

The 2016 India Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth



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Introduction to the 2016 India Report Card

The 2016 India Report Card on Physical Activity of Children and Youth is the first comprehensive assessment of physical activity and sedentary behaviour among Indian children and youth. The Report Card is part of Global Matrix 2.0, an international endeavour to evaluate various aspects of active living in 38 countries spread across six continents (representing 60% of the world's population). As part of this initiative, country-specific teams appraised current evidence using rigorous methods and assigned standardized grades to previously developed indicators of active living.

The India Report Card is an independently developed, evidence-based scientific report that assesses physical activity, sedentary behaviour, and multiple contextual factors that impact these behaviours in Indian children and youth. Investigating the contexts in which these behaviours occur is critical for conceptualizing successful policy and program interventions. The Report Card summarizes current evidence

on not only key contexts such as family and peers, schools, and neighbourhood environment, but also government strategies, policies and investments that impact these contexts.

In addition to being a source of current evidence on active living in Indian children and youth, the Report Card's purpose is to raise awareness and advocate action in tackling the pandemic of physical inactivity in India. The primary stakeholders of the India Report Card are policy makers, researchers, parents, teachers, and health professionals. We hope that the Report Card garners their attention to address the current challenges for active living in India. Ultimately, we hope that the India Report Card enables the inception of active living research to address current gaps in evidence, and also serves as a tool to influence child and youth-focused active living programming and policies in India.

It is time for India to step up for its children's physical activity

Summary of Report Card Indicators and Grades

Indicator	Grade
Overall Physical Activity The proportion of children and youth who meet physical activity guidelines.	C-
Organized Sport Participation The proportion of children and youth who participate in organized sport and/or physical activity programs.	INC
Active Play The proportion of children and youth who engage in unstructured or unorganized active play for several hours per day.	INC
Active Transportation The proportion of children and youth who walk or bike to different destinations (e.g. home, school)	C
Sedentary Behaviour The proportion of children and youth who meet sedentary behaviour or screen-time guidelines.	C
Family and Peers The proportion of parents who facilitate physical activity and sport opportunities for children, meet physical activity guidelines for adults, and are physically active with their children. The proportion of children and youth with friends or peers who encourage and support them to be physically active.	INC

School – Infrastructure, Policies and Programs

The proportion of schools with active school policies, offering at least 150 minutes per week of physical education, providing access to physical activity opportunities at school in addition to physical education, and providing regular access to facilities and equipment which support physical activity (i.e., gymnasium, playgrounds, sporting fields, etc.).

INC

Community and the Built Environment

The proportion of children, youth, or parents who perceive their community as supportive for physical activity. The proportion of communities reporting physical activity policies and infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks, trails, bike lanes). The proportion of children and youth who report being outdoors for several hours daily, and reporting well-maintained facilities, parks, and playgrounds which are also safe.

INC

Government – Strategies, Policies and Investments

Demonstrated leadership, investments, and evidence of implementation of physical activity strategies targeting children and youth.

D

Physical Fitness

The proportion of children and youth performing well in several fitness tests and exercise regimens meant to test physical fitness, including: cardio respiratory endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, explosive strength, and body composition.

INC

Recommendations for Action

- 1. Addressing the dearth of active living evidence by resource allocation towards active living research**
Major evidence gaps exist as there are limited national-level data on physical activity and sedentary behaviour among children and youth. Additional resources need to be allocated to enable the collection and appraisal of nationally representative data in order to understand the big picture of active living in children and youth in India.
- 2. Development of a national strategy for physical activity of children and youth**
The majority of government-led strategies are focused on competitive sport and the development of elite national and international athletes. While there is indication of some school boards implementing strategies at a local level, national-level strategies focused exclusively on children and youth are needed.
- 3. Investments at national, state, local jurisdictional, and school and community levels**
Targeted investments are required at multiple jurisdictional levels (national, state and local) and at multiple levels of context (schools and neighbourhoods) to influence a significant change in current levels of physical activity and sedentary behaviour in children and youth.
- 4. Culturally and geographically appropriate policy interventions**
India is a culturally and geographically diverse nation, hence policy interventions need to take this diversity into account. A “one size fits all” strategy will not work, thus municipal, state, and national-level policies need to be tailored according to cultural and geographic differences.
- 5. Facilitating active living through urban planning policy**
There are numerous barriers to physical activity in the built environment, and a national survey identified Indian cities as having low walkability ratings, as well as high air pollution. Evidence-based local urban planning policy is critical to facilitate active living and minimize existing barriers.
- 6. Physical activity education and promotion directed towards families and educators**
Families and educators play an important role in providing children and youth opportunities to be physically active. Thus, strategies to increase physical literacy and physical activity among these stakeholders would have a direct impact on child and youth physical activity.

Report Card Grading and Methods

An international Research Working Group was established, comprising of nine experts from seven universities and institutions. A total of 10 active living indicators were assessed against parameters provided by Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance, and standardized grades were assigned based on the benchmarks provided in the table below. Both peer-reviewed data sources and grey literature were appraised. Nationally representative data were given higher weightage, followed by published data, unpublished data, and grey literature. For the 2016 India Report Card, one national survey, several state and city-level surveys, as well as baseline data from an ongoing longitudinal state-level survey were used as sources. For more detail on the methods and grading scheme, please consult the 2016 India Report Card Long-Form.

Grade	Definition	Benchmark
A	We are succeeding with a large majority of children and youth.	81-100%
B	We are succeeding with well over half of children and youth.	61-80%
C	We are succeeding with about half of children and youth.	41-60%
D	We are succeeding with less than half, but some, children and youth.	21-40%
F	We are succeeding with very few children and youth.	0-20%
INC	Incomplete. Insufficient information available to establish a grade.	---



2016 Research Working Group

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