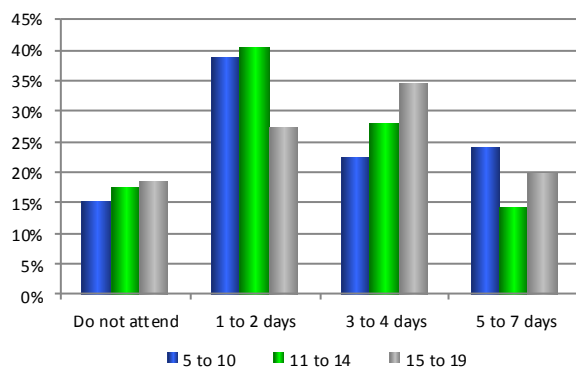
Child characteristics

Older children (15 to 19 years) are more likely than the youngest children (5 to 10 years) to attend an after school program 3 to 4 days per week, whereas they are least likely to indicate less frequent attendance (1 to 2 days a week). The youngest children are more likely to indicate daily attendance compared to 11 to 14 year olds. These overall age-related patterns generally exist for boys, but are not significant for girls.

Participation in organized physical activity and sport is associated with the number of days attending after school programs. For example, children who participate in organized physical activity and sport are also generally more likely to attend after school programming at least 3 days out of the week yet are less likely to never attend these programs compared to those children who do not participate in organized physical activity and sport.

FIGURE 5

Number of days attending after school programs by age of child



CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI

Parent and household characteristics

Few differences exist with respect to the number of days attending after school programs and parent and household characteristics, with one exception. Children living in the highest income households are less likely to attend an after school program on a less frequent basis (i.e., 1 or 2 days a week) compared to those living in households with incomes ranging from \$30,000 to \$60,000 per year.

Number of days attending after school programs by daily steps

Children and youth who attend an after school program on a daily basis take roughly 1,000 more steps per day on average than those who attend on a less frequent basis (1 to 2 days a week). When looking at child, parent, and household characteristics, there are significant step differences between those who attend after school programs daily compared to those who never attend among 15 to 19 year olds and those who do not participate in organized physical activity and sport.

When looking at the number of days independently, some differences in patterns exist, namely:

- a lack of significant gender differences in steps taken between those who *never* attend an after school program or who attend less frequently (1 to 2 days per week), however, boys take more steps than girls if they attend a program more frequently (3 or more days per week).
- older youth attain the lowest number of steps on average if attending a program less frequently or not at all (4 days or less per week), whereas there are no significant age-related differences if this group attends on a daily basis.
- If a child attends an after school program, there are no step differences between children who participate in organized physical activity and sport and those who do not. However, among children who do not participate in an after school program, participating in organized physical activity and sport yields more steps than those who do not engage in organized activities.
- If a child attends an after school program, there are no significant differences with respect to parental education. Among children who do not participate in an after school program, children whose parents have a university education take more steps on average than those whose parents have graduated from high school.

CANADIAN FITNESS & LIFESTYLE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

201-185 Somerset Street West • Ottawa, ON K2P 0J2 • (613) 233-5528 • info@cflri.ca

<http://www.cflri.ca/>



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