



Ireland's report card
on physical activity
in children & youth

**ARE OUR CHILDREN
UP TO THE MARK?**

ON YOUR MARKS, GET SET, GO!



The detailed Long Form of the 2014 Report Card, which contain full details of the methods and data used, can be accessed at www.getirelandactive.ie/get-info/reportcard

2014

Background

- There is a growing concern around children's inactivity levels worldwide and increasing and maintaining the physical activity levels of children on the island of Ireland is a priority.
- The **Report Card on Physical Activity** is a means of collating all data related to children's physical activity levels and 'grading' the evidence using a standardised grading scheme¹
- Nine common indicators that are known to influence children's overall physical activity levels will be graded using a grading system just like a school report card i.e. A to F or inconclusive/incomplete if there are not enough data available yet.
- These indicators are behaviours and settings that are known to influence children's physical activity.
- This first Report Card will act as a baseline for surveillance of physical activity promotion efforts across the island of Ireland and will support efforts to change policy and programming for children's physical activity.

International Standardised Grading Scheme



Key Stages of Creating Ireland's Physical Activity Report Card 2014

01.

The research work group (RWG) first met in May 2013 to discuss the Report Card format and to identify key data sources.

02.

Data sources were identified through databases and online searches.

03.

Relevant data were extracted and each indicator was discussed, assessed and a proposed grade for each indicator was established using the standardised, international grading system by the RWG.

04.

Key data were sent to four external researchers with experience of the Report Card grading process to validate the proposed grades for the 2014 Report Card.

05.

A targeted consultation session with practitioners and policy makers from Ireland occurred where the proposed grades were presented.

2014 GRADES

Indicator	Benchmark	Data	Grade
Overall Physical Activity	% of children in Ireland meeting the physical activity guidelines of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) every day ^{2,3}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of 11 to 15 year olds⁴ • 12% of 11 to 16 years year olds⁵ • 25% of 9 year olds⁶ • 19% of primary and 12% post primary children⁷ • 43.4% of 7 to 8 year olds based on accelerometry⁸ • A sex difference existed with females being less active than their male counterparts^{4,7} and the sex gap widens with age⁵ 	D-
Sedentary Behaviour (TV viewing)	% of children watching < 2 hours of TV/day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% of 11 to 15 year olds⁹ • 73% of 11 to 16 year olds spent < 10 hour/week⁵ • 23% of 7 to 8 year olds¹⁰ and 21% of 9 year olds watched < 1 hour TV/video⁶ • 79% of primary and 71% of post-primary children reported watching < 2 hours of TV/day⁷ • TV viewing increases with age^{7,9} 	C-
Active Transportation	% of children reporting walking or cycling to or from school each day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24% of 11 to 16 year olds⁵ • 26% of 9 year olds⁶ • Between 25% and 32% of primary and 24% and 43% of post-primary children^{7,11} • Difference by location and distance to school^{12,13} 	D
Physical Education	% of children receiving the recommended time for PE each week in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35% of primary and 10% of post-primary children⁷ • 17% reported 2+ hours of PE/week in Northern Ireland¹⁴ • Recommended levels of PE are lower than global and European averages^{14,15} 	D
Active Play	No recommendations for active play alone, difficult to define	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49% of children reported playing games outside with their parent within the last week while 23% said that playing games outside was their most favourite thing to do in their free time - <i>GUI (unpublished)</i> 	INC

Indicator	Benchmark	Data	Grade
Sport Participation	% of children participating in sport twice/week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% of 7 to 8 year olds¹⁰ • 56% of 9 year old males and 33% of 9 year old females⁶ • 64% primary and 54% post-primary (sex differences found)⁷ • Participation decreases with age and inequalities are evident¹⁶ 	
Home (family)	The factors and amount of support (e.g. parental support, modelling and shared activities from the home) is not clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22% of children undertake physical activities with their family every day/ almost every day while 8% of parents play active games with their children every day/almost every day¹⁰ • 6% of parents of 9 year old children play sports/cards/games with their child every day while 49% of the children reported playing games outside with their parent within the last week - <i>GUI (unpublished)</i> • The typical sport club volunteer is a parent aged 35-54 years old¹⁷ 	
School	% of children participating in 2+ hours/week in extra-curricular sport and school based recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42% of primary and 57% of post-primary students reported participating in extra-curricular sport 2+ times/week⁷ • 49% of adolescents reported 2 hours of PE or games at school while 46% are part of school club or team⁵ • Team extra-curricular sport drops when moving from primary to post-primary school¹⁶ 	
Community and Built Environment	% of parents perceiving their local area as safe and % of adolescents perceiving their local facilities as good quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46.8% of parents say their 7-8 year old child plays on the street/public¹⁰ • 52.8% of adolescents say play/leisure facilities locally are very good/fairly good⁵ • 68% of parents agree that it is safe to walk alone after dark in their area, 91% agree it is safe to play outside during the day and 58% agree there are safe parks/playgrounds in their area and an urban rural difference was seen⁶ 	
Government	Difficult to set a benchmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a number of governmental initiatives that could support and influence children's physical activity participation 	

Research Work Group

Member	Institution	
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Consultations

- Department of Children and Youth (Republic of Ireland)
- Department of Education Northern Ireland
- Department of Education (Republic of Ireland)
- Early Childhood Ireland
- Get Ireland Active
- Healthy Ireland
- Irish Heart Foundation
- Irish Primary PE Association
- Irish Sports Council
- Local Authority Play and Recreation Network
- Local Physical Activity Co-ordinators Network
- National Physical Activity Plan Group
- Sport Northern Ireland

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The Report Card can be accessed at <http://www.getirelandactive.ie/get-info/reportcard> and full details of the grading process and the data used can be found in the journal article Harrington, et al. Results from the Ireland's 2014 Report Card on Physical Activity in Children and Youth. *J Phys Act Health* 2014;11(suppl.1), which is in the Global Matrix supplement of the *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*.