

New U.S. Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth Reveals Continued Low Levels of Physical Activity

Report gives overall physical activity a "D-" grade

WASHINGTON, D.C. , DC, UNITED STATES, October 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Physical Activity Alliance, the nation's largest national coalition dedicated to advancing regular participation in physical activity, today released the 2024 United States Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. The overall physical activity grade for children and youth remained low at D-, the same grade it received in 2022, the last time a report was made.

The 2024 Executive Summary and Full Report are provided here: <https://paamovewithus.org/us-report-card-on-physical-activity-for-children-and-youth/>

The grade was derived from National Survey of Children's Health and National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data that showed:

- Only 20% to 28% of 6- to 17-year-olds meet the 60 minutes of daily physical activity recommended by the U.S. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.
- The proportion of children who meet the physical activity guidelines has decreased slightly since 2016, when these data were first available.
- Physical activity levels decline with age: 26% to 42% of 6- to 11-year-olds meet the physical activity guidelines; 15% of 12- to 17-year-olds meet the physical activity guidelines.
- The most notable declines over previous years are for rates of sports participation and rates of meeting recommendations for limiting screen time.

The Report Card synthesizes the best available data from multiple nationally representative surveys to provide a comprehensive evaluation of physical activity among children and youth. It covers 11 indicators, individual state data, and recommendations for how grades can be improved. A letter grade is assigned to each indicator based on the evidence. Each grade reflects how well the United States is succeeding at providing children and youth opportunities and/or support for physical activity.

Findings from the 2024 Report Card, the fifth iteration in the series that started in 2014, highlight the need for programs and policies to combat the rise in societal factors that interfere with children's physical activity and healthy development.

"Children's physical activity is highly influenced by factors within our communities," said Jordan Carlson, PhD, Professor of Pediatrics at Children's Mercy Kansas City and Chair of the 2024 United States Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. "Human bodies were designed to move and be active, but modern society has made life more sedentary. We need to reengineer our environments and routines to build activity back in. This means providing more opportunities for children to be active that are safe and enjoyable. Policy makers and other community leaders can support children's health by carefully considering the important role all sectors of society play in removing barriers to physical activity."

The report card is an advocacy tool that provides accountability and a call-to-action for decision-makers regarding how parents, teachers, health professionals, community leaders and policy makers can implement new initiatives, programs and policies to improve the physical activity levels and health of children and youth.

[According](#) to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as of 2021 more than 40% of school-aged children and adolescents had at least one chronic health condition such as asthma or obesity. In 2022, a report [published](#) in JAMA Pediatrics found that nearly one in three adolescents now meet the criteria for prediabetes and the rate among 12- to 19-year-olds had more than doubled from 11% to 28% between 1999 and 2018.

The National Physical Activity Plan, which is also part of the Physical Activity Alliance, includes recommended strategies for strengthening the support our communities provide for physical activity.

"The National Physical Activity Plan provides a roadmap for increasing physical activity in the U.S. population," said National Physical Activity Plan Chair-Elect and Director of the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports at Michigan State University Karin Pfeiffer, PhD, FACSM, FNAK. "In particular, the Education and Sport sectors frequently engage in addressing youth physical activity. One example of work that could have tangible impact is to simply increase the access to playing youth sports. A recent study showed that if we were to increase youth sports participation to the level of the Healthy People 2030 goal, it could save the nation \$80 billion in direct medical costs and productivity losses and deliver more than 1.8 million more quality years of life to Americans."

Physical Activity Alliance President and Executive Director of NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation Pam Watts, CAE, said, "Improving the health of our young people will require parents, teachers, health professionals, community leaders and policy makers working together to change the systems and settings impacting youth health. As the nation's largest coalition dedicated to making the active choice the easy choice, PAA is the home for the collaborations

and coordinated effort needed to reverse these trends and improve our physical activity grade.”

The United States Report Card Research Advisory Committee responsible for developing this report card is a sub-committee of the National Physical Activity Plan, an initiative of the Physical Activity Alliance.

Support for development of the 2024 United States Report Card was provided by Children’s Mercy Kansas City and the Center for Children’s Healthy Lifestyles & Nutrition.

ABOUT THE PAA: The Physical Activity Alliance (PAA) is the largest national coalition dedicated to advancing regular participation in physical activity, advocating for policy and system changes that make physical activity accessible for all. Formed in 2020 from three predecessor organizations, PAA has grown into a unified voice promoting active living as essential to public health.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN: The National Physical Activity Plan, an initiative of the PAA, aims to foster a national culture that supports physically active lifestyles and lead the population to achieve the U.S. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. The Plan itself is a comprehensive set of policies, programs, and initiatives that aim to increase physical activity in all segments of the American population

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