

# Getting Kids Active!

2010-2011 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY MONITOR: FACTS & FIGURES



## Preferences for types of activities

The 2010-2011 Physical Activity Monitor asked parents about their children's preferences for certain types of activities. This bulletin explores parents' beliefs about their children's preferences for physical activity, structure of the activity (organized or unorganized), intensity (vigorous or moderate), competitiveness, and skill level.

Almost one quarter of parents (24%) indicate that their child prefers to be *physically active*, 16% report that their child prefers *quiet or less active* activities, and the remaining 60% say that their child likes *both* types of activities equally well. Compared to the average, parents residing in the Yukon are less likely to indicate that their children prefer quiet activities.

Regarding the degree of structure of activities, 21% of parents indicate that their children prefer *organized* activities, 27% say that they prefer *unorganized* activities, 49% report that their children like *both* types of activities equally well, and the remaining 4% do not like either. Relatively more parents in Saskatchewan say that their children like both types of activities equally well, whereas relatively fewer in this province say that their children like unorganized activities, when compared to the Canadian average.

In terms of intensity of activities, 27% of parents indicate that their children prefer *vigorous* intensity activities, 29% say they prefer *moderate* intensity activities, 40% like activities of *both* intensities equally well, and 3% like *neither*. There are no regional differences from the national average.

Parents were also asked about their child's preferences for the level of competition. One in five parents say that their children prefer *competitive* activities, 33% indicate that their children prefer *non-competitive* activities, 44% like *both* types of activities equally well, and 4% do not like either. Several regional differences emerge. Compared to the national average, relatively more parents: in Prince Edward Island say that their children prefer competitive activities; in Quebec say that their children prefer non-competitive activities (whereas fewer parents in Manitoba and Saskatchewan report this); and, in Saskatchewan report that their children like *both* types of activities equally well.

Lastly, parents were asked about their child's preference for the level of skill required for activities. Roughly one in ten parents (11%) indicated that their children prefer activities that require a *low level of skills*, 28% say that their children prefer activities that *challenge skills*, and 62% like *both* types of activities equally well. No regional differences exist with respect to preferences for activities of various skill levels.

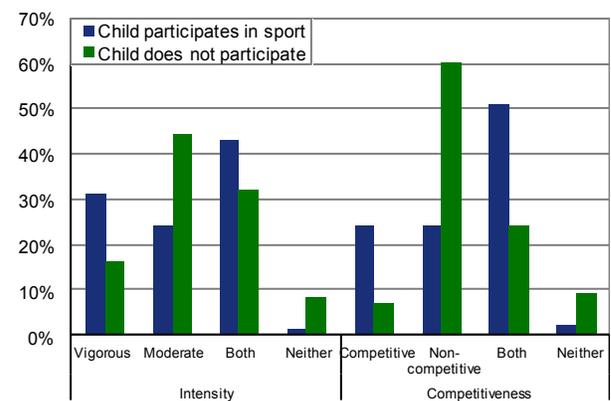
### Child characteristics

Preferences for various types of physical activities and sports vary by the characteristics of the child, such as gender, age, and participation in sport. A greater proportion of parents indicate that their sons:

- prefer to be physically active;
- like both organized and unorganized activities equally well;
- prefers vigorous intensity activities;
- prefers competitive activities or a combination of competitive and non-competitive activities; and,
- prefers activities that challenge skills.

FIGURE 1

Child's preferences for the type of activity by child's participation in sport



Physical Activity Monitor 2010-2011, CFLRI

A greater proportion of parents of girls, however, say that their daughters prefer:

- quiet activities;
- organized physical activities and sports;
- moderate intensity activities; and
- non-competitive activities.

Children's preferences for activities also differ by the age of the child. Table 1 describes these relationships in detail.

However, parents whose children do not participate in sport are more likely to say that their children prefer:

- quiet activities;
- unorganized activities, or likes neither organized nor unorganized activities;
- moderate activities, or likes neither vigorous nor moderate activities;
- non-competitive activities, or likes neither competitive nor non-competitive activities; and,
- activities requiring a low level of skill.

TABLE 1

Preferences of the type of activity by children's age

Relatively more parents of 5 to 12 year olds indicate that their children	Relatively more parents of 13 to 17 year olds say that their children
-prefer to be active or like both quiet activities and to be active equally well	-prefer less active or quiet activities
-likes both organized and unorganized activities equally well	-prefer organized activities or likes neither organized or organized activities
-likes both intensity activities equally well	-prefer moderate intensity activities, likes neither vigorous nor moderate intensity activities
-likes both competitive and non-competitive equally well	-prefer competitive activities
-likes a variety of skill level activities	-prefer activities that challenge skills

*Physical Activity Monitor 2010-2011, CFLRI*

As one would expect, relatively more parents who have children that participate in sport say that their children prefer:

- to be physically active or likes both active and quiet activities equally well;
- organized physical activities or likes both organized and unorganized activities equally well;
- vigorous intensity activities, or likes both vigorous and moderate intensity activities equally well;
- competitive activities, or likes both competitive and non-competitive activities equally well; and
- activities that challenge skills.

#### Parental characteristics

Although there are no parental gender differences related to preferences for active versus quiet activities, a greater proportion of mothers indicate that their children like both organized and unorganized physical activities and both vigorous and moderate intensity activities, compared to fathers. Relatively more fathers, however, indicate that their children prefer competitive activities and vigorous intensity activities.

In addition, children's preference for certain types of activities vary by parental age. Table 2 describes these relationships further.

TABLE 2

Preferences of the type of activity by parent's age

Relatively more parents aged 25 to 44 indicate that their children	Relatively more parents aged 45 to 64 say that their children
-prefer to be physically active	-prefer less active or quiet activities
-likes both organized and unorganized activities equally well	-prefers organized activities
-likes a variety of skill level activities	-likes neither vigorous nor moderate intensity activities
	-prefer competitive activities
	-prefer activities that challenge skills

*Physical Activity Monitor 2010-2011, CFLRI*

Parents with a university education are more likely to indicate that their children like to do both quiet and active activities equally well compared to parents with less than a high school education. Similarly, parents with a college education are slightly more likely than those with less than a high school education to say that their children like both organized and unorganized activities equally well.

Compared to the average, a greater proportion of parents who are homemakers say that their children prefer both vigorous and moderate activities equally well, whereas relatively fewer parents who are unemployed or ill say this.

A greater proportion of active parents indicate that their children:

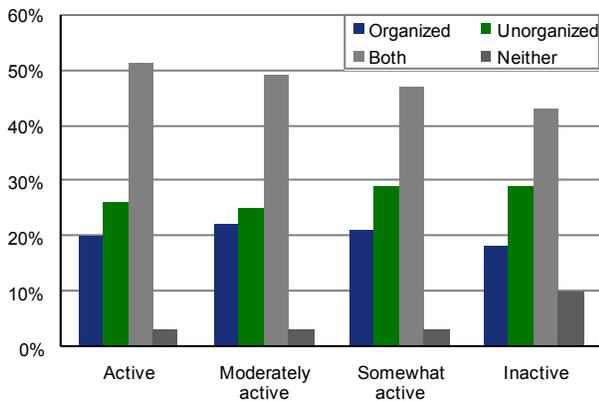
- prefer to be physically active, or likes both active and quiet activities equally well;
- like both organized and unorganized activities equally well;
- prefer vigorous intensity activities, or likes both vigorous and moderate intensity activities; and,
- prefer activities that challenge skills.

Less active parents, on the other hand, are more likely to report that their children prefer:

- less active or quiet activities;
- moderate activities, or likes neither vigorous nor moderate activities; and,
- activities requiring a low level of skills.

FIGURE 2

Child's preferences for the type of activity by parent's activity level



Physical Activity Monitor 2010-2011, CFLRI

Household characteristics

A greater proportion of parents from higher income households indicate that their children:

- like both active and inactive activities equally well;

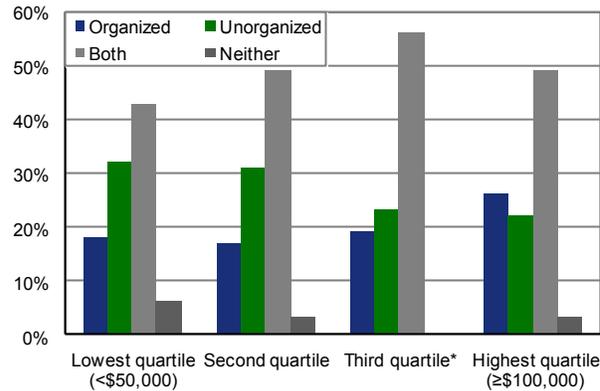
- prefer organized physical activities, or both organized and unorganized equally;
- prefer vigorous intensity activities; and,
- prefer competitive activities.

However, parents from the lowest income households are more likely than some higher income parents to say that their children prefer:

- unorganized activities, or likes neither organized or unorganized activities;
- moderate intensity activities; and,
- non-competitive activities, or likes neither competitive nor non-competitive activities.

FIGURE 3

Child's preferences for the type of activity by household income



\*Data unavailable due to cell size.

Physical Activity Monitor 2010-2011, CFLRI

A greater proportion of parents residing in smallest communities (less than 1,000 residents) indicate that their children prefer to be physically active, whereas a greater proportion of parents from the largest communities (250,000 and more residents) say their children prefer quiet or less active activities, and competitive activities (compared to communities with 1,000 to 9,999 residents).

**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, Sport Canada, and the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of these agencies.