



2014 The Mexican Report Card on Physical Activity for Mexican Children and Youth

THE GRADING SYSTEM

The Mexico Report Card working group included experts from academic institutions in Mexico, Canada and the United States, and from governmental agencies in Mexico. A search of the English and Spanish language literature was conducted in the summer of 2013. The main sources of data were the National Health and Nutrition Survey (ENSANUT) 2012, the National Youth Survey 2010, reports from public institutions such as the National Commission on Physical Culture and Sports (CONADE), and published academic articles. The literature search for published articles was conducted on major data bases including Academic Search Complete, EBSCO host, Web of Science and Medline for English articles, and on SCIELO, Cochrane México and *Biblioteca virtual en Salud* for Spanish articles. Articles reporting on Mexican populations 1 to 25 years of age published from 2010 forward were included.

Grades for each indicator were assigned by consensus during a meeting held with the Mexico Report Card team and members from the AHKC Report Card team. The grading scheme for the Mexican Report Card was based on the national grading system, where numbers below 5 represent failing grades and numbers above 6 represent approbatory grades. Assigned grades can be seen in Table 2. Oversight to the grading procedure for this Report Card was provided by the Scientific Officer of Active Healthy Kids Canada.

GRADING TABLE

- 9-10** we are succeeding with a large majority of children and youth (81 - 100%);
- 7-8** we are succeeding with well over half of children and youth (61 - 80%);
- 5-6** we are succeeding with about one-half of children and youth (41 - 60%);
- 3-4** we are succeeding with relatively few children and youth (21 - 40%);
- 0-2** we are succeeding with very small percentage of children and youth (0 - 20%).

Table 2. Grading system in the 2014 Mexican Report Card

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SHORT FORM



Why is physical activity important for Mexican children and youth?

Obesity among childhood and youth has become a public health concern in Mexico. In comparison to other countries, our nation holds the second place in prevalence of obesity. According to data gathered in the National Health and Nutrition Survey (ENSANUT 2012), the combined prevalence of overweight and obesity in Mexican children and youth reaches 34.4% in children and 35% in teens aged 12-19. That is, 5,664,000 children and 6 million youth are overweight or obese. That is, 1 in every 5 Mexican teen is overweight and 1 in every 10 is obese.

Additionally, physical inactivity levels among Mexican children and youth are alarming. Over the last six years, the prevalence of physical inactivity among children and youth aged 10-18 increased 47%. Per national data, 58.6% of 10-14 year-olds do not engage in any sport or physical activity on a regular basis. Moreover, 41.9% of 15-18 year-olds are considered inactive or moderately active (ENSANUT 2012). Further, our children and youth spend a lot of time in sedentary behavior such as watching TV, using computers, playing videogames or manipulating mobile devices.

As a response to this problem, the Federal Government has propelled a series of actions in an attempt to increase physical activity levels and battle obesity in children and youth. One relevant initiative is the National Agreement for Nutritional Health (ANSA), a policy aimed at reducing overweight and obesity in Mexico through healthy eating and physical activity promotion. One of the programs this policy included was the Action Program for the School Context, which introduced strategies for promoting healthy eating and physical activity within school settings across Mexico. This is evidence that promoting child and youth physical activity has become a priority for the national public health agenda.

Research shows that physical activity involvement during childhood and adolescence increases the likelihood of having an active life style during adulthood. Thus, early years are critical to foster physically active lifestyles that can persist into adulthood. To increase child and youth physical activity, it is necessary that government, academia and different social sectors join efforts to design and implement effective strategies. As part of these efforts, contextual factors that influence physical activity in children and youth within the family, school, and the community must be taken into account.

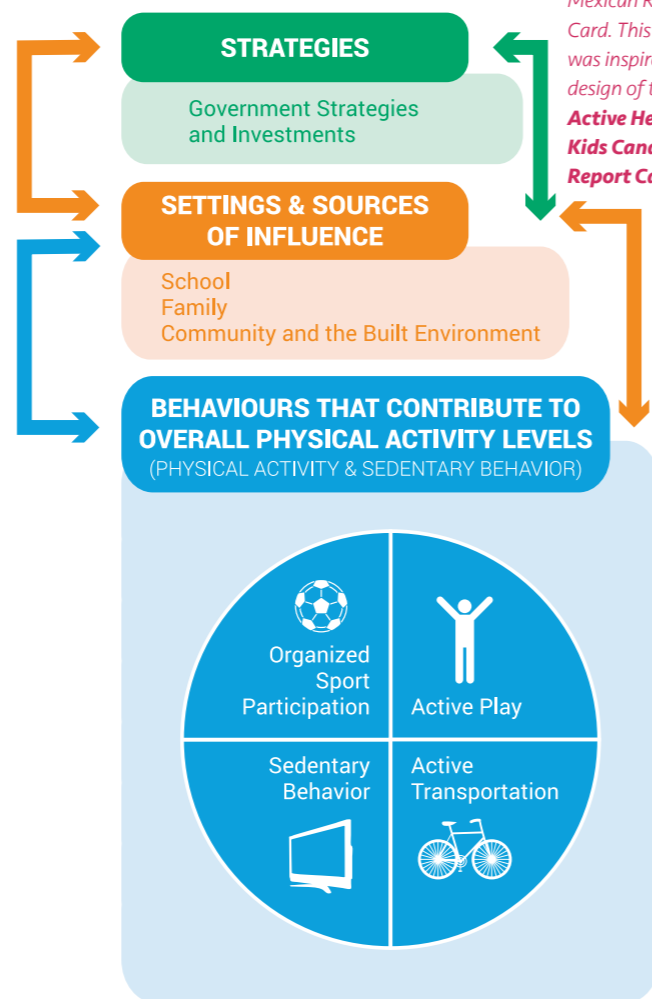
Why do we develop a Report Card on physical activity for Mexican children and youth?

A successful model for increasing public and government awareness over the importance of physical activity is the Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. The Canadian Report Card has been a valuable surveillance instrument for monitoring what Canada is doing for increasing child and youth physical activity opportunities within different settings and sectors. The impact of the Canadian Report Card has been reflected in the development of policies and programs aimed at promoting child and youth physical activity. Based on this model, Mexico launched its first Report Card in 2012, gathering national published data on 8 key indicators. Conclusions of the 2012 Mexican Report Card included:

- The levels of physical activity among Mexican children and youth are low
- The levels of sedentary behavior are high
- Mexican data are scarce and lack national representativeness.
- More research is needed to better estimate children and youth physical activity in Mexico and to inform future public policies and programs

In contrast to the Canadian Report Card, which uses an alphabetical grading system, the Mexican Report Card uses a numeric system to evaluate the different indicators. The grading scheme for the Mexican Report Card was based on the national grading system, in which numbers below 5 represent failing grades and numbers above 6 represent approbatory grades.

Main Indicators reviewed in the Mexican Report Card. This diagram was inspired by the design of the 2013 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card



When comparing grades from the 2012 Mexican Report Card against those from the 2014 edition, grade improvements were observed for some indicators, while decreases were observed for others. Indicators such as "Organized Sports", "Active Transportation", and "Community and Built Environment" did not receive a grade in the 2012 edition due to the lack of data. However, they were evaluated in the 2014 edition, which demonstrates progress on physical activity research and monitoring in our country. A small grade improvement was observed for "Physical Activity Levels", going from a 5 in 2012 to a 6 in 2014. Another improvement observed in the 2014 edition was for the "Physical Activity at School" indicator, mainly because of the launching of a major government strategy, the Action Program for the School Context, which included a number of actions aimed at promoting child and youth physical activity within schools.

As compared with the 2012 Report Card, grades from the "Sedentary Behaviors" decreased in the 2014 edition because children and youth increased the number hours watching TV or using screen devices. A decrease grade was also observed in the "Government" indicator on the 2014 Report Card. In addition, evaluation strategies to determine the impact of governmental programs and policies implemented over the last few years were non-existent.

Lastly, indicators such as "Physical Activity in the Family" and "Active Play" were not graded in the 2014 edition due to the lack of data needed to inform these indicators.

To increase the grades on each indicator, it is imperative to continue making efforts to obtain data regarding physical activity levels and sedentary behavior of children and youth as well as to identify strategies being implemented across the nation. Further, evaluating the implementation and impact of existing public programs and policies aimed to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary be-

havior among children and youth is imperative. The collaboration among public and private sector and non-governmental organizations will be essential. Alliances with countries going through similar processes than ours will enrich the Report Card model and will solidify the strategies that might be developed in Mexico, aiming to lessen the physical inactivity concern.

Recommendations for action

1. Increase the opportunities for Mexican children and youth to be active. Ensure that both competitive and recreational options are made available.
2. Invite parents to regulate the amount of time their children watch TV, electronic devices and/or videogames so that it does not add up to more than two hours a day of sedentary activities.
3. Take advantage of family activities to promote children's active transportation; i.e., go shopping or someplace nearby on foot or on a bike.
4. Continue the efforts made at school to implement physical activation spaces; it is essential to learn about the impact of the initiatives carried out to date.
5. Promote participation by the private sector in campaigns and programs that strengthen public sector initiatives to overcome the sedentarism problem



Table 1. Grades According to Physical Activity Indicator in the 2014 Mexican Report Card

INDICATORS	GRADE	OVERVIEW
PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	5	58.6% of children 10-14 years of age did not participate in any organized sporting activity during the previous 12 months. Among 15-18 year-olds, 59% are active, 18.3% are moderately active and 22.7% are inactive.
SEDENTARY BEHAVIOR	4	67% of 10-18 year-olds spend more than two hours a day in front of a screen device.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT SCHOOL	4	More national efforts are in place in order to generate physical activity programs in schools, especially following the implementation of the National Agreement for Nutritional Health. Across the nation, 11.3 million basic education students from 62,696 schools participate in the National Program for Physical Activation.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE FAMILY	Not graded	There is not enough data to assign a grade - more research is needed.
COMMUNITY AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT	1	The National Census reports a total of 51,595 facilities in the 31 states and the capital. If we consider that in Mexico there are 32,500,000 kids aged 0-14 and about 29,706, 560 youth aged 15-29, the ratio of inhabitants-sporting facilities in the country is still insufficient.
ACTIVE PLAY	Not graded	There is not enough data to assign a grade - more research is needed.
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION	6	66.4% of kids aged 10-14 commute to school on foot.
ORGANIZED SPORTS	4	58.6% of 10-14 year-olds do not participate in sporting activities on a regular basis, 38.9% participate in 1 or 2 each year, and only 2.5% participate in more than three sporting activities per year.
GOVERNMENT	6	There is an important interest from public organisms seeking to bring down the physical inactivity problem. As a result, the generation of programs among various sectors has reached out to different areas. The challenge lies in having the evaluation tools that would allow us to find out the impact of such initiatives as they relate to physical activity in Mexican children and youth.