Healthy Children, Healthy State: 

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN TEXAS 

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

Texas children are falling behind in physical activity

The Department of Health and Human Services recommends 60 minutes or more of daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for youth aged 6-17.

Texas children do not meet guidelines of 60 minutes (or more) of physical activity.

78.4% of youth do not meet 60+ minutes of physical activity at least 5 days per week.

Classroom teacher-led physical activity breaks occur in 47.1% of elementary schools, 28.6% of middle schools, and 13.3% of high schools.

25.3% of Texas high school students meet 60 minutes per day of physical activity; though 31.2% are in daily PE classes.

How we can improve Texas children’s physical activity

- Promote active commuting (biking, walking) for students
- Daily structured PE classes using an evidence-based program like CATCH
- Daily recess for K-5 of at least 30 minutes
- Encourage classroom physical activity breaks
- Quality training for physical education and classroom teachers

Comprehensive approach to school-wide physical activity promotion
Current Physical Activity Guidelines

The Department of Health and Human Services recommends 60 minutes or more of daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for youth aged 6-17. Most of the 60 minutes or more per day should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity on at least 3 days a week. Adolescents should include muscle-strengthening and bone-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days a week.

Texas Administrative code requires PE be offered to all K-12 students, but this varies by grade level. Grades K-6 are required to have 30 minutes of physical activity every day which can be structured (PE) or unstructured (recess). In grades 6-8, 30 minutes per day is required for 4 out of the 6 semesters. For grades 9-12, the requirement for graduation is 1 semester of PE.

References


2. School Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Project. Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. SPAN project details available online at go.uth.edu/SPAN.

   The School Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Project is a surveillance system monitoring the prevalence of overweight/obesity in school-aged children in Texas conducted by researchers at the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. SPAN has been funded by the Texas Department of State Health Services since 2000 to conduct height and weight measurements across different grade levels.


11. CATCHinfo.org


About the Texas Child Health Status Report

This project is funded by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. These reports utilize state-level data from the School Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Project to provide an accurate representation of Texas child health.

Learn more at go.uth.edu/TexasChildHealth