

# PHE CANADA FACT SHEET



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS OF CANADIAN CHILDREN

- According to the 2000/01 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 56% of Canadian youth aged 12-19 were physically inactive. However, as many as 82% may not have been active enough to meet international guidelines for optimal growth and development.<sup>1</sup>
- Adolescents in Canada spend almost 35 hours a week in front of the screen, representing more time than in the classroom over the course of the year.<sup>2</sup>
- Less than one in five children have daily physical education in school.<sup>3</sup>
- Only about 55% of low-income children participate regularly in organized sports, compared with 65% of middle-income, and 79% of high-income children.<sup>4</sup>

## BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

- Sport is recognized as an integral part of quality education and can be used to mobilize and educate individuals, especially youth, and communities. *Physical education has been found to increase school achievement, improve school attendance and retention and contribute to social and personal development.* Sport is a “School for Life” where individuals can acquire fundamental values and social skills such as respect, discipline, fair play, confidence and tolerance.<sup>5</sup>
- Higher levels of participation in school sport correlate with higher physical activity levels overall, and reveal stronger connectedness to school and positive self-esteem.<sup>6</sup>
- In order to meet the recommended Canadian guidelines of 90 minutes of physical activity per day, *schools need to ensure a quantity and quality of physical education that is sufficient to support skill development and promote physical activity*, as well as physical activity in other class time and throughout the school day.<sup>7</sup>

## NEGATIVE IMPACT OF PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

- Physical Activity is a critical public health issue for Canadians. Physical activity helps prevent certain chronic conditions, including heart disease, hypertension, stroke, type II diabetes, osteoporosis, certain cancers, depression, or reduced functional ability with older age.<sup>8</sup>
- The International Agency of Research on Cancer attributes about one-fourth to one-third of cancers of the breast, colon, esophagus, kidney and uterus to excess body weight and physical inactivity. The American Cancer Research estimates that *about 30 % to 40% of all cancer cases could be prevented over time by a combination of following recommended diets and maintaining physical activity and appropriate body weight.*<sup>9</sup>



## CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN CANADA

- In 1978 12% of Canadian children (age 2-17) were overweight and by 2004 18% were overweight. In 1978 3% of Canadian children were obese and by 2004 8% were obese. The combined overweight/obesity prevalence has increased by 11% to 26%, between 1978 and 2004. *This means that overweight/obesity prevalence has more than doubled during this time span and that currently over a quarter of Canadian children are overweight or obese.*<sup>10</sup>
- 55% of First Nations children and 41% of Aboriginal children living off reserve are either overweight or obese.<sup>11</sup>
- Due to the increased rates of childhood obesity and its correlation to life-long diseases, *today's children may not enjoy the same life span as their parents.*<sup>12</sup>

## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PHYSICAL INACTIVITY IN CANADA

- Current estimates place the cost of physical inactivity in Canada at \$5.3 billion (\$1.6 billion of direct costs and \$3.7 billion in indirect costs) and the cost of obesity in Canada at \$4.3 billion (\$1.6 billion of direct costs and \$2.7 billion of indirect costs) in health care expenditures.<sup>13</sup>
- Canada's Health Care spending was estimated at \$121.4 billion dollars (10% of the Gross Domestic Product of Canada) in 2003, up from \$84 billion spent in 1998.<sup>14</sup>

## BARRIERS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- The most highly rated barriers to children's activity as reported by their parents are:
  - 46% agreed that high costs
  - 44% agreed that the lack of convenient facilities
  - 21% agreed that lack of skill or ability
  - 26% agreed that safety concerns
  - 28% agreed that too much traffic
  - 34% agreed that lack of time due to homework
  - 34% agreed that watching television and playing video games<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Craig, C.L., Cameron, C. (2004). Increasing physical activity: Assessing recent trends from 1998-2003. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. <http://www.cflri.ca/pdf/e/2002pam.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> House of Commons. *Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids: Report of the Standing Committee on Health*, March 2007. <http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/committee/391/hesa/reports/rp2795145/hesarp07/hesarp07-e.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> House of Commons. *Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids: Report of the Standing Committee on Health*, March 2007. <http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/committee/391/hesa/reports/rp2795145/hesarp07/hesarp07-e.pdf>



<sup>4</sup> Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2007

[http://www.activehealthykids.ca/Ophea/ActiveHealthyKids\\_v2/upload/Full-English-Report-Card-2007.pdf](http://www.activehealthykids.ca/Ophea/ActiveHealthyKids_v2/upload/Full-English-Report-Card-2007.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> United Nations. *Achieving the objectives of the United Nations through Sport*, 2008.

<http://www.un.org/themes/sport/brochure.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2007

[http://www.activehealthykids.ca/Ophea/ActiveHealthyKids\\_v2/upload/Full-English-Report-Card-2007.pdf](http://www.activehealthykids.ca/Ophea/ActiveHealthyKids_v2/upload/Full-English-Report-Card-2007.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2007

[http://www.activehealthykids.ca/Ophea/ActiveHealthyKids\\_v2/upload/Full-English-Report-Card-2007.pdf](http://www.activehealthykids.ca/Ophea/ActiveHealthyKids_v2/upload/Full-English-Report-Card-2007.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Craig, C.L., Cameron, C. (2004). *Increasing physical activity: Assessing recent trends from 1998-2003*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. <http://www.cflri.ca/pdf/e/2002pam.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Canadian Cancer Society: Canadian Cancer Statistics 2005.

[http://www.cancer.ca/Prince%20Edward%20Island/Publications/Publications%20on%20cancer%20statistics/~//media/CCS/Canada%20wide/Files%20List/English%20files%20heading/pdf%20not%20in%20publications%20section/Canadian%20Cancer%20Statistics%20-%202005%20-%20EN%20-%20PDF\\_401594768.ashx](http://www.cancer.ca/Prince%20Edward%20Island/Publications/Publications%20on%20cancer%20statistics/~//media/CCS/Canada%20wide/Files%20List/English%20files%20heading/pdf%20not%20in%20publications%20section/Canadian%20Cancer%20Statistics%20-%202005%20-%20EN%20-%20PDF_401594768.ashx)

<sup>10</sup> House of Commons. *Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids: Report of the Standing Committee on Health*, March 2007.

<http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/committee/391/hesa/reports/rp2795145/hesarp07/hesarp07-e.pdf> also see

Active Healthy Kids Canada, *Older But Not Wiser Canada's Future At Risk: Canada's Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth 2007*

[http://www.activehealthykids.ca/Ophea/ActiveHealthyKids\\_v2/upload/Full-English-Report-Card-2007.pdf](http://www.activehealthykids.ca/Ophea/ActiveHealthyKids_v2/upload/Full-English-Report-Card-2007.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2007

[http://www.activehealthykids.ca/Ophea/ActiveHealthyKids\\_v2/upload/Full-English-Report-Card-2007.pdf](http://www.activehealthykids.ca/Ophea/ActiveHealthyKids_v2/upload/Full-English-Report-Card-2007.pdf) also see House of Commons 2007

<http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/committee/391/hesa/reports/rp2795145/hesarp07/hesarp07-e.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Leitch, K. *Reaching for the Top: A Report by the Advisor on Healthy Children and Youth*, 2007. [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/alt\\_formats/hpb-dgps/pdf/child-enfant/2007-advisor-conseillere/advisor-conseillere-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/alt_formats/hpb-dgps/pdf/child-enfant/2007-advisor-conseillere/advisor-conseillere-eng.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Katzmarzyk, P.T., & Janssen, I. (2004). The economic costs associated with physical inactivity and obesity in Canada: an update. *Canadian Journal of Applied Physiology*: 29(1), 90-115. Also see and House of Commons 2007

<http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/committee/391/hesa/reports/rp2795145/hesarp07/hesarp07-e.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Craig, C.L., Cameron, C. (2004). *Increasing physical activity: Assessing recent trends from 1998-2003*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. <http://www.cflri.ca/pdf/e/2002pam.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Cameron, C., Craig, C.L., Paolin, S. (2005). *Increasing physical activity: Communicating the benefits of physical activity for children: A parent's perspective*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute.

<http://www.cflri.ca/eng/statistics/surveys/documents/2003childrencapacity.pdf>