



# Kids CAN PLAY!

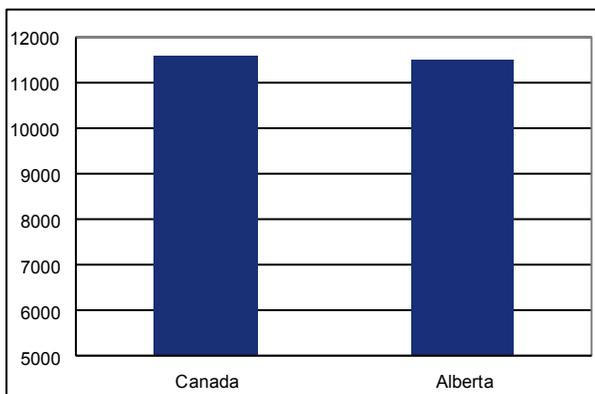
Encouraging children to be active at home, at school, and in their communities

## Physical Activity Levels of Canadian Children and Youth in Alberta

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute's CANPLAY study (*Canadian Physical activity Levels Among Youth* study) has measured physical activity levels of children and youth using pedometers to measure daily steps. Although the majority of the analyses in this bulletin focus on combined data collected in years five and six of collection (2009-2011), some analyses also reflect trends over time, if otherwise stated. Combining years 5 and 6 of data collection, the CANPLAY study shows that Canadian children, aged 5 to 19, take approximately 11,600 daily steps on average. Children and youth in Alberta take a similar number of steps as the national average, at roughly 11,500 steps.

**FIGURE 1**

Average daily steps of children and youth, Canada and Alberta, 2009-2011



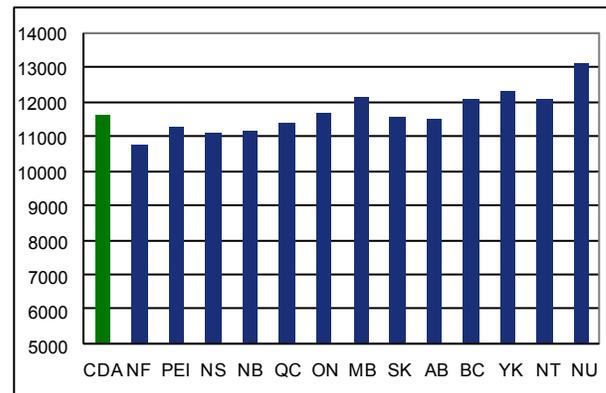
CANPLAY 2009/11, CFLRI

### Province and Territory

Children and youth in Alberta take roughly the same number of steps as children living elsewhere in Canada, with the exception that they take fewer steps than children and youth living in Nunavut (however, it should be noted that data in Nunavut was collected using a different methodology).

**FIGURE 2**

Average daily steps of children and youth by province/territory, 2009-2011



CANPLAY 2009/11, CFLRI

### Child characteristics

Boys in Alberta take more daily steps on average than girls do (roughly 1,200 more steps), which is similar to the relationship found nationally. Daily steps decrease by age group, and this is a pattern that appears both nationally and at a provincial level.

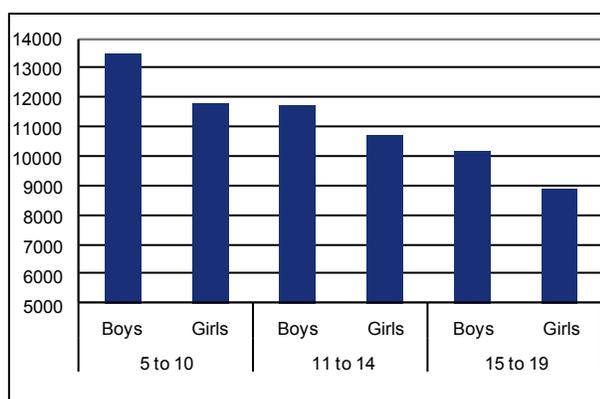


In Alberta, only younger boys (aged 5 to 10 years) take significantly more steps than girls of the same age, however, the age-related decrease in steps generally appears for both boys and girls.

In Alberta, children who participate in organized physical activities and sport take significantly more daily steps on average compared to children who do not participate in these types of activities (roughly 1,600 more steps). This relationship is similar to that found nationally.

FIGURE 3

Average daily steps of children and youth in Alberta by age and sex of child, 2009-2011



CANPLAY 2009/11, CFLRI

### Parent and household characteristics

In Alberta, there are no significant associations between children's daily steps and parent's education level, activity level or household income. This differs from the population as a whole, where nationally: children from the highest income household ( $\geq \$100,000$  per year) take more daily steps on average than those from households with incomes between \$40,000 and \$59,999; and, children whose parents consider themselves *substantially less* active than their peers take fewer steps on average than those who parents consider themselves *slightly more* active than their peers.

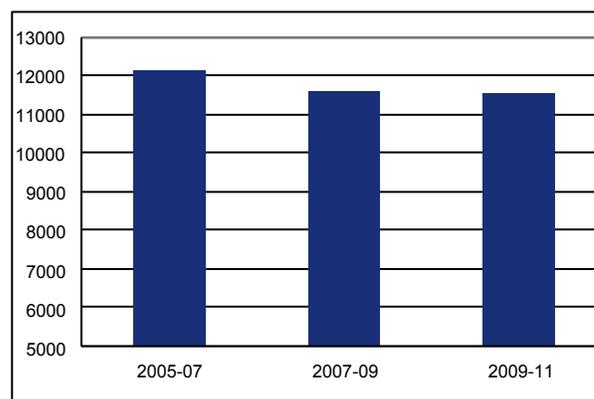
### Trends in activity level over time

There have been no significant changes over time in the number of steps taken by children and youth residing in

Alberta, and this is illustrated in Figure 4. This section looks at trends over time in this province.

FIGURE 4

Average daily steps of children and youth in Alberta, trends, 2005-2011



CANPLAY 2005/11, CFLRI

### Child characteristics

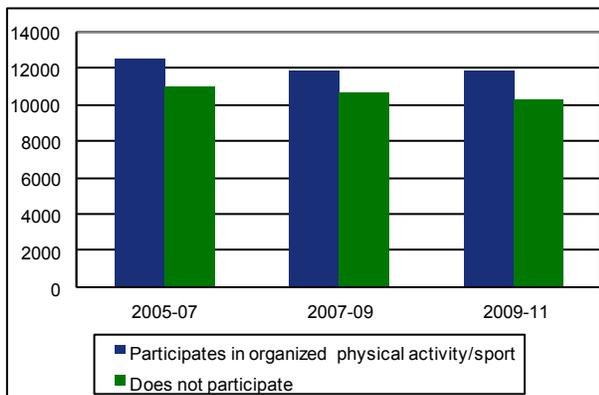
In all years of the CANPLAY study in Alberta, boys took more steps than girls (roughly between 1,200 and 1,400 more steps). The age-related decrease in steps appears within all study years, and also appears for both boys and girls. For earlier years of the study, gender differences appear between younger boys (aged 5 to 14) and girls of the same ages. In more recent years of the study (years 5 and 6 combined), significant gender differences only appeared among 5 to 10 year olds. The relationship between a child's participation in organized sport and physical activity and a greater number of steps appears within all study years in Alberta.

### Parent and household characteristics

Although a relationship existed between a child's daily steps and a parent's education level in Alberta in earlier years (years 1 and 2 combined) of the study, this relationship is not evident in later years (years 5 and 6 combined). The relationship between a child's daily steps and household income was only significant in years 3 and 4 of the study in Alberta. The lack of a relationship between a child's daily steps and parent's activity level persists across all data collection cycles in Alberta.

**FIGURE 5**

Average daily steps of children and youth in Alberta by child's participation in organized sport and physical activity, 2005-2011



CANPLAY 2005/11, CFLRI

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