

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN TEXAS

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

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 fitness¹.

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 activity².



Youth aged 6-17 meet daily physical activity guidelines only 3.9 days per week².

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 week².



Regular classroom physical activity breaks occur in fewer than 35% of elementary schools².



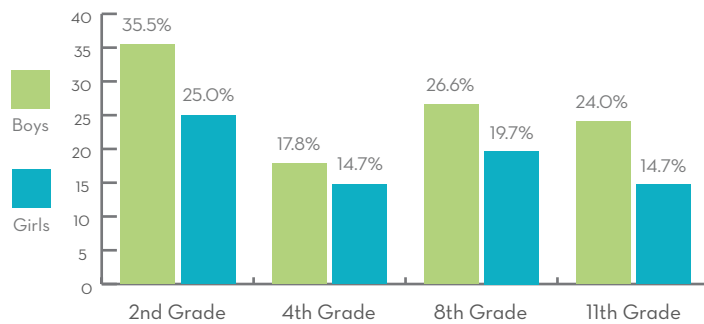
Only 45% of middle schools allow students to use gym facilities and equipment outside of school hours².

Current and Lifetime Risks

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

- Obesity³
- Social isolation^{4,5}
- Reduced cognitive abilities^{6,7}
- Chronic diseases^{8,9}

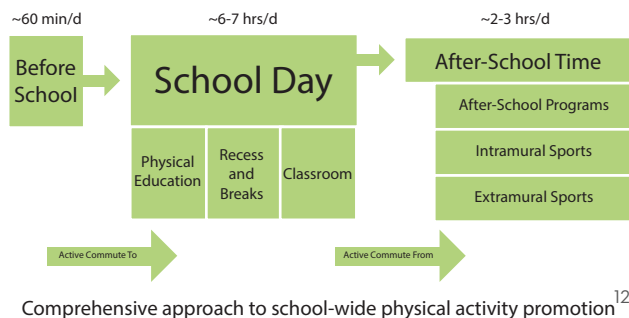
% of students exercising 7 days a week, 60+ minutes per day²



A Roadmap for Texas Youth to Meet Physical Activity Recommendations¹⁰

Encourage:

- Active commuting (biking, walking) to school or other destinations
- Daily structured PE classes using an evidence-based program like CATCH¹¹
- 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 guidelines¹



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 week¹.

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).¹³

References

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition. 2018.
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.
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4. Santos, S J D, et al. Association between physical activity, participation in Physical Education classes, and social isolation in adolescents. *Jornal de pediatria*, 91(6), 543-550. (2015).
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11. CATCHinfo.org
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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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