



# Kids CAN PLAY!

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

## Children's preferences for active versus quiet pursuits

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. The study also explores factors associated with physical activity, including asking a subsample of parents about their children's preferences for the types of activities that they like to participate in (such as a preference for being active, a preference for quiet, non-active pursuits, or liking both types of activities equally well).

Among a sub-sample of parents, less than one-quarter of parents (22%) indicate that their children exclusively prefer to be physically active, 20% say that their children prefer to do quiet, non-active pursuits, whereas the majority (58%) like to both types of activities equally well. Compared to the national average, a greater proportion of parents living in the West indicate that their children like to do both types of activities equally well. There are no other significant regional differences with respect to preferences for the type of activities that children prefer to participate in.

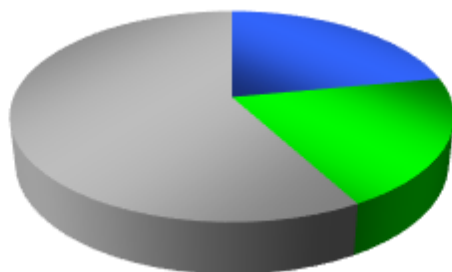
### Child characteristics

There are no significant gender differences with respect to preferences for types of activities, although the preferences do vary by age. Relatively more parents of 5 to 10 year olds indicate that their children prefer to be physically active compared to youth, aged 11 to 14 years. On the contrary, a preference for quiet, non-active pursuits is less prevalent among the youngest children (5 to 10 year olds) compared to those 11 years and older.

As one would expect, a greater proportion of children who participate in organized physical activity and sport more generally prefer to be physically active or like both types of activities equally well, whereas those who do not participate in organized physical activity and sport are more likely to prefer quiet, non-active pursuits.

**FIGURE 1**

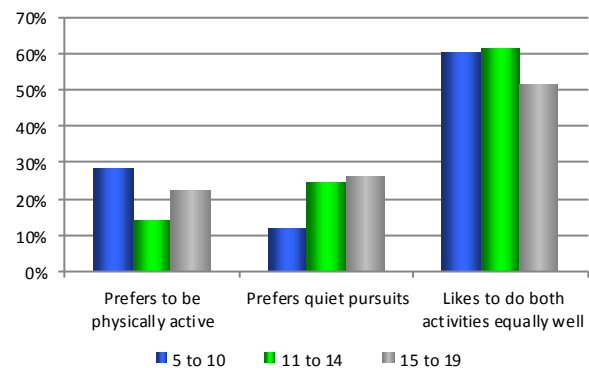
Preferences for active versus quiet pursuits



- Prefers to be physically active
- Prefers quiet pursuits
- Likes to do both activities equally well

**FIGURE 2**

Preferences for active versus quiet pursuits by child's age



CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI

CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI



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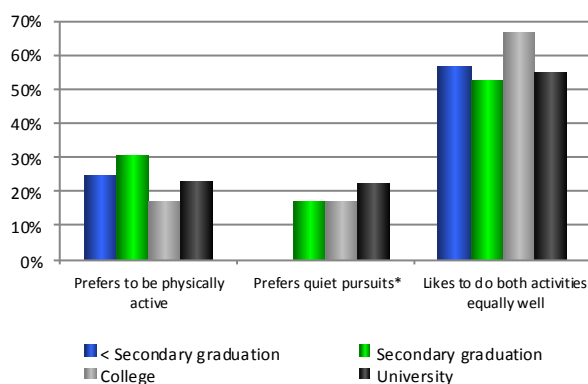
Bulletin 9: Children's preferences for active versus quiet pursuits

## Parent and household characteristics

Parents who have graduated from secondary school are more likely to report that their children prefer active pursuits compared to parents who report having a college education. Conversely, college educated parents are more likely than those who have graduated from secondary school or who have a university education to say that their children like to do both types of activities equally well. A greater proportion of parents living in the highest income households (\$80,000 or higher per year) say that their children like to do both types of activities equally well compared to parents residing in lower income households (\$20,000 to \$29,999 per year).

**FIGURE 3**

Preferences for active versus quiet pursuits by parent's education level



\*one category not releasable due to sample size

CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI

## Preferences for active versus quiet pursuits by steps taken daily

Children and youth who have a preference for being physically active take more steps compared to those who either like both types of activities, or prefer quiet, non-active pursuits. Higher steps among children who prefer being physically active to quiet activities is generally the pattern for:

- both girls and boys overall,
- children under 15 years (especially boys),
- children whose parents are just as or more active than peers (same age and sex),
- children who participate in organized physical activity and sport,
- children whose parents have a post-secondary education,
- children from the highest income households.

Generally speaking, the relationship between steps and child or parent characteristics are somewhat consistent regardless of children's preferences for types of activities, with a couple of exceptions. Among children who prefer to be physically active, average steps are higher among boys than girls. This relationship with gender is not significant among those who prefer quiet activities or like *both* active and quiet pursuits equally well. In addition, there are no age-related differences when considering a preference for one type of activity over another, but among children who like both types of activities equally well, younger children take more steps than the oldest youth. Among children who prefer physically active pursuits exclusively or among those who like active pursuits in conjunction with quiet pursuits, average steps are higher among those who participate in organized physical activity and sport compared to those who do not. This significant difference is not evident, however, among those who exclusively prefer quiet, non-active pursuits.

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