

Results From the Netherlands' 2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

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Introduction

National surveillance data in the Netherlands show that the percentage of children and youth, who meet the Dutch physical activity guidelines has decreased significantly between 2006 and 2014.¹ Data from the 2016 Dutch Physical Activity Report Card showed that only a minority of Dutch children and adolescents are meeting the current guidelines for sedentary behavior and overall physical activity.¹

The purpose of this paper is to summarize the results of the 2018 Report Card. Grades were based on the best available evidence. Sources included national surveys, peer-reviewed literature, and gray literature such as government and nongovernment reports and online content.

Methods

The 2018 Report Card included the 10 core physical activity indicators that are common to the Global Matrix 3.0 (Overall Physical Activity, Organized Sport Participation, Active Play, Active Transportation, Sedentary Behavior, Family and Peers, School, Community and Environment, Government, and Physical Fitness). Weight status was included as an additional indicator.

Three groups of indicators were created: Daily Behaviors (Overall Physical Activity, Organized Sport and Physical Activity Participation, Active Play, Active Transportation, and Sedentary Behaviors), Settings and Sources of Influence (Family and Peers, School, Community and Environment, and Government), and health outcomes (Weight Status and Physical Fitness).

This Report Card synthesized data from multiple sources to inform the 11 grades. The data sources relied upon most heavily were national surveys and data from January 2016 to June 2018 was used to inform the grades. These surveys included the Lifestyle monitor, developed by Statistics the Netherlands in collaboration with RIVM, 2017- National Survey,² and the Physical Education Survey which is conducted at the end of primary school (data 2015-2016), which was a study conducted by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education.³

Results and Discussion

For many indicators there were self-reported data available. The grades and rationales are provided in Table 1 and Figure 1 presents the Netherlands' 2018 Report Card front cover. National

(self-reported) data² show that 81% of Dutch children are classified as normal weight, and thus a grade A⁻ was scored for this indicator.

In the future and if possible, we recommend to obtain more objectively (device-based) measured national level data. For example, we are currently discussing the possibility of using accelerometry to measure physical activity in a representative sample of Dutch subjects. Furthermore, there are discussions on also assessing various physical fitness outcomes in Dutch children. Although these outcomes are often monitored in schools, data are not yet available on a national level.

Promoting physical activity through active transport to school and physical activity during school time might be a pathway for increasing overall physical activity in Dutch children and youth. Schools should also focus on increasing Physical Education (PE) (quality) time and appoint educated PE teachers.



Figure 1 — The Netherlands' 2018 Report Card cover.

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Table 1 Grades and Rationales for the Netherlands 2018 Report Card

Indicator	Grade	Rationale
Overall Physical Activity	C	National data show that 56% of children and 33% of adolescents are meeting the national physical activity recommendations. ²
Organized Sport Participation	B	National data shows that 64% of children and 77% of adolescents are participating weekly in sport. ²
Active Play	B	70% of children play actively outside more than 1 time per week. ²
Active Transportation	B-	90% of adolescents commute actively to school. 36% of children commute actively to school. ²
Sedentary Behaviors	C	41% of the children and adolescents spend more than 2 hours per day watching TV, and 44% are using other screen devices for less than 2 hours/day. ²
Family and Peers	INC	No national data are available.
School	C	56% of physical education (PE) teachers are educated PE teachers and most of the schools have a sports hall. ³
Community and Environment	INC	Good infrastructure that promotes physical activity exists (e.g., many bicycle paths, 30 km/hour speed limit, playgrounds etc.)
Government	INC	Many projects to promote physical activity exist, but only a few standardized policies exist and their effects are not evaluated.
Physical Fitness	INC	No national representative fitness data are available

Conclusion

Although Dutch children and youth frequently participate in sports, active transport and active play, most Dutch children do not meet the national guidelines for healthy physical activity and sedentary behavior.

References

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