



SOCIAL CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT



Social support for the physical activity of students

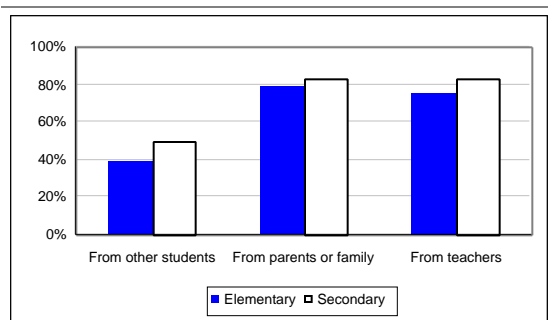
Social support for the physical activity of students may be provided in a number of ways: teachers, parents, or students may act as role models; parents may incorporate physical activity into family events, or help with extracurricular activities at school; and teachers, parents, and other community members may organize or plan physical activity events and services. Less than half (42%) of all schools have policies or programs which encourage support for student physical activity by other students. Support provided by teachers and parents is more commonly encouraged by schools: at least three-quarters of all schools encourage parental support (80%) and support by teachers (77%) for the physical activity of students. Encouraging support from teachers, family and other students is more likely to occur in Western schools and less likely to occur in Quebec schools. Elementary schools are less likely than secondary schools to have policies or programs that encourage any kind of support for student physical activity.

Estimated family income Schools with mostly higher income students are more likely than other schools to encourage peer support for student physical activity. Schools with mostly lower income students are less likely to encourage teacher or parental support for the physical activity of students than are other schools.

Language Reflecting the results for Quebec schools, French schools are far less likely than English schools or Bilingual/ Immersion schools to have policies or programs which encourage any kind of social support for the physical activity of students.

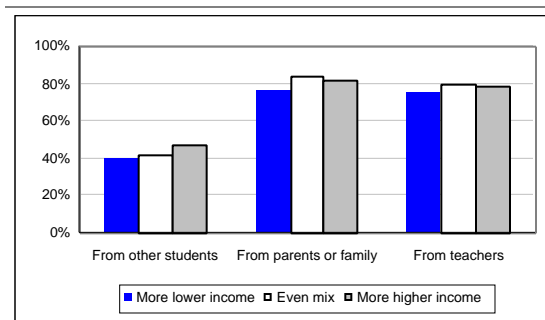
Implications Parents and teachers alike are in an excellent position to act as role models for demonstrating active behaviours. Indeed, since research has shown that parental support is a determinant of children and youth physical activity patterns,¹⁸ schools could encourage parents to become role models by being “actively” involved in supporting children’s physical activity at school, at recess, during lunch, or after school (for example, coaching a team, organizing tournaments, cheering, etc). In addition, teachers can assign homework that involves family interaction or physical activity participation, or provide information to parents about how both they and their children can become and stay active. Finally, parents should also be encouraged to monitor and restrict sedentary behaviours, including television viewing, computer usage, or video games.¹⁸

**SOCIAL SUPPORT
by grade level**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

**SOCIAL SUPPORT
by estimated family income**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

Integrating physical activity into the broader school life

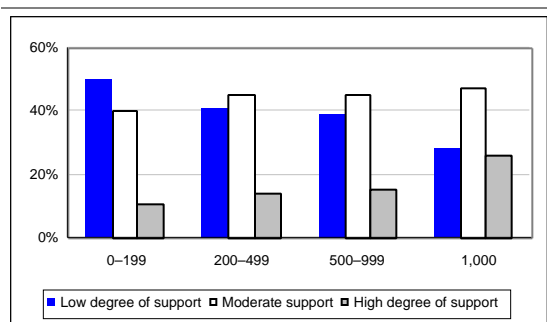
Schools may help integrate physical activity into school life in a number of ways, such as incorporating physical activity into lesson plans or homework, by providing students, parents, and families with information about opportunities to be active, or by providing physical activity programs or counseling. Most schools demonstrate only a low (42%) or moderate (44%) degree of support for integrating physical activity into broader school life. A low degree of support is particularly evident among schools in Quebec (70%). Secondary schools are more likely than elementary schools to demonstrate a high degree of support to integrate physical activity into other areas of school life (18% vs. 13%).

Student population size. In general, a high degree of support for integrating physical activity into other school activities is more likely to be demonstrated in larger schools than those with a smaller population size.

Estimated family income Schools with mostly low income students are the least likely to show a high degree of support for integrating physical activity into school life, while schools with mostly high income students are the most likely to show a high degree of support for such integration.

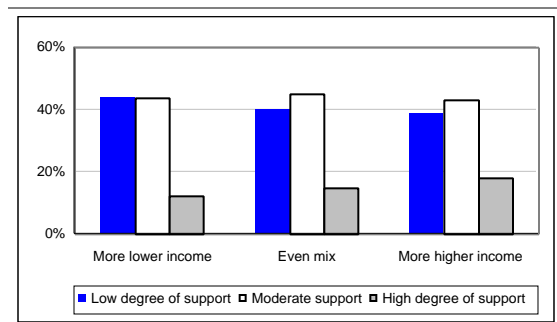
Implications Providing a nurturing school environment which supports physical activity is an important component of a comprehensive and integrated school-based program to reduce physical inactivity of children. This topic reveals a noticeable lack of such support. Schools could consider supplementing its existing physical activity program by introducing a physical activity component into the curriculum of other subjects (for example, learning about basic kinesiology in biology class; having students interview local athletes for journalism classes). They could also promote physical activity outside of physical education and health classes by acquiring, posting and distributing appropriate tools, resources, and information on physical activity to students.

**INTEGRATING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
by student population size**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

**INTEGRATING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
by estimated family income**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

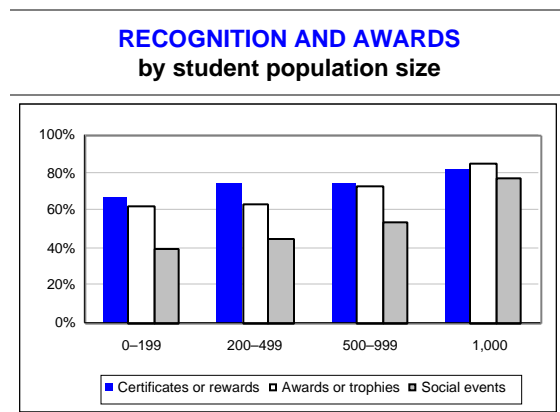
Recognition and awards for physical activity participation

Although the rates vary by province, most Canadian schools offer some kind of recognition for physical activity. Three-quarters of all schools (73%) offer certificates or rewards for physical activity, and 66% offer awards or trophies for physical activity efforts (e.g. *Most Improved Player*). Approximately half of all schools host social events to publicly recognize individuals who participate in physical activity. Elementary schools are less likely than secondary schools to offer any kind of recognition for physical activity. Only 59% of elementary schools offer awards or trophies, compared with 83% of secondary schools, and only 41% of elementary schools host events to recognize students who participate in activities, compared with 65% of secondary schools.

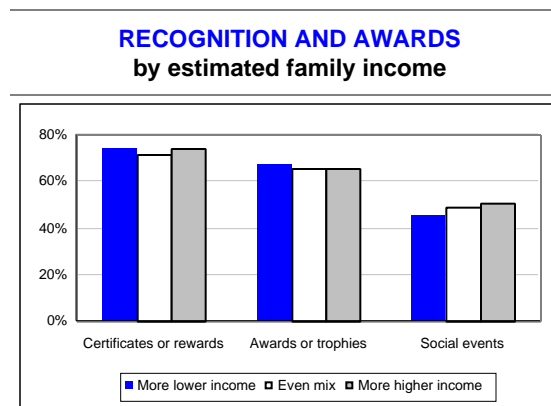
Student population size Smaller schools are generally less likely than larger schools to provide any kind of recognition for participation in physical activity. At least three-quarters of schools with 1,000 or more students host events to recognize participation by students, compared with only 40% of schools with less than 200 students.

Estimated family income Schools with mostly high income students are more likely than schools with mostly low income students to host events to recognize individual students' physical activity achievements.

Implications Data in this report reveal that most schools provide some type of rewards or recognition for physical activity participation at school. Schools may also want to consider recognizing students' achievements in physical activity related activities outside of the school environment. In addition to recognizing or rewarding individual physical activity behaviour, schools should be encouraged to apply for awards available through provincial or national organization to recognize the achievement of their school body towards a more physically active environment. For example, the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance provide awards and certificates recognizing schools who achieve certain standards for physical education programming.⁸ Moreover, Go-for-Green recognizes schools who promote active commuting.²⁴ These types of awards may precipitate increased motivation towards more physically active behaviours, especially among less active students, through role modeling.



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

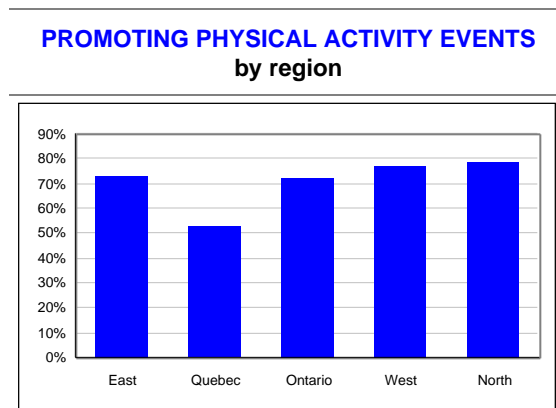
Promoting physical activity events

Overall, seven in ten Canadian schools promote physical activity by publicizing information about, or organizing student participation in, special physical activity events in the community. Elementary schools are more likely than secondary schools to promote community physical activity events.

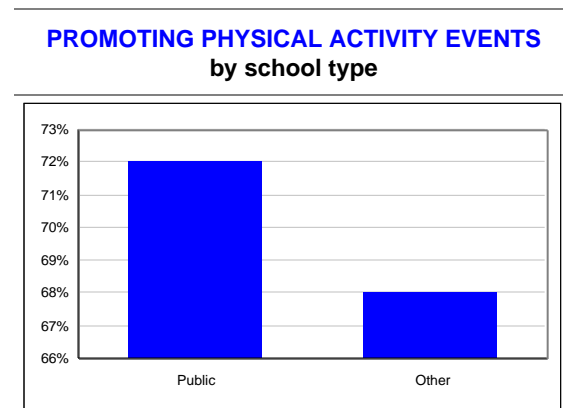
Region Approximately three-quarters of schools in the North (79%), the West (77%), the East (73%) and Ontario (72%) report promoting community physical activity events to students, whereas just over half (53%) of schools in the province of Quebec report promoting such events.

School type Public schools are more likely than other schools to promote physical activity events in the community to students.

Implications Schools could consider using community events as a way to promote physical activity among their students without overburdening the available resources of the schools. For example, another topic in this report (see section entitled “Community links”) discussed the role of schools in promoting regular community based physical activity opportunities to its students and staff. Schools could promote special physical activity events in the community that take place outside of school hours to enhance their existing programming and encourage physical activity more generally. In addition, they could participate in special events targeted specifically for schools, such as “International Walk to School Day”.²⁶ Faculty and staff should also be encouraged to participate, providing role models for appropriate physically active behaviours for students.



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

After school access for students

More than half of all schools (52%) allow student access to indoor facilities after school hours, and three-quarters (76%) allow access to outdoor facilities after hours. However, 13% of all schools do not allow students to access either indoor or outdoor facilities after hours. Elementary schools are more likely to allow access to outdoor facilities after hours (77%) than are secondary schools (73%), and less likely to allow access to indoor facilities (45% compared with 72%). Schools in Quebec and Ontario are less likely than other schools to permit students access to indoor facilities after hours. Schools in the West are more likely, and schools in Quebec are less likely than the average school to permit student access to outdoor facilities after hours.

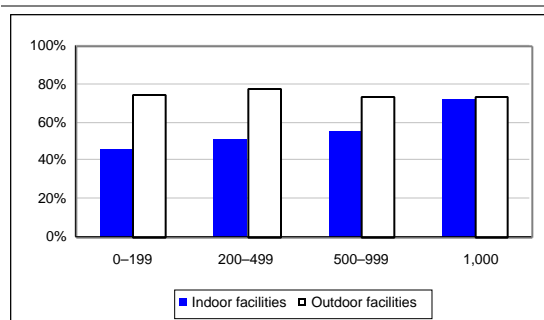
Student population size In general, schools with larger populations are more likely than those with smaller populations to allow access to indoor facilities after hours.

School type Public schools are more likely than other schools to allow student access to both indoor and outdoor facilities after school hours.

Community size In general, schools in larger communities are more likely than those in smaller communities to report that students are not allowed to access any facility after school.

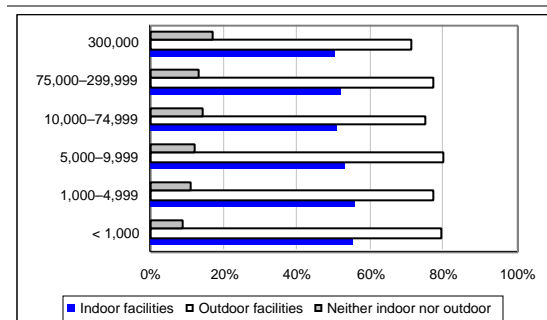
Implications It is interesting to note that only half of schools report allowing student access to indoor facilities after school hours, yet between 80–85% of schools report that they offer intramurals and between-school activities (see topic entitled “Extracurricular programs for physical activity”). However, since only half of schools allow access to indoor facilities for physical activity outside of school hours, this appears to be a good opportunity for increasing physical activity levels by providing convenient and accessible facilities, especially during winter months. Indeed, national guidelines in the United States recommend that school facilities should be available for children and youth before, during, and after school, on the weekends, and during vacations (including summer break).¹⁸

**AFTER SCHOOL ACCESS FOR STUDENTS
by student population size**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

**AFTER SCHOOL ACCESS FOR STUDENTS
by community size**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

Physical activity as a disciplinary measure

In Canadian schools, scheduled physical activities, such as recess or gym class, are sometimes cancelled as a disciplinary measure. In total, three in five schools report that cancellation of these activities happens some of the time: 19% report that it happens occasionally, while 41% report that it happens infrequently. Elementary schools are much more likely to use this kind of discipline at least some of the time (74%) than are secondary schools (38%). Schools in Ontario and the West are more likely than those in Quebec and the East to report canceling physical activity for this reason.

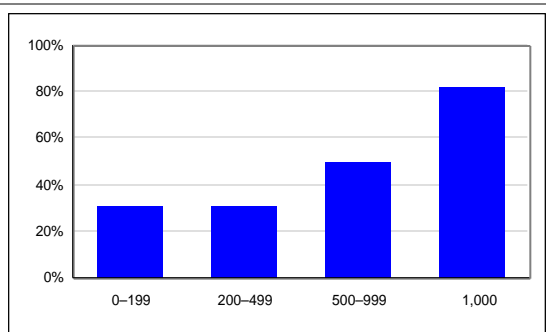
Student population size Schools with less than 500 students are more likely than larger schools to cancel opportunities for physical activity as a form of discipline. Compared with other schools, large schools with more than 1,000 students are unlikely to use this as a means of discipline. Those large schools that do report having used such a measure report that its use is typically infrequent.

Estimated family income Schools with mostly low income students are more likely to use this form of discipline than are schools with mostly high income students.

Language English schools are more likely than French schools to cancel opportunities for physical activity as a form of discipline.

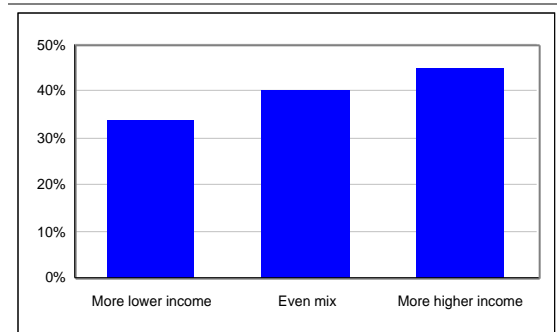
Implications One key recommendation in the Center for Disease Controls' *Guidelines for School and Community Programs*, is that schools should not use physical activity as a disciplinary measure, as this may produce negative associations and attitudes towards physical activity. However, between 60% to 70% of Canadian schools are currently using this type of punishment some of the time. Schools could consider adopting policies which discourage this type of punishment, and substituting alternative forms of discipline, including letters sent home, visits to the principal, or other such strategies.¹⁴ It is interesting to note the lack of this form of punishment in large schools and to speculate as to whether the absence of this type of punishment is related to the higher availability of physical education specialists for teaching physical education (see "Staff resources for physical education") and the greater likelihood of having a teacher or staff member to coordinate physical activities opportunities in these schools (see "Coordination of physical activity opportunities").

**NEVER CANCEL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
by student population size**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

**NEVER CANCEL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
by estimated family income**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

Physical activity as a reward measure

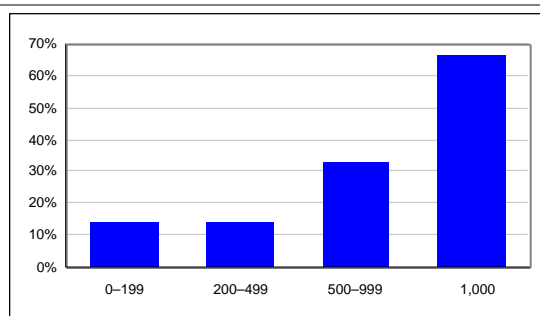
Opportunities for physical activity, such as an extra recess or sporting event, can be offered to students as a reward for good behavior or academic achievement. Four out of five Canadian schools do offer this type of reward at least some of the time, but most offer it only occasionally (45%) or infrequently (27%). This pattern is fairly typical across the country. Elementary schools are more likely to offer this kind of reward to students (90%) than are secondary schools (57%), however, less than one in ten elementary schools rewards students with physical activity opportunities on a frequent basis.

Student population size Schools with less than 500 students are more likely than those with 1,000 students or more to reward students with opportunities for physical activity.

Community size Schools in very small communities (those with a population of less than 1,000) are more likely than schools in larger communities to reward students with opportunities for physical activity.

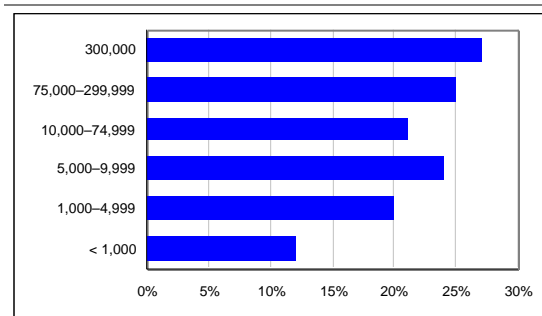
Implications The use of physical activity as a reward seems prevalent in small to medium-sized Canadian schools, especially amongst lower grades. Considering this together with the prevalence of canceling physical activity as a form of punishment, an interesting picture emerges. Small schools report use of physical activity as a reward and punishment system for students, whereas large schools do not. One might speculate that small schools are more likely to view physical activity as a bonus rather than a core requirement. This warrants investigation. In contrast, recognizing participation in physical activity through rewards is a tool for reinforcing school support of an active lifestyle among its students. To do this, schools could consider seeking donations of small activity related tokens or gifts from local sports stores and organizations (such as water bottles, caps, wristbands, gift certificates, free registration in a soccer club, t-shirts, etc.) to award to students who demonstrate positive behaviours. Examples include recognizing active commuters or students who establish a physical activity goal and achieve it in physical education class.

**NEVER REWARD WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
by student population size**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

**NEVER REWARD WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
by community size**



2001 Survey of physical activity in Canadian schools, CFLRI

Social support for the physical activity of students

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Percentage receiving support:		
	From other students	From parents or family	From teachers
OVERALL	42%	80%	77%
Elementary	39	78	75
Secondary	49	83	83
REGION			
East	37	81	72
Newfoundland	24	73	68
Prince Edward Island	68	93	88
Nova Scotia	42	85	70
New Brunswick	39	82	77
Quebec	29	53	51
Ontario	46	85	83
West	47	87	86
Manitoba	51	85	82
Saskatchewan	32	91	85
Alberta	49	83	87
British Columbia	50	91	87
North	49	74	83
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE			
0–199	32	72	74
200–499	42	81	76
500–999	48	83	82
1,000	61	81	83
SCHOOL SETTING			
Urban	44	79	78
Suburban	48	84	80
Rural	37	78	74
SCHOOL TYPE			
Public	44	82	79
Other	39	77	75
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME			
More lower income	40	76	75
Even mix	42	84	80
More higher income	47	82	79
LANGUAGE			
English	46	86	84
French	28	53	49
Both	44	85	82

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Integrating physical activity into the broader school life

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	Degree of support for integrating physical activity into broader school life:		
	Low support	Moderate support	High support
OVERALL	42%	44%	14%
Elementary	45	42	13
Secondary	36	46	18
REGION			
East	42	47	12
Newfoundland	48	42	–
Prince Edward Island	–	50	–
Nova Scotia	39	49	12
New Brunswick	41	47	–
Quebec	70	24	5
Ontario	39	47	13
West	31	50	20
Manitoba	32	52	17
Saskatchewan	30	47	23
Alberta	31	49	19
British Columbia	29	50	21
North	–	56	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE			
0–199	50	40	11
200–499	41	45	14
500–999	39	45	15
1,000	28	47	26
SCHOOL SETTING			
Urban	42	45	14
Suburban	38	45	17
Rural	45	42	12
SCHOOL TYPE			
Public	40	46	14
Other	43	42	15
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME			
More lower income	44	44	12
Even mix	40	45	15
More higher income	39	43	18
LANGUAGE			
English	36	48	16
French	68	27	5
Both	38	48	15

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Recognition and awards for physical activity participation

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	School provides:		
	Certificates or rewards for participation	Awards or trophies for effort	Events to recognize individual students
OVERALL	73%	66%	48%
Elementary	71	59	41
Secondary	77	83	65
REGION			
East	74	68	49
Newfoundland	72	77	54
Prince Edward Island	83	76	54
Nova Scotia	73	67	46
New Brunswick	75	59	45
Quebec	71	60	32
Ontario	76	73	53
West	72	63	51
Manitoba	78	64	47
Saskatchewan	63	61	52
Alberta	66	58	51
British Columbia	79	67	54
North	60	64	47
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE			
0–199	67	62	40
200–499	74	63	45
500–999	74	73	54
1,000	82	85	77
SCHOOL SETTING			
Urban	73	65	48
Suburban	75	64	51
Rural	72	69	46
SCHOOL TYPE			
Public	74	66	49
Other	69	70	48
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME			
More lower income	74	67	46
Even mix	71	65	49
More higher income	74	65	51
LANGUAGE			
English	74	68	52
French	69	58	32
Both	76	65	47

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Promoting physical activity events

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	School promotes community physical activity events to students:		
	Yes	No	Don't know
OVERALL	71%	26%	4%
Elementary	72	24	4
Secondary	66	29	5
REGION			
East	73	23	–
Newfoundland	64	29	–
Prince Edward Island	84	–	–
Nova Scotia	70	28	–
New Brunswick	83	–	–
Quebec	53	42	–
Ontario	72	23	5
West	77	21	2
Manitoba	73	24	–
Saskatchewan	80	17	–
Alberta	75	22	–
British Columbia	79	20	–
North	79	–	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE			
0–199	67	30	4
200–499	74	22	4
500–999	69	27	4
1,000	64	31	–
SCHOOL SETTING			
Urban	69	27	4
Suburban	74	23	4
Rural	70	26	4
SCHOOL TYPE			
Public	72	25	4
Other	68	28	4
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME			
More lower income	70	27	4
Even mix	72	24	4
More higher income	72	24	4
LANGUAGE			
English	74	22	4
French	57	38	6
Both	73	24	–

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

After school access for students

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	School allows students to access:		
	Indoor facilities	Outdoor facilities	Neither indoor nor outdoor facilities
OVERALL	52%	76%	13%
Elementary	45	77	14
Secondary	72	73	10
REGION			
East	70	72	7
Newfoundland	87	51	–
Prince Edward Island	77	86	–
Nova Scotia	65	80	–
New Brunswick	59	79	–
Quebec	33	63	26
Ontario	45	74	16
West	65	85	6
Manitoba	67	81	6
Saskatchewan	70	86	–
Alberta	61	84	6
British Columbia	65	86	–
North	72	68	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE			
0–199	46	74	16
200–499	51	78	12
500–999	55	73	14
1,000	72	73	11
SCHOOL SETTING			
Urban	48	71	17
Suburban	53	77	12
Rural	55	79	10
SCHOOL TYPE			
Public	55	78	10
Other	46	69	20
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME			
More lower income	50	75	14
Even mix	55	78	11
More higher income	54	76	14
LANGUAGE			
English	58	79	9
French	25	63	28
Both	61	79	9

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Physical activity as a disciplinary measure

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	School cancels physical activity as discipline:			
	Never	Infrequent	Occasionally	Frequently
OVERALL	39%	41%	19%	2%
Elementary	26	48	24	2
Secondary	62	26	11	1
REGION				
East	47	37	14	–
Newfoundland	42	41	–	–
Prince Edward Island	–	–	–	–
Nova Scotia	58	31	11	–
New Brunswick	36	43	16	–
Quebec	47	35	16	–
Ontario	37	41	21	2
West	34	45	20	–
Manitoba	35	42	21	–
Saskatchewan	26	50	24	–
Alberta	34	46	19	–
British Columbia	37	43	20	–
North	–	42	–	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE				
0–199	31	44	23	–
200–499	31	46	21	2
500–999	50	33	16	–
1,000	82	15	–	–
SCHOOL SETTING				
Urban	41	39	19	–
Suburban	41	41	17	–
Rural	35	43	20	2
SCHOOL TYPE				
Public	39	41	18	2
Other	37	41	21	–
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME				
More lower income	34	42	22	2
Even mix	40	41	18	–
More higher income	45	39	14	–
LANGUAGE				
English	37	42	19	2
French	44	37	18	–
Both	41	42	15	–

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.

Physical activity as a reward measure

2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools

	School offers physical activity as reward:			
	Never	Infrequent	Occasionally	Frequently
OVERALL	22%	27%	45%	6%
Elementary	10	29	53	8
Secondary	43	23	31	3
REGION				
East	19	29	47	6
Newfoundland	18	30	48	–
Prince Edward Island	–	–	–	–
Nova Scotia	24	28	43	–
New Brunswick	–	28	52	–
Quebec	26	25	43	6
Ontario	24	27	43	6
West	19	27	47	7
Manitoba	17	25	50	9
Saskatchewan	–	24	59	–
Alberta	19	30	45	6
British Columbia	23	27	43	–
North	–	–	61	–
STUDENT POPULATION SIZE				
0–199	14	26	52	9
200–499	14	30	50	6
500–999	33	24	38	5
1,000	66	19	13	–
SCHOOL SETTING				
Urban	25	26	44	6
Suburban	24	29	41	6
Rural	18	26	49	7
SCHOOL TYPE				
Public	22	27	45	6
Other	22	29	42	7
ESTIMATED FAMILY INCOME				
More lower income	19	26	48	6
Even mix	24	27	41	8
More higher income	24	28	44	4
LANGUAGE				
English	20	28	45	6
French	25	24	46	5
Both	26	24	43	7

– Data unavailable because of insufficient sample size.