



# 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, Ontario

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 Ontario 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 Ontario cite having *access* to an after school program than those living in Quebec, whereas relatively fewer living in Ontario report this compared to those living in British Columbia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

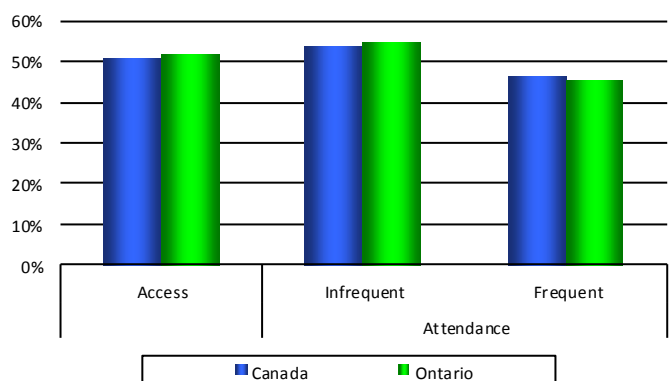
Among the 52% of children and youth living in Ontario who indicate having *access* to supervised programs during the after school period, 55% *attend* this type of programming *infrequently* (2 days or less a week, or never attend) and 45% attend more *frequently* (on 3 days or more per week). These 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 among boys and girls. This relationship, however, between *access* to a program and a child's age is not significant among

FIGURE 1

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



CANPLAY study, 2014-2016, CFLRI

children and youth living in Ontario. Similarly, in the province, there are no significant differences in *attendance* in this programming related to a child's gender or age. In Canada and in Ontario, 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 Ontario who participate in organized physical activity and sport reportedly *attend* an after school program on a *frequent* basis (3 or more days per week) compared to those who do not 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.



Similarly in Ontario, a higher percentage of children and youth whose parents indicate that they are *more* active than their own peers indicate that they have *access* to a supervised after school program compared to those who consider themselves *just as* active or *less* active than their peers. Similarly, the relationship between *access* to an after school program and household income that exists nationally, whereby children who live in the highest income households are more likely to report having *access* to this type of programming than those in lower income households, is similar in Ontario.

### 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 Ontario.

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 Ontario, 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, among children who do not have *access* to after school programming, those whose parents indicate 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*. Nationally and in Ontario, 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*. Boys living in Ontario who do not have *access* to an after school program take more steps than girls, whereas this relationship with gender is not significant among those who have *access*.

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