

Results From England's 2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

Martyn Standage, Lauren Sherar, Thomas Curran, Hannah J. Wilkie, Russell Jago, Adrian Davis, and Charlie Foster

Introduction

The Active Healthy Kids England 2018 Report Card provides an updated “state of the nation” resource regarding performances on the provision of, and support for, physical activity opportunities for children and young people. Specifically, in this paper we present and discuss key findings from the 2018 Report Card, a release that serves to revise our 2014 and 2016 report cards via the same systematic approach that incorporates best current data. To this end, these data include national surveys, peer-review outputs, and a variety of nonacademic sources including online content and reports from government and nongovernment organizations.

Methods

The 2018 England Report Card included the 10 core physical activity indicators that are common to the Global Matrix 3.0 (see Table 1). Key articles and reports were identified and synthesized by the lead author. With the exception of the new indicator (ie, Physical Fitness), and to revise our 2016 Report Card, the search was limited to materials published between 2014 to 2018. Specifically, data used to inform the grades for these indicators were provided from several national surveys including the Health Behavior in School Aged Children Study (HBSC, 2014,¹ 2016²), the Health Survey for England (HSE, 2015),³ the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS, 2015),⁴ the Taking Part Survey (TPS, 2016/17),⁵ the National Travel Survey (NTS, 2016),⁶ and the YST National PE and Sport Survey (YST, 2018).⁷ Reports from the government and the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) were also referred to throughout, as were regional datasets and reports from other organizations when data were not available from national surveys.

The grade assignment meeting took place in April 2018 where members of the expert panel assessed the available evidence and assigned grades to each indicator. Discussion also continued out of the meeting via email. Data quality was considered by taking into account the sample size, age range of participants, year of data collection, the reach of the sample (ie, whether data were collected regionally or across England), and the measures used to collect data.

Results and Discussion

Grades were assigned to the indicators based on the best available data. These grades are presented in Table 1, and the front cover

is shown in Figure 1. Future versions of the England Report Card would, however, benefit greatly from a stratified and targeted survey designed to directly address the 10 core indicators and associated benchmarks. Such an approach would overcome a number of gaps in the extant literature that led to the awarding of INC grades. As part of this work, ongoing and nationally representative monitoring of objectively assessed PA data in England is needed as current nationally representative data is derived from self-report measures.

Conclusion

As with the 2014 and 2016 report cards, it is evident that the provision to engage in physical activity in England is good. Yet,



Figure 1 — England's 2018 Report Card cover.

Standage, Curran, and Wilkie are with the Centre for Motivation and Health Behaviour Change, University of Bath, Bath, Somerset, United Kingdom. Sherar is with the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, United Kingdom. Jago and Foster are with the Centre for Exercise, Nutrition & Health Sciences, University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom. Davis is with the Faculty of Environment & Technology, University of West England, Bristol, United Kingdom. Standage (m.standage@bath.ac.uk) is corresponding author.

Table 1 Grades and Rationales for England's 2018 Report Card

Indicator	Grade	Rationale
Overall Physical Activity	C-	Nationally-representative data in England are survey-based. ^{2,3} Based on these data, a grade of D- would be assigned (eg, 23% of boys and 20% of girls aged 5–15 years met the guidelines of at least 1 hour of moderate intensity PA 7 days a week ²). Regional accelerometer data using the Evenson cut-off point imply a C grade to be apt (eg, ⁸). For example, 62% of boys and 36% of girls met the CMO guidelines at Year 4, with 73% of boys and 54% of girls meeting the guideline at Year 1. ⁸ In taking the strengths of the objective data into account, yet recognising that these data are regional, a grade of C- was deemed appropriate.
Organized Sport Participation	D+	36.8% of children had taken part in competitive sport outside of school (higher for boys); 25.8% were members of an external sport club; and 39.8% played for a sports team. Average value = 34.1 = D+ (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/648073/Taking_Part_child_statistical_release.pdf).
Active Play	INC	A lack of available data and appropriate definitional means for measuring this indicator was cited in the 2014 and 2016 Report Cards and an INC grade was assigned. The same issues are still apparent and as such an INC grade was awarded again for 2018.
Active Transportation	C-	Based on National Travel Survey (2016), ⁶ HSE, ³ and Walking & Cycling Statistics (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674503/walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-2016.pdf) transport to school data (not including other destinations) 48% = C and 37% = D+ walked to school every day (nationally representative data). Averaging these grades provided a value of 42.5 which equates to a C-.
Sedentary Behaviours	INC & D+	An INC grade was assigned in terms of the England Report Card because there are currently no UK guidelines which specify a threshold for sedentary time that can be used as a benchmark. Based on the indicator for the Global Matrix (ie, >2 hour screen time) a D+ was assigned based on the HBSC (2014) ¹ data which show 62% of children to engage in such behavior (aged 11, 13, 15 years). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ INC for England Report Card ■ D+ for the Global Matrix (ie, based on Canadian Guidelines)
Physical Fitness	C-	For VO ₂ peak, the data aligned with a grade of D+ (Boys 10–14 yrs = 38%; Girls 10–14 yrs = 36%) ⁹ and for Handgrip Strength with a grade of C- (Boys 10–14 yrs = 42%; Girls = 46%). ¹⁰ The average value of 40.5% equated to an overall indicator grade of C-.
Family and Peers	INC	An INC grade was awarded to this indicator due to a lack of nationally representative data on family and peer support for PA in England.
School	B+	There was a lack of new data for the benchmarks, yet data from the Youth Sport Trust ⁷ showed the average number of minutes of PE offered to pupils: KS3 = 124; KS4 = 98; KS5 = 34. The overall grade in the 2018 Report Card was a B+. Comprising data from the following benchmarks: Policies – % of schools that promote PA as part of the school day – 85% of secondary and 97% primary schools (A); Provision – 58%–86% (B); PE Specialist – 57% (KS1-2 = 44%; KS3-4 = 86%). (B-); Extracurricular PA and Sport – >97%. (A+); PA Facilities – 46% have access to outdoor court; 64–78% access to sports hall, playing field or swimming pool; and 100% have access to an outside court (B+)
Community and Environment	C	An overall grade of a C was awarded based on MCS and State of UK Public Parks (2014 and 2016) data (eg, https://www.hlf.org.uk/state-uk-public-parks-2016). The graded benchmarks comprise: (I.) Use of facilities – 30% of 11–15 years once a week): D; (II.) Satisfaction was reported to be around 50%: C; (III.) for safety, 72% of parents endorsed their community/environment as safe: B; and (IV.) Access: A. ⁴
Government	INC	We do not know how successful policies are in terms of promoting PA participation among children and youth. We did note that there was increased funding and an ongoing 2019 sport premium evaluation and we may be able to assign a grade in future versions of the Report Card.

more effort is required to maximize use of the existing resources, monitor progress, and subsequently improve the physical activity engagement of English children and youth.

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