

This is the second in a series of research summaries highlighting some of the key findings from the Physical Activity and Dietary Intake of Children and Youth in Nova Scotia (PACY) surveillance studies from 2001 (PACY1) and 2005 (PACY2). Findings for this issue are based on information collected from PACY2. These studies are unique, particularly within Canada, because physical activity data was collected using questionnaires and accelerometers (motion detectors).

Students in grades 3, 7 and 11 were randomly selected from schools in six regions of Nova Scotia. Approximately 2,300 students participated in PACY2 and data collection took place during the school year (October-June).

Participation

Based on information collected from questionnaires, it was possible to identify the physical activities in which students take part and determine whether those activities are related to gender, grade and household income.

Students were given a list of 40 activities and asked “Which of the following physical activities do you do outside of school (weekdays and weekends)? Think of the last two weeks.”

Participation in team activities such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, hockey and football were reported most often by students in grade 7.

Grade 11 students were least likely to report participating in physical activities used for transportation (such as walking, biking, jogging or running).

Girls of all grades were more likely to participate in gymnastics (13%) and dancing (38%) while boys of all grades were more likely to participate in football (21%) and hockey (41%).

Those students who met the standard¹ more frequently reported participating in hockey, swimming, biking, soccer, skating, exercise and jumping rope.

Students whose household income was \$50,000 or greater were more likely to say they participated in hockey, skating, golf, tennis and swimming.

10 Most Frequently Reported Physical Activities By Grade

■ Grade 3
■ Grade 7
■ Grade 11



¹ The standard was defined as a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate or greater intensity physical activity five or more days of the week

To better understand the types of youth activities, participants were asked to respond to the following statement: “Think of the last week and check off any activities that you did before or after school.”

Boys in grades 7 and 11 were more likely than girls to report playing active games, outside with friends, and on a sports team.



Before or After School

Percentage of participants who reported playing:

Activity	Grade 3	Grade 7	Grade 11
Sports in a club	25	28	20
On a sports team	34	48	39
Sports in a youth group	N/A	17	10
Active games	N/A	59	41
Outside with friends	89	76	52

Response options differed slightly between the questionnaire for students in grade 3 and the questionnaire for those in grades 7 and 11. Therefore, some response options are not applicable (N/A).

Participants were also asked to indicate, “Activities I do during the school day.” Boys in grade 7 and 11 were more likely than girls to report participating in intramurals. Grade 11 boys frequently participated in free gym time while girls were more likely to participate in a club and school sports teams.



During the School Day

Percentage of participants who reported participating in:

Activity	Grade 3	Grade 7	Grade 11
Free gym time	53	52	32
A club	17	18	21
Play outside at recess	96	N/A	N/A
A school sports teams	N/A	37	37
Intramurals	N/A	39	16

For the complete PACY reports and information on Active Kids Healthy Kids—Nova Scotia’s physical activity strategy for children, youth and families—please visit <http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/pasr/akhk-intro.asp>

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