

Results from South Korea's 2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

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Introduction

In an effort to join the global movement to promote physical activity among young people, South Korea developed its first Report Card (RC) on Physical Activity for Children and Youth in 2016 as part of the Global Matrix 2.0.¹ The 2018 South Korea RC has been developed as part of the Global Matrix 3.0 (Figure 1). This paper presents the findings of the 2018 RC which will serve as an advocacy tool to develop national/regional/local strategies to promote physical activity among young people in the nation.

Methods

South Korea's 2018 RC on Physical Activity for Children and Youth was developed based on the Active Healthy Kids Canada (AHKC) RC Framework.² Two national datasets were used to evaluate 10 core indicators. Specifically, Overall PA, Organized Sport and PA, Sedentary Behaviours (SB), and School were graded using the 2017 Korea Youth Risk Behavior web-based Survey (12-17-year-olds). Active Transportation was graded using the 2016 Korea National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (KNHANES) (12-17-year-olds). Physical Fitness was evaluated using the Physical Activity Promotion System (PAPS) data (11-17-year-olds). Data related to national policies and reports pertaining to the PA of children and youth were used to assess the Government indicator. The RC development team consisted of 14 Research Working Group members. Final grades of the 7 core indicators were based on the predefined grading scheme provided by the AHKGA.

Results and Discussion

Grades and rationales for the South Korea's 2018 RC are shown in Table 1. Improvements have been made from the 2016 RC on the

Active Transportation and SB indicators; however, caution is needed when comparing the grades on these two indicators between the two RCs. Specifically, though results from the 2016 RC suggested that over 75% of students used active modes of transport to/from school, "C+" was given based on the expert opinion, rather than empirical evidence. This was because most students live within 10-minute walking distance to/from school, which suggests that active commuting is prevalent but occurs in short bouts. In the 2018 RC, "B+" was given based on the national data and followed by the internationally standardized grading scheme. Similarly, "F" was given for SB in the 2016 RC based on the expert opinion that study/sitting time should be included when grading the SB indicator; however, in the 2018 RC, "D" was given for SB solely based on the evidence from recreational screen-based SB, which aligns with the grading scheme provided. Physical Fitness and School indicators were assigned "D+" due to the fair but poor fitness levels and the low frequency



Figure 1 — South Korea's 2018 Report Card cover.

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Table 1 Grades and rationales for South Korea's 2018 Report Card

Indicator	Grade	Rationale
Overall Physical Activity	F	According to the 2017 KYRBS (n = 55,063; 12-17 years) data, 5.8% of students engaged in MVPA for ≥ 60 minutes daily (the average MVPA data is not available).
Organized Sport Participation	C	According to the 2017 KYRBS (n = 55,063; 12-17 years) data, 50.6% of students participated in at least one organized sport.
Active Play	INC	Due to insufficient data, this indicator could not be graded.
Active Transportation	B+	According to the KNHANES (n = 524; 12-17 years) data, 79.4% of children and youth reported that they take active modes of transport to/from places.
Sedentary Behaviours	D	According to the 2017 KYRBS (n = 55,063; 12-17 years) data, 32.7% of students spent < 2 hours a day in screen-based sedentary behaviour for recreational pursuits.
Physical Fitness	D+	According to the PAPS (nationwide; 11-17 years) data from the Korean Ministry of Education, the results of each individual physical fitness indicator were the following: Boys = C, girls = C- for cardiovascular strength; boys = C-, girls = C- for muscular strength; boys/girls = F for flexibility. Therefore, physical fitness was graded an overall "D+" grade.
Family and Peers	INC	Due to insufficient data, this indicator could not be graded.
School	D+	According to the KYRBS (n = 55,063; 12-17 years) data, 34.6% of students participated in ≥ 150 minutes of PE for 3 days a week (either in outdoor field or in school gymnasium) in school.
Community and Environment	INC	Due to insufficient data, this indicator could not be graded.
Government	D	Due to insufficient data for this indicator, the committee discussion led to a conclusion that "D" should be graded for Government. Although "C" was graded for Government in the 2016 Report Card, recent budget cuts by the government for physical activity-related policies and initiatives resulted in a lower grade.

Note: KYRBS, Korea Youth Risk Behaviour web-based Survey; KNHANES, Korea National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey; MVPA, Moderate-to vigorous-intensity physical activity; PAPS, Physical Activity Promotion System; PE, Physical education.

of participation in physical education classes, which was particularly in high school students. The Government indicator was graded "D" given the recent budget cuts for physical activity-related policies by the government.

Conclusion

Results from South Korea's 2018 RC showed that, although some improvement has been made, most children and youth continue to be insufficiently physically active with generally poor or incomplete grades on the common indicators. More effort is needed for national surveillance to include the measures on the behaviours and the sources of influence (i.e., Active Play, Family and peers, and Community and Environment) to enable a comprehensive

assessment of all 10 indicators. To achieve substantial improvements in all indicators, more support and investment to promote PA may be needed at the institutional and government levels.

References

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