



Kids CAN PLAY!

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

Parents' perspective about the availability of after school programs, Alberta

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute examines physical activity levels of children and youth through a study called CANPLAY (the Canadian Physical Activity Levels Among Youth study), along with other factors that are associated with physical activity. This bulletin summarizes the findings with regards to parents' perspectives about the availability of supervised after school programs and the amount of days that their children attend these types of programs each week.

Access to a supervised after school program

According to a subsample of parents, half of all Canadian children and youth (51%) have *access* to supervised programming during the after school period. A similar percentage (52%) of children and youth living in Alberta report having *access* to a supervised, after school program compared to the national average. When comparing provinces and territories, a higher proportion of children and youth living in Alberta cite *access* to an after school program than those living in Quebec, whereas relatively fewer living in Alberta report this compared to those living in the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

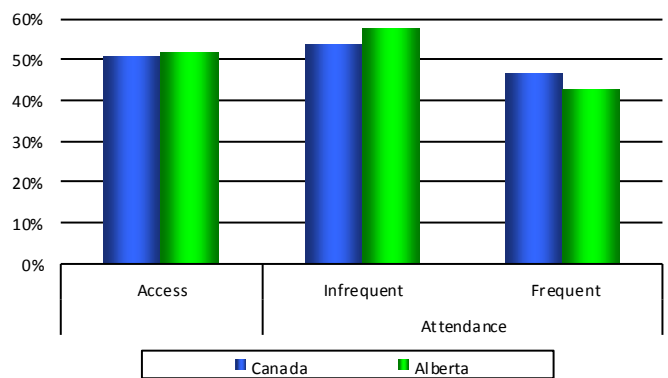
Among the 52% of children and youth living in Alberta who indicate having *access* to supervised programs during the after school period, 57% *attend* this type of programming *infrequently* (2 days or less a week, or never attend) and 43% attend more *frequently* (on 3 days or more per week). These proportions do not differ significantly from the national estimates.

Child characteristics

Nationally, older children are least likely to have *access* to supervised, after school programming compared to younger children. This age-related relationship generally appears

FIGURE 1

Access to, and attendance in, a supervised after school program, Alberta and Canada



CANPLAY study, 2014-2016, CFLRI

among boys and girls. This relationship, however, between *access* to a program and a child's age is not significant among children and youth living in Alberta. On the contrary, in the province, a higher proportion of 5 to 12 year olds cite infrequent *attendance* (none to 2 days per week), whereas a greater percentage of 13 to 19 year olds report frequent *attendance* (3 or more days per week) in this programming. In Canada and in Alberta, a higher percentage of children who participate in organized physical activity and sport have *access* to a supervised after school program compared to those who do not participate. Moreover, a greater percentage of children and youth living in Alberta who do not participate in organized physical activity and sport reportedly *attend* an after school program on an *infrequent* basis (none to 2 days per week) compared to those who do participate.



Parent and household characteristics

Compared to parents who are *just as* or who are *slightly less* active than their peers of the same age and gender, a greater proportion of Canadian parents who consider themselves *substantially more* active say that their children have *access* to a supervised after school program. This relationship, however, is not significant among children and youth living in Alberta. Similarly, the relationship between having *access* to an after school program and household income that exists nationally, whereby children who live in the highest income households are most likely to report having *access* to this type of programming, is not significant in Alberta, more specifically. Interestingly, a greater percentage of children and youth living in the lowest income households report infrequent *attendance* in this type of programming, compared to those living in households earning \$60,000 per year or more.

Access to daily after school programs by daily steps

Nationally, children who have *access* to a supervised, after school program take about 700 more steps/day on average than those who do not have access. Step-related differences between those who have *access* and those who do not, do not differ significantly in Alberta.

Nationally, the pattern whereby those who have *access* to this type of programming take more steps is significant among the following groups: both boys and girls; children whose parents are *substantially more* active than their peers; children whose parents have a university education; children living in the highest income households; and, children living in the Atlantic and Western regions. In Alberta, these relationships are not significant.

It is also possible to explore patterns in child, parent and household characteristics by those who have *access* to after school programs and those who do not. Relatively few differences exist between these two groups. Nationally and in Alberta, among children who have *access* to after school programs, those who live in the highest income households take more steps than those living in some lower income households; this relationship is not significant among those who do not have *access*.

Nationally, among children who do not have *access* to after school programming, those whose parents indicate that they are *slightly more* or *just as* active than their peers take more steps compared to those whose parents are *substantially less* active, whereas this relationship is not significant among those who do have *access*. On the other hand, among children and youth who reside in Alberta and who have access to an after school program, boys take more steps than girls. This relationship is not significant among those who do not indicate having *access*.

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