

Getting Kids Active!

Planning effective communications strategies



2008 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY MONITOR: FACTS & FIGURES

Activities to help children to stay fit and maintain healthy weights

The 2008 Physical Activity Monitor asked parents how beneficial certain activities are to children for staying fit and maintaining healthy weights. Most parents felt that all listed activities were of some benefit; results in this bulletin focus on those reporting that each of the following activities is a *very good* way to stay fit and maintain a healthy body weight:

- Participation in organized sport, 70%
- Participation in recreational activities, 69%
- Doing outdoor activities, 66%
- Walking or cycling to school, 47%
- Doing household chores, 37%

There are generally no regional differences among Canadian parents with respect to their ratings of activities to help children to stay fit and maintain their weight, with a few exceptions. Compared to the national average,

- Quebec parents are more likely to say that participation in organized sport and in outdoor activities are very good ways to do so; and
- those living in Manitoba are more likely to say that doing household chores is a very good way to do so.

Child characteristics

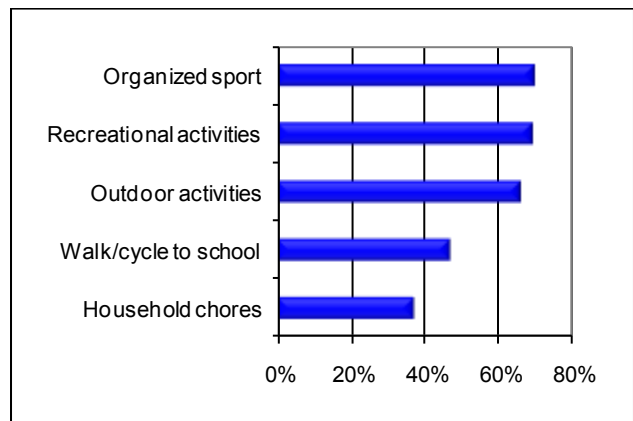
Compared to parents of girls, parents of boys are more likely to state that participation in recreational activities and in outdoor activities are very good ways for children to stay fit and maintain a healthy weight. When examined by age, these gender differences are significant only among parents of 10 to 14 year-olds.

Parental and household characteristics

Certain parental and household characteristics are associated with ratings of the benefit of activities for the purposes of staying fit and maintaining a healthy weight:

FIGURE 1

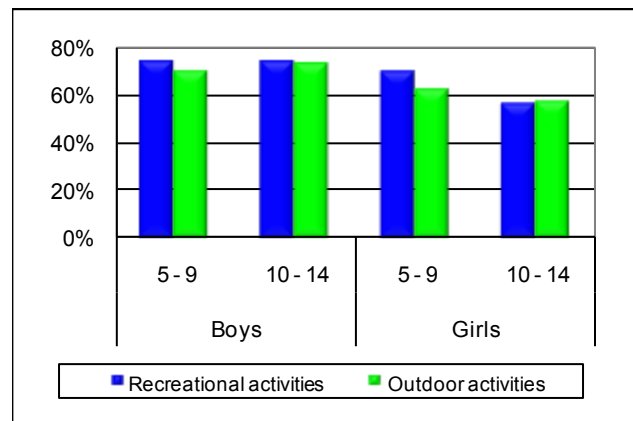
Very good ways for children to maintain a healthy weight and stay fit, overall



Physical Activity Monitor 2008, CFLRI

FIGURE 2

Very good ways for children to maintain a healthy weight and stay fit, by child age and sex

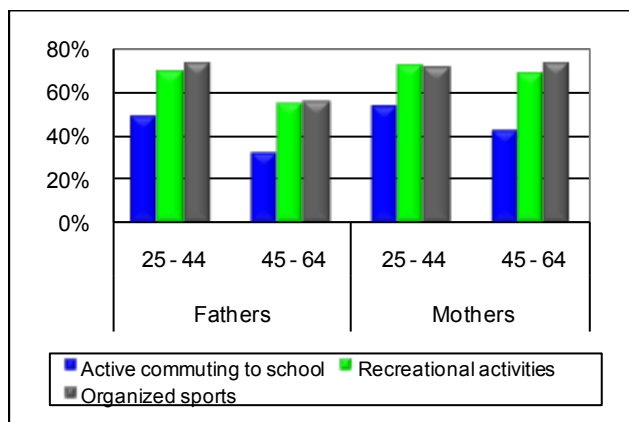


Physical Activity Monitor 2008, CFLRI



FIGURE 3

Very good ways for children to maintain a healthy weight and stay fit, by parent age and sex



Physical Activity Monitor 2008, CFLRI

- Mothers are more likely than fathers to say that outdoor activities are very good.
- Younger parents (25 to 44 years) are more likely than older parents (45 to 64 years) to say that walking or cycling to school and participating in recreational activities are very good.
- Similarly, younger fathers (25 to 44 years) are more likely than their older counterparts (45 to 64 years) to say that participation in organized sport is very good.
- Active parents are also more likely than those who are sedentary to say that organized sport is very good.

As a way to stay fit and maintain healthy weight in children,

- those in the smallest communities (< 1,000 people) are less likely than the national average to say that participation in organized sport is very good; and
- those in small communities (1,000-9,999 residents) are more likely than those in the largest municipalities (250,000+ residents) to say that outdoor activities is very good.

Trends

There have been some changes since 2003 in parental ratings of the benefit of different types of physical activity for staying fit and maintaining weight in children. Compared to 2003, the proportion of parents saying that commuting to school is a very good way for children to stay fit and maintain weight is lower in 2008.

Similar to 2003, mothers are more likely than fathers to say that outdoor activities are very good in helping to stay fit and maintain a healthy weight among their children. Comparing 2003 and 2008 data, other trends and changes of note include:

- the appearance in 2008 of differences between parents of boys and girls in citing recreational and outdoor activities as very good ways of staying fit and maintaining weight;
- newly emerged differences in active commuting to school and participation in recreational activities with respect to parental age that did not appear 2003; and
- the lack of parental gender and education differences in ratings of the benefits of household chores and active commuting to school that appeared in 2003.

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