



# Kids CAN PLAY!

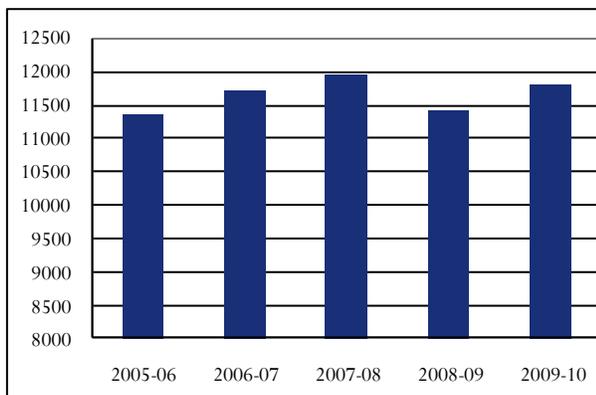
Encouraging children to be active at home, at school, and in their communities

## Physical activity levels of Canadian children and youth

Physical activity levels of Canadian children and youth have been measured since 2005 through the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute’s CANPLAY study. The purpose of the CANPLAY, or the *Canadian Physical Activity Levels Among Youth*, study is to objectively measure physical activity levels of Canadian children and youth aged 5 to 19 using pedometers to assess daily steps taken. The data presented in this bulletin primarily reflects data collected in year 5 (2009-10) of this study. In year five, children and youth (age 5 to 19) took an average of 11,800 steps. Although there is no significant change in the overall number of steps taken by children and youth between year two and year four of this study, children and youth in year 5 took more steps per day than in year 1 (see figure 1).

**FIGURE 1**

Mean number of steps for children and youth, overall, 2005 to 2010



CANPLAY 2005 - 2010, CFLRI

### Region

Children and youth residing in the Atlantic take fewer daily steps than the average Canadian child. This finding has generally been consistent over time (with the exception of year one).

In terms of changes within regions over time:

- there has been no significant change in steps among Atlantic children and youth;
- those residing in Quebec took more steps in year three (but not in years four or five) compared to year one
- those residing in Ontario took more steps in year three and year five compared to those taken in year one of the study;
- the number of steps taken by children and youth living in the West and North have not significantly changed over time. However, children and youth in the West and North took significantly higher steps than the national average in year one and year two, whereas this difference in later years have not been significantly different than the average. One explanation for this finding may be the increase in the number of steps taken by children in Ontario, thereby increasing the national average.

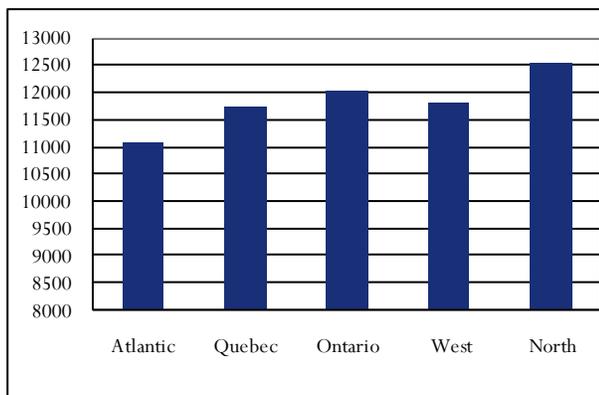
### Socio-economic and demographic factors

Similar to earlier survey years, boys take more daily steps than girls (about 1,300 more daily steps) in year five of the study.



**FIGURE 2**

Mean number of steps for children and youth by region, 2009-10



CANPLAY 2005 - 2010, CFLRI

The number of steps taken decreases with each increasing age group; children aged 5 to 10 take more steps than children aged 11 to 14, who take more steps than those aged 15 to 19. Gender differences – whereby boys take more steps than girls - also appears among 5 to 14 year-olds .

These relationships with age and sex are consistent over time. Although there has been no significant change in the number of steps taken by boys over time , there has been a slight increase in the number steps taken by girls overall in year five compared to year four. Although there have been no significant difference over time in the steps taken overall by those 11 and older, the number of steps taken by 5 to 10 years olds has increased in year five compared to year four.

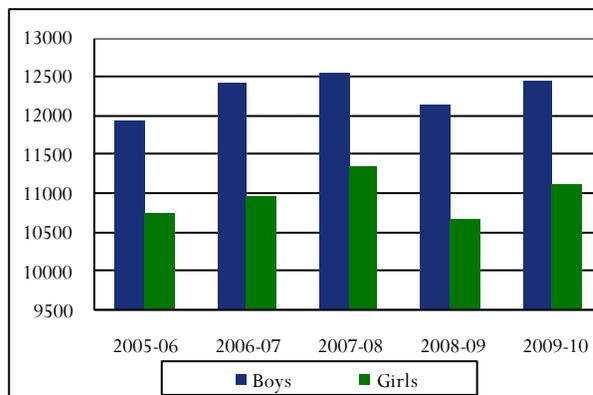
Children and youth in the highest income households (with annual household incomes of \$100,000 or greater) take more steps than those in the lowest income households. This relationship with income has occurred in some previous years. In year five, however, there does not appear to be a relationship between steps taken by the child and the education level of the parent. This finding differs from most prior study years, where a relationship with parental education was evident.

**Parental activity level**

In year five of the study, the amount of daily steps taken by a child was not associated with parental activity

**FIGURE 3**

Mean number of steps for children and youth by gender, 2005 to 2010



CANPLAY 2005 - 2010, CFLRI

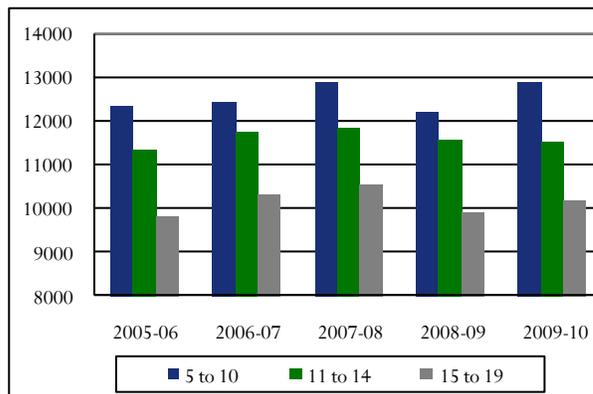
level. This finding is similar to year three and year four of the study, whereas there were differences with parental activity level appearing in both year one and year two of data collection.

**Children’s participation in organized sport and physical activity**

Children and youth who participate in organized physical activity and sport take more steps in a day than those who do not. This is a consistent finding since the start of the study in 2005. Indeed, in each year, those that participate in organized physical activity and sport take roughly 1500-1700 more daily steps than those children who do not.

**FIGURE 4**

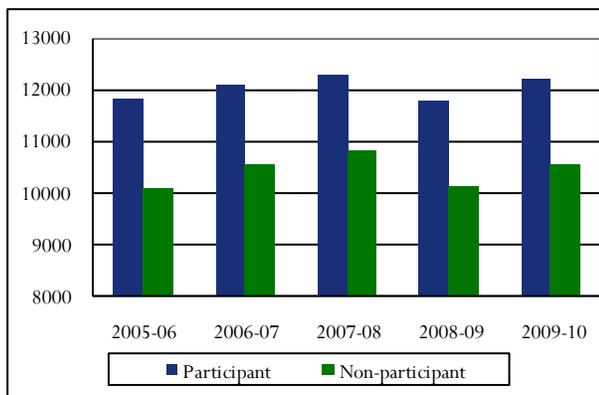
Mean number of steps for children and youth by age, 2005 to 2010



CANPLAY 2005 - 2010, CFLRI

**FIGURE 5**

Mean number of steps for children and youth by participation in organized sport and physical activity, 2005 to 2010



CANPLAY 2005 - 2010, CFLRI

**CANADIAN FITNESS & LIFESTYLE RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

201-185 Somerset Street West • Ottawa, ON K2P 0J2 • (613) 233-5528 • info@cflri.ca

<http://www.cflri.ca/>



Production of this bulletin has been made possible through a financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of these agencies.