



**ADEQUACY AND AVAILABILITY OF FACILITIES
FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**



Indoor facilities for physical activity

Gymnasiums are the most common indoor facility available to schools, with almost all schools (96%) having access to one. Dance studios are the least common physical activity room available: only 10% of schools have access to a dance studio. Although the proportions vary, the overall pattern of availability is consistent across provinces. Weight rooms and other rooms for physical activity are more likely to be available in secondary schools than in elementary schools. As many as 68% of secondary schools have access to a weight room, compared with only 13% of elementary schools, and 65% of secondary schools have access to other rooms for physical activity, compared with 37% of elementary schools.

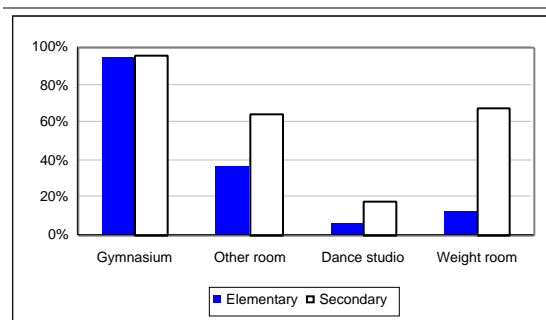
Student population size In general, schools with a larger student population are more likely than schools with fewer students to have access to a dance studio, a weight room, or other rooms for physical activity. Although widely available (89%), schools with fewer than 200 students are less likely than others to have a gymnasium.

School type Public schools are just as likely as non-public schools to have access to a weight room, dance studio, or other room for physical activity.

Estimated family income Schools with students from mostly high income homes are more likely than those with mostly low incomes to have access to a dance studio, weight room, or other room for physical activity.

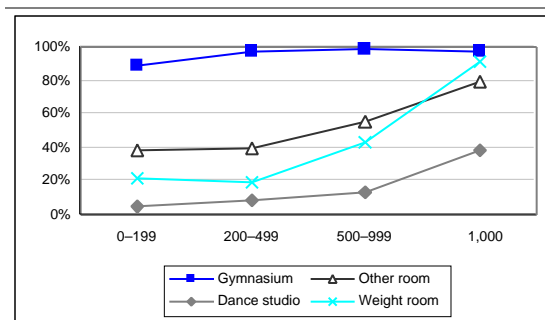
Implications Virtually all schools have access to gymnasiums either on, or near, school grounds. The abundance of gymnasiums available for physical education or physical activity seem contrary to earlier research which reported that Canadian schools are “characterized by an alleged high level of inadequate provision” for physical activity, namely that have “deficiencies in provision of facilities” and “low levels of maintenance”.¹³ Although gymnasiums appear pervasive in schools, other rooms for physical activity do not. Schools may consider partnering with municipal sports and recreation facilities in order to provide a wider variety of indoor facilities for physical activity and education. Accessing existing facilities within the broader municipality may be a particularly useful strategy for schools in lower income areas.

**INDOOR FACILITIES
by grade level**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

**INDOOR FACILITIES
by student population size**



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Outdoor facilities for physical activity

Playing fields and baseball diamonds are the most prevalent outdoor facilities available to schools overall, with 94% of schools having access to playing fields and 86% having access to baseball diamonds. Although the proportions vary, reported access to facilities is similar across provinces. Elementary schools are more likely than secondary schools to have access to basketball hoops (84% vs. 70%), playground areas (91% vs. 52%), or paved areas (91% vs. 59%), whereas secondary schools are more likely than elementary schools to have access to running tracks (58% vs. 38%) or tennis courts (61% vs. 34%).

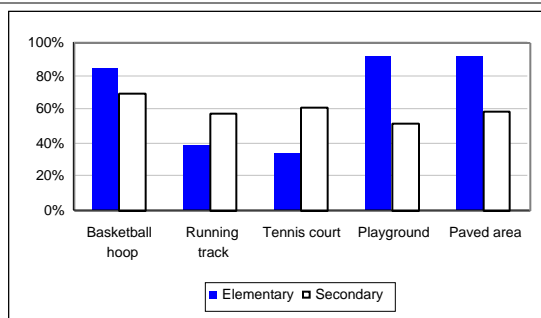
School setting Rural schools more likely than other schools to have access to baseball diamonds or playground areas, while suburban schools are more likely than other schools to have access to basketball hoops or paved areas.

Estimated family income Schools with mostly high income students are more likely than schools with mostly low income students to have access to facilities such as basketball hoops, tennis courts, and paved areas.

Language English schools are more likely than French schools to have access to playing fields, baseball diamonds, basketball hoops, running tracks, playground areas and paved areas.

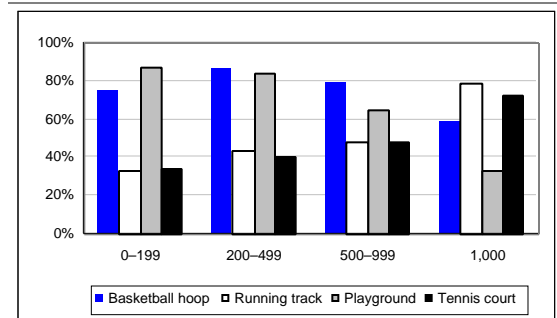
Implications A variety of outdoor facilities appear to be readily available on, or near, school grounds. This is important, as play spaces and facilities that are convenient are positively related to physical activity behaviours of children and youth. These types of facilities allow seasonal alternatives to typical indoor physical activity facilities. This, therefore, may help to alleviate concerns of safety and overcrowding due to a lack of space and to redress the lack of indoor facilities among schools having students from lower income homes. (See “Indoor facilities for physical activity”). It is essential to ensure that these facilities are maintained according to safety standards, and that they provide amenities appropriate for outdoor facilities (such as shade, availability of water, and so on).¹⁴ Moreover, adequate supervision must be available to ensure an environment free of harassment, discrimination, and intimidation.¹⁵

**OUTDOOR FACILITIES
by grade level**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

**OUTDOOR FACILITIES
by student population size**



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Amenities supporting physical activity

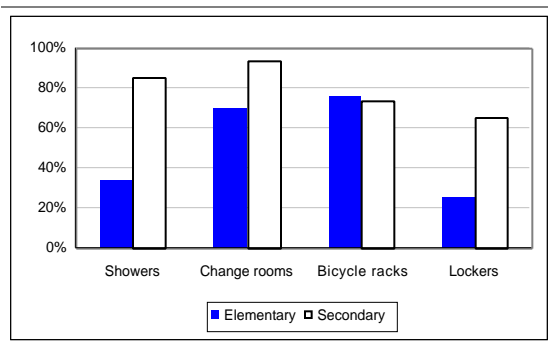
Change rooms and bike racks are among the most common amenities supportive of physical activity available to schools (77% and 76% respectively). Showers and lockers are less commonly available, with about half of all schools reporting availability of showers, and slightly more than one-third reporting availability of lockers. Whereas the availability of bike racks increases from East to West, showers and change rooms are less common in Quebec schools and lockers and change rooms are less common in Ontario schools. Availability of these types of amenities also varies by community size, although no clear pattern by size is evident. Secondary schools are more likely than elementary schools to have available showers, change rooms, and lockers.

Student population size In general, schools with a larger student population are more likely than smaller schools to have amenities such as showers, change rooms, and lockers. Showers and change rooms are available at almost all very large schools (those with 1,000 or more students).

Estimated family income Schools with mostly low income students are less likely than schools with mostly high income students to have access to any amenity supporting physical activity.

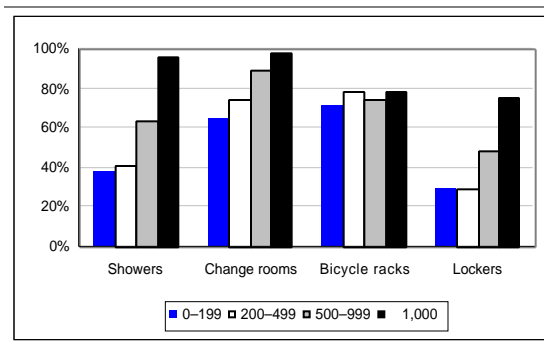
Implications Canadian schools, and in particular larger schools and those of higher grades, appear to generally have access to amenities supportive of physical activity. In another topic (see “Adequacy of space for physical activity”), schools reported that the lack of space for physical activity leads to concerns about safety and overcrowding in larger schools. The promotion of active commuting may provide an effective means of increasing students activity level without increasing the burden of already perceived deficiencies in space. Coupled with the fact that larger schools and secondary schools appear more likely to have supportive amenities (such as showers, bicycle racks, and so on), the promotion of active transit may be a relatively simple and effective way of encouraging physically active behaviours among adolescents.

**AMENITIES SUPPORTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
by grade level**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

**AMENITIES SUPPORTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
by student population size**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

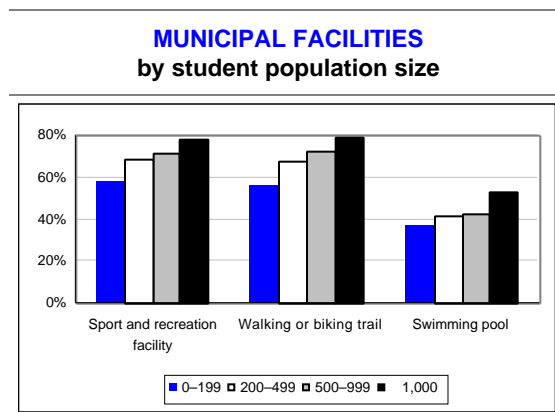
Municipal facilities for physical activity

The majority of schools report having access to municipal facilities such as skating rinks (70%), sport and recreation facilities (67%), community centres (59%), or walking or bicycling trails (66%). Less than half of all schools (41%) have access to municipal swimming pools. Although access to facilities generally varies by community size, rural schools are less likely than those elsewhere to have access to a sport and recreation facilities, walking or bicycling trails and swimming pools. Elementary schools are less likely than secondary schools to have access to municipal facilities, with the exception of community centres.

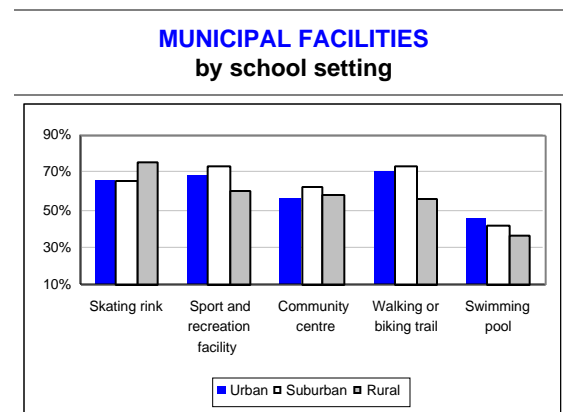
Region Access to facilities varies widely by province. Nonetheless, compared to other regions, Ontario schools are the least likely to have access to skating rinks (60%). Whereas, schools in the East are the least likely to have access to sport and recreation facilities (53%), and schools in the West are the most likely to have access to swimming pools (57%).

School setting Although rural schools are less likely than other schools to have access to sport and recreation facilities, walking or bicycling trails, or swimming pools, they are more likely to have access to skating rinks.

Implications Whereas municipal facilities seem fairly available to most schools, this does not appear to be so for rural schools. Therefore, schools in smaller or rural communities may consider using facilities in the community that are not typically considered for physical activity, such as community centres or church halls. Moreover, schools could work in conjunction with communities to promote physical activity in the community outside of school hours. Such promotion may include distribution of schedules for activities, transportation schedules, maps to facilities, and so on. In addition, studies purport that the establishment of walking trails in rural communities may be a cost-effective intervention for increasing walking.¹⁶ Considering that data reveals deficiencies in the availability of walking trails near or on school grounds, the establishment and maintenance of municipal trails may be a low cost option for encouraging physical activity among students and the community as a whole.



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Adequacy of space for physical activity

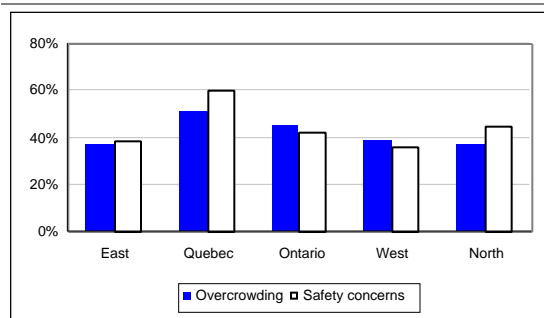
At least two-fifths of all schools report that lack of adequate space for physical activity leads to overcrowding or safety concerns. Issues related to lack of space vary substantially by province for concerns about both overcrowding (from a low of 26% in Newfoundland to 51% in Quebec) and safety (from 27% in British Columbia to 60% in Quebec). Overcrowding is more often reported by secondary schools (48%) than by elementary schools (40%) and less often reported by rural schools than by schools elsewhere.

Student population size Schools with a student population numbering at least 500 are more likely than smaller schools to report that lack of space for physical activities leads to some concern; over half of all schools with at least 1,000 students report that lack of space leads to overcrowding (59%) or safety concerns (51%).

Language French schools are more likely than other schools to report that lack of space leads to overcrowding and safety concerns. This is related in part to differences in the prevalence of concern about these issues in Quebec schools compared to schools elsewhere.

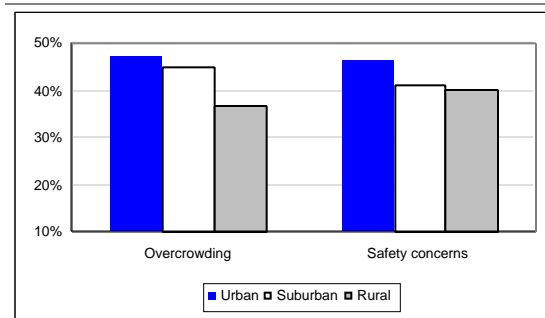
Implications The concerns about safety and inadequate space appear more of an issue for schools with larger student populations. These larger schools may consider establishing shared use agreements with municipal sports and recreation facilities, as well as local community facilities not primarily used for physical activity. As an alternative method for increasing physical activity among students yet not putting pressure on existing school physical activity facilities, schools can be encouraged to promote active commuting as a means of getting to and from school. Considering the majority of Canadian schools do not have a policy related to promoting active transportation of students to and from school (see topic in this report entitled “Support for active commuting”), there is a great potential for using this type of promotion to increase physical activity behaviour without placing additional strain on existing physical activity facilities at school.

**ADEQUACY OF SPACE
by region**



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**ADEQUACY OF SPACE
by school setting**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

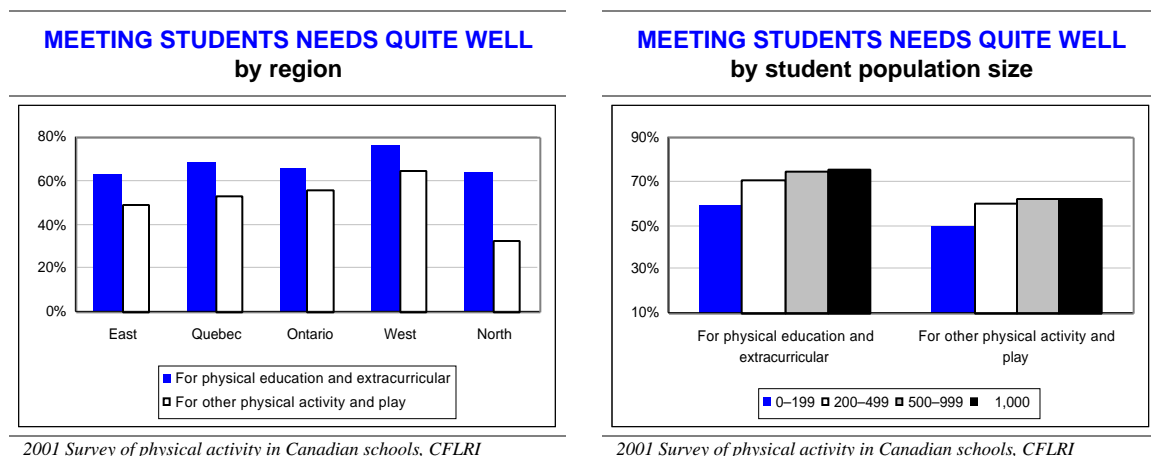
Meeting the needs of students

Almost three-quarters (70%) of all schools report that their facilities meet the needs of students quite well for physical education and extracurricular programs. In addition, over half (58%) of all schools report that their facilities meet students' needs quite well for other physical activity and play. Secondary schools are slightly more likely than elementary schools to report that the facilities meet the needs of students quite well for physical education and extracurricular programs, whereas there is no difference for other physical activity and play. There is a general east to west regional increase in the proportion of schools reporting that their facilities meet the needs of students quite well. In contrast, results vary by community size, with no clear pattern emerging.

Student population size Schools with a student population of less than 200 are more likely than larger schools to report that their facilities don't meet the needs of students for either physical education and extracurricular activity, or other physical activity and play.

School setting Suburban schools are more likely than other schools to report that their facilities meet students' needs quite well for physical education and extracurricular activity or play.

Implications It is interesting to note that almost half of schools report that their physical activity facilities are not adequate in terms of overcrowding or safety concerns, yet 70% report that the facilities meet the needs of students quite well. One explanation may be that the facilities are adequate to meet some basic level of service, but are less adequate in supporting a wide range of activities to provide a wide range of opportunities for students (e.g. to support extracurricular dance classes, see “Indoor facilities for physical activity”). Smaller and rural schools may consider partnering with other community organizations (such as sports and recreation facilities, community centres, churches, and so on) to supplement the physical activity facilities available at school.



Indoor facilities for physical activity

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Schools has access to a:			
	Gymnasium	Other room	Dance studio	Weight room
OVERALL	96%	46%	10%	30%
Elementary	95	37	6	13
Secondary	96	65	18	68
REGION				
East	94	47	8	34
Newfoundland	97	35	–	42
Prince Edward Island	100	–	–	–
Nova Scotia	91	47	–	31
New Brunswick	95	59	–	31
Quebec	95	46	15	22
Ontario	97	38	7	25
West	96	53	12	37
Manitoba	93	52	6	35
Saskatchewan	96	56	16	40
Alberta	97	51	14	38
British Columbia	96	54	11	34
North	96	–	–	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE				
0–199	89	39	5	22
200–499	98	40	8	19
500–999	99	56	13	43
1,000	98	79	38	91
SCHOOL SETTING				
Urban	97	48	14	29
Suburban	98	46	11	29
Rural	94	44	7	31
SCHOOL TYPE				
Public	97	46	10	31
Other	94	44	11	29
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME				
More lower income	96	43	9	27
Even mix	96	48	10	34
More higher income	97	49	14	31
LANGUAGE				
English	96	45	9	32
French	95	48	16	23
Both	99	47	12	31

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Outdoor facilities for physical activity

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Schools has access to a:			
	Playing field	Baseball diamond	Basketball hoop	Running track
OVERALL	94%	86%	80%	45%
Elementary	93	86	84	38
Secondary	95	86	70	58
REGION				
East	89	73	66	32
Newfoundland	75	59	47	22
Prince Edward Island	95	77	77	52
Nova Scotia	92	75	71	35
New Brunswick	96	81	78	35
Quebec	84	70	75	36
Ontario	96	88	82	46
West	98	95	85	51
Manitoba	98	94	79	46
Saskatchewan	97	98	82	66
Alberta	99	97	84	46
British Columbia	98	92	91	52
North	81	86	65	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE				
0–199	91	84	75	33
200–499	94	88	86	44
500–999	96	84	79	48
1,000	98	81	58	79
SCHOOL SETTING				
Urban	93	82	78	46
Suburban	96	86	84	45
Rural	94	89	79	44
SCHOOL TYPE				
Public	95	88	81	45
Other	92	81	78	43
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME				
More lower income	93	86	79	43
Even mix	95	88	81	45
More higher income	95	85	82	47
LANGUAGE				
English	96	90	82	46
French	84	73	74	40
Both	95	83	81	47

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Outdoor facilities for physical activity (cont'd)

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Schools has access to a:		
	Tennis court	Playground area	Paved area
OVERALL	43%	77%	82%
Elementary	34	91	91
Secondary	61	52	59
REGION			
East	41	72	74
Newfoundland	35	64	56
Prince Edward Island	–	80	86
Nova Scotia	41	76	81
New Brunswick	48	74	79
Quebec	40	70	80
Ontario	34	73	84
West	52	86	83
Manitoba	39	83	78
Saskatchewan	58	91	85
Alberta	54	86	82
British Columbia	54	84	86
North	43	88	43
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE			
0–199	34	87	78
200–499	40	84	90
500–999	48	65	76
1,000	72	33	48
SCHOOL SETTING			
Urban	41	72	81
Suburban	41	76	86
Rural	45	82	79
SCHOOL TYPE			
Public	44	77	82
Other	38	76	82
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME			
More lower income	40	77	81
Even mix	46	77	80
More higher income	44	78	85
LANGUAGE			
English	43	79	83
French	43	72	78
Both	40	76	84

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Amenities supporting physical activities

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Schools has access to a:			
	Showers	Change rooms	Lockers	Bike racks
OVERALL	49%	77%	36%	76%
Elementary	34	69	25	76
Secondary	85	94	65	74
REGION				
East	60	77	42	57
Newfoundland	69	87	44	40
Prince Edward Island	47	65	48	68
Nova Scotia	55	71	35	57
New Brunswick	59	79	50	72
Quebec	43	67	49	69
Ontario	42	76	21	73
West	55	81	42	87
Manitoba	58	81	25	77
Saskatchewan	66	89	53	88
Alberta	56	72	54	91
British Columbia	49	86	34	88
North	72	81	–	71
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE				
0–199	38	64	29	71
200–499	41	74	29	79
500–999	63	89	48	74
1,000	96	98	75	78
SCHOOL SETTING				
Urban	43	72	35	75
Suburban	50	81	34	80
Rural	53	77	39	74
SCHOOL TYPE				
Public	49	77	37	78
Other	48	78	33	73
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME				
More lower income	45	74	34	71
Even mix	52	79	37	80
More higher income	52	80	39	82
LANGUAGE				
English	50	79	34	78
French	45	72	49	70
Both	50	74	34	78

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Municipal facilities for physical activities

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Schools has access to a:				
	Skating rink	Sport/recreation facility	Community centre	Walking or bicycling trail	Swimming pool
OVERALL	70%	67%	59%	66%	41%
Elementary	69	65	58	63	38
Secondary	73	69	60	70	47
REGION					
East	68	53	53	68	35
Newfoundland	66	55	65	68	41
Prince Edward Island	84	58	53	93	–
Nova Scotia	65	48	44	63	30
New Brunswick	73	58	52	72	37
Quebec	69	71	47	61	31
Ontario	60	65	58	65	31
West	79	70	66	69	57
Manitoba	77	65	67	56	37
Saskatchewan	88	65	59	50	54
Alberta	86	71	68	71	70
British Columbia	71	75	67	82	55
North	92	61	65	63	59
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE					
0–199	73	58	56	56	37
200–499	69	68	60	67	41
500–999	68	71	59	72	42
1,000	70	78	61	79	53
SCHOOL SETTING					
Urban	66	68	56	70	45
Suburban	66	74	63	74	42
Rural	76	60	58	56	36
SCHOOL TYPE					
Public	71	66	59	66	43
Other	68	70	60	66	38
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME					
More lower income	70	65	58	62	39
Even mix	71	69	59	67	43
More higher income	68	70	60	73	43
LANGUAGE					
English	70	66	61	68	43
French	72	72	49	59	36
Both	65	68	62	70	40

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Adequacy of space for physical activity

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Lack of space for physical activities lead to:	
	Overcrowding	Safety concerns
OVERALL	43%	43%
Elementary	40	42
Secondary	48	44
REGION		
East	37	39
Newfoundland	26	30
Prince Edward Island	–	–
Nova Scotia	41	43
New Brunswick	43	40
Quebec	51	60
Ontario	45	42
West	39	36
Manitoba	40	40
Saskatchewan	34	34
Alberta	47	44
British Columbia	33	27
North	–	45
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE		
0–199	32	39
200–499	41	40
500–999	54	49
1,000	59	51
SCHOOL SETTING		
Urban	47	46
Suburban	45	41
Rural	37	40
SCHOOL TYPE		
Public	43	42
Other	43	40
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME		
More lower income	44	46
Even mix	42	39
More higher income	43	40
LANGUAGE		
English	39	37
French	54	61
Both	47	44

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Meeting the needs of students

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	For physical education and extracurricular programs			For other physical activity and play		
	Not well	Moderately	Quite well	Not well	Moderately	Quite well
OVERALL	11%	19%	70%	14%	28%	58%
Elementary	12	21	67	14	29	57
Secondary	11	17	72	15	27	59
REGION						
East	16	22	63	19	32	49
Newfoundland	–	22	62	21	39	40
Prince Edward Island	–	–	67	–	–	65
Nova Scotia	19	24	57	25	30	45
New Brunswick	–	19	70	–	28	62
Quebec	13	19	68	16	30	53
Ontario	11	23	66	14	30	56
West	8	16	76	10	25	65
Manitoba	11	22	67	14	26	60
Saskatchewan	–	12	78	–	23	66
Alberta	9	17	74	8	25	67
British Columbia	–	14	79	9	26	65
North	–	–	64	–	–	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE						
0–199	17	24	59	19	31	50
200–499	10	19	71	12	28	60
500–999	8	17	75	12	26	62
1,000	10	14	76	12	26	62
SCHOOL SETTING						
Urban	12	21	67	14	28	58
Suburban	7	16	76	11	25	64
Rural	13	20	67	15	31	54
SCHOOL TYPE						
Public	11	18	71	14	28	59
Other	12	22	66	13	31	56
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME						
More lower income	13	22	65	16	32	53
Even mix	9	18	72	11	27	61
More higher income	10	15	76	12	23	65
LANGUAGE						
English	11	20	70	13	28	60
French	12	19	69	15	32	53
Both	8	19	73	11	28	61

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.