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BC Recreation and Parks Association says sedentary lifestyles contributing to sleep deprivation among children and youth

BCRPA supports findings in the 2016 ParticipACTION Report Card



VANCOUVER (BC) June 16, 2016 – The BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) supports findings in the 2016 ParticipACTION Report Card.

Released today, the ParticipACTION Report Card highlights the important relationship between sleep, physical activity and sedentary behaviour and shows how sedentary lifestyles are connected to a creeping ‘sleepidemic’ in Canadian children and youth. That is why, for the first time, the 2016 ParticipACTION Report Card assigns a grade to sleep and includes new *Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth*. A first of their kind in the world, the guidelines outline what a healthy 24-hour period looks like for children and youth.

“Sleep deprivation is becoming a problem for Canadian children and youth, creating an insidious threat to their mental and physical health,” says Dr. Mark Tremblay, Chief Scientific Officer, ParticipACTION Report Card and Director of the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute’s Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group (CHEO-HALO). “It’s time to take a whole day approach – many kids are too tired to get enough physical activity during the day, and not active enough to be tired at night – it’s a vicious cycle.”

According to the Report Card, for optimal health children and youth need to sweat, step, sleep and sit the right amounts. Only nine per cent of kids get enough heart-pumping physical activity and only 24 per cent are meeting screen time guidelines of no more than two hours per day. Plus, in recent decades, children’s nightly sleep duration has decreased by 30 minutes to an hour; 31 per cent of school-aged kids are 26 per cent of adolescents in Canada are sleep-deprived.

In addition to impacting children’s physical activity levels, sleep deprivation has many other health implications. For example, too little sleep can cause hyperactivity, lower IQ scores and produce adverse hormonal changes like those associated with increased risks of obesity, diabetes and hypertension.

The good news is that regular physical activity may be the best sleep aid there is. The Report Card indicates that Grade 5 students with higher physical activity levels are less likely to be sleepy during the daytime and high school students who get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day are 41 per cent more likely to get sufficient sleep than those who don’t.

“Our tendency may be to cram more into each day to wear kids out, but a full schedule of activities doesn’t necessarily equal more physical activity,” says Elio Antunes, President and CEO, ParticipACTION. “It’s time for a wake-up call. If we want to improve sleep in our kids, we need to get them off the couch and away from their screens with regular, heart-pumping activity.”

“The negative health and mental consequences of sedentary behaviour are well known but this correlation to sleep deprivation and its detrimental effects adds yet another important dimension and call to action to take deliberate measures to ensure physical activity is a part of our everyday routines,” states BCRPA CEO, Rebecca Tunnacliffe. “People have a key resource to help them become more active right in their own communities – their local recreation centres. Community recreation is a major proponent in combatting physical inactivity and provides accessible activity options for all ages and abilities.”

Two examples of BCRPA led community based programming aimed at increasing physical activity rates in children are [MEND \(Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do It!\)](#) and [ParticipACTION's Teen Challenge](#). MEND is a FREE, fun healthy living program for children aged 5-13. The 10 week family-based education program is designed to help children and their families get fitter, healthier and happier. The programs facilitate safe, effective and lasting lifestyle changes by improving children's physical activity levels, nutrition and self-esteem. Teen Challenge works to get teens moving across the country by breaking down the barriers that prevent teens from getting active. The program provides micro-grant funding to encourage and support teens to come up with innovative ways to get themselves and their peers active.

The Report Card assigns grades in 12 categories this year, with Sedentary Behaviour receiving the lowest mark:

- "D-" for Overall Physical Activity
- "F" for Sedentary Behaviour
- "D" for Active Transportation
- "D+" for Active Play
- "D+" for Physical Literacy
- "C+" for Family and Peers
- "C+" for School
- "B" for Organized Sport and Physical Activity Participation
- "B" for Sleep
- "B-" for Government
- "A-" for Community and Environment
- "A-" for Non-Government

To download the 2016 ParticipACTION Report Card Highlight Report, including the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth, or the full 76-page Report, please visit www.participactionreportcard.com.

The Canadian 24 Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth call for at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity, no more than two hours a day of recreational screen time, limited sitting for extended periods and at least 9-11 hours of sleep per night for children 5-13 years, and 8-10 hours for those aged 14-17 years. They were developed by the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, the Conference Board of Canada, HALO-CHEO, ParticipACTION and the Public Health Agency of Canada, with input from research experts and stakeholders across Canada and around the world.

BACKGROUND:

The **British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA)** is a not for profit organization dedicated to building and sustaining active healthy lifestyles and communities in BC. Established in 1958, the Association is a central resource agency for its members and stakeholders of the parks, recreation, physical activity and culture sector, providing leadership, training and support to help meet national, provincial and local health priorities. Through a diverse network of partners and extensive programs and services, BCRPA actively advocates accessibility and inclusiveness to recreation and physical activity. <http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca/>

Information on the **MEND** program can be found at: <http://www.bcchildrens.ca/health-info/healthy-living/mend>

Information on **ParticipACTION's Teen Challenge** can be found at: <http://teen-challenge.participation.com/about/>

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