



# Kids CAN PLAY!

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

## Preferences for unorganized versus organized physical activity or sport

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute has conducted a study called CANPLAY (the Canadian Physical Activity Levels Among Youth Study). The study examines physical activity levels of children and youth using pedometers to measure daily steps and factors associated with physical activity, including children's preferences for unorganized versus organized physical activity or sport.

Among a sub-sample of parents in the CANPLAY study, one-quarter of parents (25%) say that their children *prefer* unorganized, whereas 19% say that their children *prefer* organized physical activity or sport. The majority (52%), however, like *both* types of activities equally well, and the remaining 4% *do not like either* type of activity. There are no regional differences with respect to these preferences.

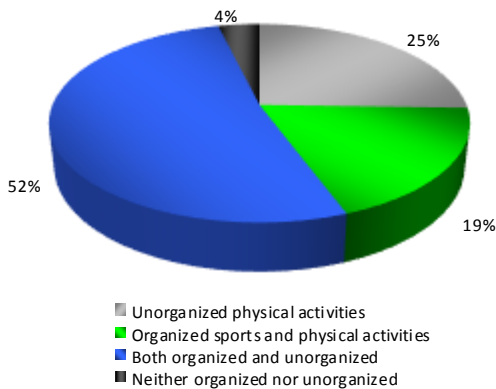
### Child characteristics

There are no significant gender differences with respect to children's reported preference for unorganized versus organized physical activity or sport.

Relatively more parents of 5 to 10 year olds indicate that their children like *both* unorganized and organized physical activity or sport equally well compared to parents of older teens (aged 15 to 19). Conversely, 5 to 10 years olds are least likely to have a preference for solely organized physical activity or sport, compared to their older counterparts.

FIGURE 1

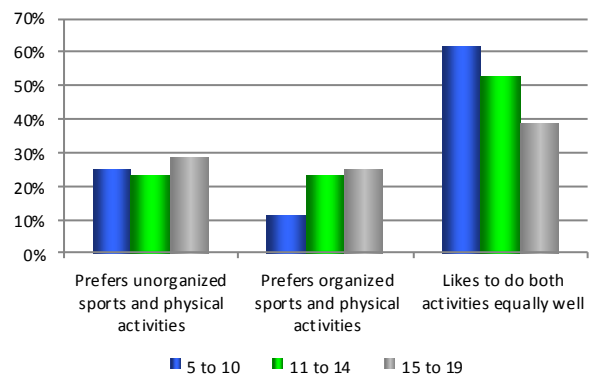
Preferences for unorganized versus organized physical activity or sport



CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI

FIGURE 2

Preferences for unorganized versus organized physical activities by child's age



CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI

Preferences seem to go hand in hand with actual participation to some extent. For example, a greater proportion of children who *participate* in organized physical activity or sport more generally *like* both unorganized and organized activities equally well, whereas those who *do not participate* in organized physical activity and sport are more likely to *prefer* unorganized physical activity and sport.



Kids CAN PLAY!

© 2017, Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute

Bulletin 10: Preferences for unorganized versus organized physical activity or sport

### Parent and household characteristics

Children whose parents are substantially less active than their peers are more likely to prefer unorganized physical activity or sport compared to children whose parents are slightly more active. Adults who have not graduated from high school are more likely to report that their children prefer unorganized physical activity or sport compared to parents who have a post-secondary education, whereas they are less likely than college-educated parents to say that their children like to do *both* types of activities equally well. A greater proportion of parents residing in higher income households (\$60,000 or higher per year) indicate that their children like to do *both* types of activities equally well compared to parents in lower income households (\$20,000 to \$29,999 per year).

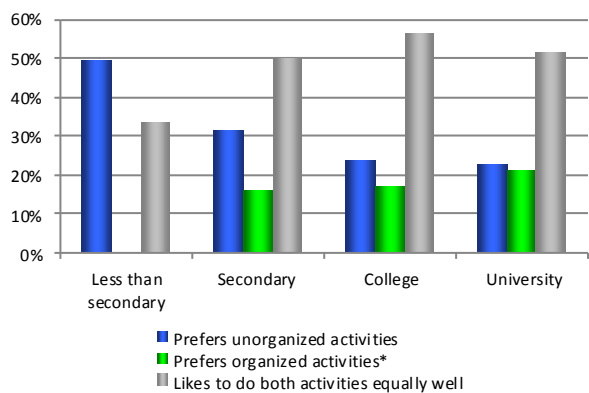
### Preferences for unorganized versus organized physical activity or sport by steps taken daily

Generally speaking, there are no significant step differences between children who *prefer* unorganized versus organized physical activity or sport, or who like both types of activities equally well.

Moreover, the relationship between steps and child or parent characteristics are generally consistent regardless of preferences, with one exception. Among those children who like *both* organized and unorganized physical activity and sport equally well, steps are higher for boys compared to girls. This relationship between average steps taken and gender is not significant among those who have a preference for one type of activity over another.

**FIGURE 3**

Preferences for unorganized versus organized physical activities by parent’s education level



\*one category not releasable due to sample size

CANPLAY study, 2014-2015, CFLRI

**CANADIAN FITNESS & LIFESTYLE RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

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

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



Production of this bulletin has been made possible through a financial contribution from Sport Canada and the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of these agencies.