Texas children are not getting the physical activity they need

Youth aged 6-17 need 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity every day for optimal health and fitness.

Physical Activity Shortfall

Texas children are not meeting physical activity guidelines.

- 80.4% of Texas youth fail to meet the recommended daily 60+ minutes of physical activity.
- Youth aged 6-17 meet daily physical activity guidelines only 3.9 days per week.

Physical activity opportunities for kids outside of Physical Education are not being adequately utilized.

- 36% of children age 6-12 play outdoors 3 or fewer days a week.
- Regular classroom physical activity breaks occur in fewer than 35% of elementary schools.
- Only 45% of middle schools allow students to use gym facilities and equipment outside of school hours.

Current and Lifetime Risks

Texas children are not exercising. Not exercising enough has lifetime health consequences.

- Obesity
- Social isolation
- Reduced cognitive abilities
- Chronic diseases

% of students exercising 7 days a week, 60+ minutes per day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th Grade</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Roadmap for Texas Youth to Meet Physical Activity Recommendations

Encourage:
- Active commuting (biking, walking) to school or other destinations
- Daily structured PE classes using an evidence-based program like CATCH
- Daily recess for K-5 of at least 30 minutes
- Classroom physical activity breaks
- Quality training for physical education and classroom teachers
- Physical activity at home to meet the 60 minute guidelines
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 which can include other courses (band, dance, etc).

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.


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

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