

This summary is the fifth 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). 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 1,600 and 2,300 students participated in PACY1 and PACY2 respectively.

Socioeconomic Differences

Based on information collected from questionnaires and accelerometers, it was possible to explore differences between household income groups in:

- rates of physical activity
- involvement in different types of physical activity
- use of facilities and locations for physical activity

Parents reported their annual household income in the following categories:

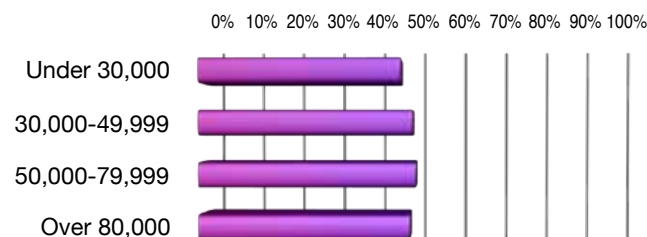
- Less than \$30 000
- \$30,000 – 49,999
- \$50,000 – 79,999
- Greater than \$80,000

Rates of Physical Activity

The chart below (Figure 1) illustrates that no significant differences emerged between income groups meeting the physical activity standard.*

Figure 1

Percentage Meeting Physical Activity Standards by Household Income



*The physical activity standard was defined as 60 minutes of moderate or more intense physical activity on at least five or more days per week.

Involvement in Different Types of Physical Activity

In 2005, youth were asked to indicate which sports and activities they engaged in over a two week period. More than 40 activities were identified. At least 25 per cent of participants reported engaging in those listed below (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Most Reported Activities

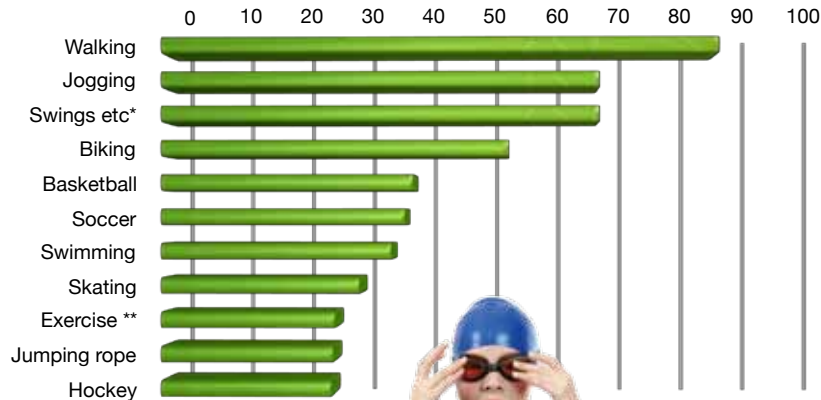
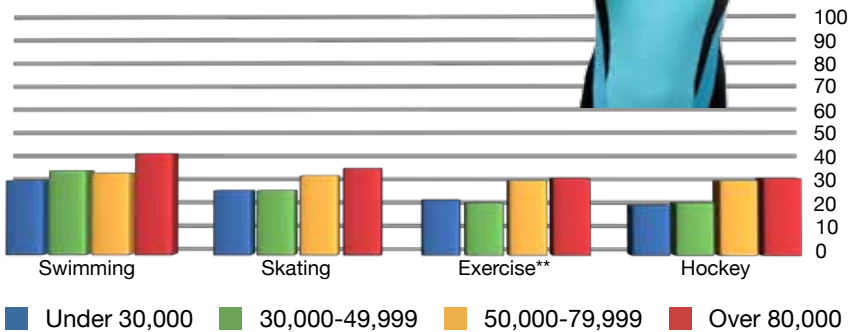


Figure 2.1

Activities that show differences in participation among household income categories



The chart above (Figure 2.1) reports on differences in participation among household income categories. The following points summarize these findings further:

- Children and youth in the lowest income group were less likely to report engaging in swimming (30%) than those in the highest income group (41%).
- For children in grade 3 only, those in the lowest income group (26%) were less likely to engage in skating than those in the highest income group (35%).
- Children and youth in the lower two income groups were less likely to report playing hockey (21%) or exercising on exercise equipment (22%) than those in the two higher income groups (31% for both hockey and exercise on exercise equipment).



*Asked of Grade 3 children only **Exercise equipment such as treadmill or stationary bicycle



Grade 3 Use of Facilities or Locations for Physical Activity

In 2001, children were asked about their use of facilities and specific locations for physical activity. Children in Grade 3 were asked whether they used any of the 12 facilities or locations in their neighbourhood by responding “yes” or “no.”

Figure 3

Youth Usage of Facilities & Locations

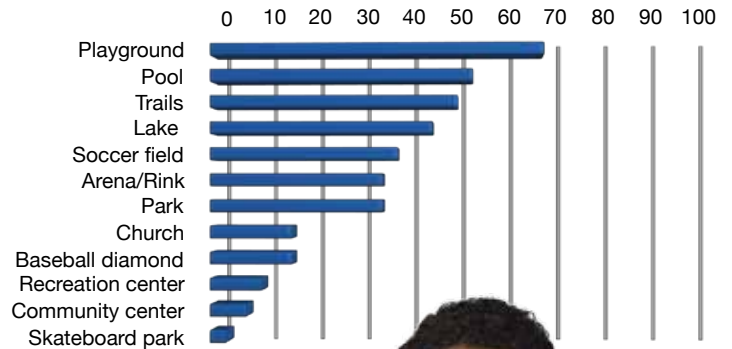
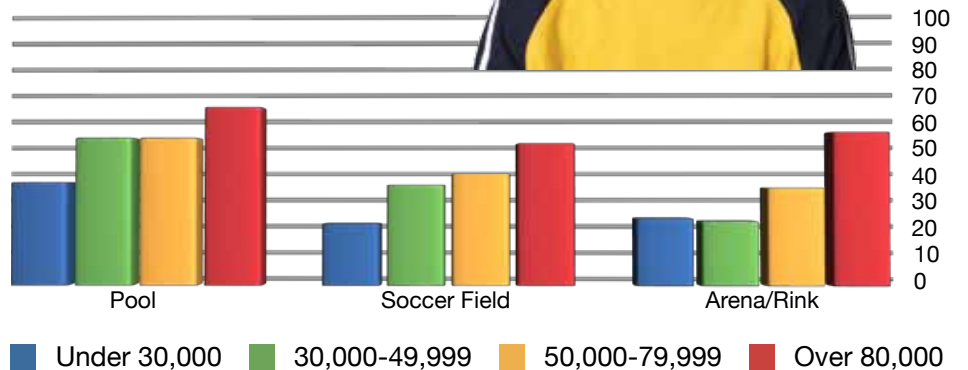


Figure 3.1

Differences in facility usage by household income



The chart above (Figure 3.1) reports on differences of facility usage by household income categories. The following points summarize these findings further:

- No socioeconomic differences were found for grade 3’s use of parks, playgrounds, lakes, and trails.
- Children in the lowest income group (37%) were less likely than those in all other income groups (57%) to use a pool.
- Children in the two lower income groups (24%) were less likely than those in the two higher income groups (49%) to use a soccer field.
- Children in the lowest income group (24%) were less likely than those in the highest group (55%) to use an arena or rink.



Grades 7 and 11 Frequency of Facility Usage

The chart below (Figure 4) reports on differences between how often youth in grades 7 and 11 use facilities and locations in their neighbourhood. The following points summarize these findings further:

- No socioeconomic differences were observed in youth’s reported use of parks, pools, lakes, skateboard parks, churches, community centers, and “other” facilities for physical activity.
- Youth in the two lower-income groups reported greater use of trails than those in the two higher-income groups.
- Youth in the two lower-income groups also reported less use of soccer fields than did those in the two higher-income groups.
- Girls in the lowest income group reported greater use of baseball diamonds than girls in the highest income group.
- Boys in the two lower-income groups reported lower use of recreation centers and arenas than boys in the two higher-income groups.

Figure 4

Mean Ratings of Neighbourhood Facility and Location Usage

Youth in grades 7 and 11 were asked to rate on a 5-point scale (1 = “never” to 5 = “very often”) how often in a week they used 12 facilities or locations “in their neighbourhood.”

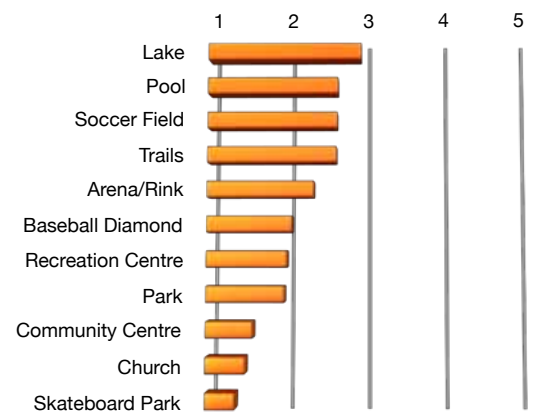
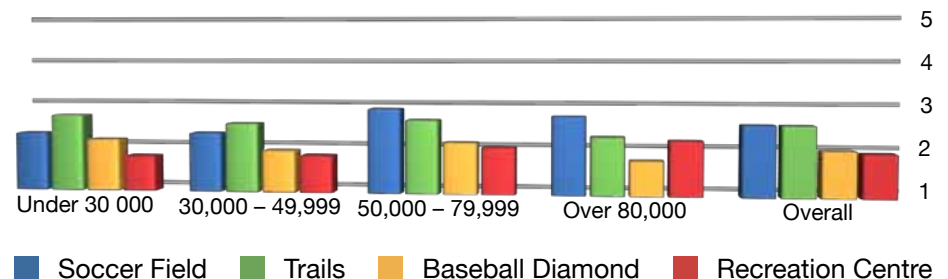


Figure 4.1



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 www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/pasr/akhk-intro.asp