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

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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, 2016), the Health Survey for England (HSE, 2015), the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS, 2015), the Taking Part Survey (TPS, 2016/17), the National Travel Survey (NTS, 2016), and the YST National PE and Sport Survey (YST, 2018). Reports from the government and the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) were also referred 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,
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.

References