1-2-3 - How difficult could it be?

2018 Bulgaria’s Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth is alarming - Bulgarian children are not active enough!
FIRST BULGARIAN REPORT CARD 2018
ACTIVE HEALTHY KIDS
Based on the special Active Healthy Kids National Representative Survey among 1014 Bulgarian children from 6 to 18 years of age and their parents, secondary analysis of already existing limited number survey data (Eurostat 914 Barometer survey, UNICEF Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, and some others), online search and analysis of policy documents on municipal level, and expert interviews and analyses.

PLOVDIV, OCTOBER 2018
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The research team of BG Be Active Bulgaria and IFPI Foundation proudly presents the results of the First Bulgarian Active Healthy Kids Report Card. Be Active Bulgaria is consistently working to motivate Bulgarian families, communities and institutions to engage children and youth in physical activity. We hope that Bulgarian Active Healthy Kids Report Card will provide evidence and strongly raise the national awareness in relation to this issue.

The Active Healthy Kids Report Card summarizes the limited and scattered existing survey data on the engagement of Bulgarian children and youth in physical activities and sports carried out under local initiatives or international programmes (such as Eurostat 914 Barometer survey or UNICEF Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, etc.) with the application of different methodology and indicators. However, due to insufficiency, disparity and disproportionality of the existing data, the core of the Bulgarian Report Card is based on properly conducted survey among 1014 Bulgarian children aged from 6 to 18 and their parents in entire accordance with the Active Healthy Kids indicators. The survey was carried out between September 15 and September 26, 2016. The collected data reflects both national and regional level (see methodology section).

The realization of a specially designed survey that meets the objectives of the "Active Healthy Kids" has allowed to avoid the above mentioned difficulties associated with the use of data from different studies based on different methodologies, targeted at different age groups, and only partially relied on the objectives of the "Active Healthy Kids Report Card". This gives us impetus to design the study with complete range of indicators of the "Active Healthy Kids Report Card", and at the same time to shrink their number (for example, using a common indicator of "time spent in front of the screen" instead of three separate indicators as applied in HBSC survey - TV, computer games and working on a computer). In three specific areas – physical education and sport & physical activities infrastructure, government & municipals strategies and activities, and activities of NGOs - the survey data has been complemented with data derived from the analysis of policy documents issued by the Bulgarian government agencies, municipalities and NGOs, as well as by expert groups. The up-to-date information on engagement of Bulgarian children and youth in the fields of physical activities and sport makes Bulgarian Active Healthy Kids Report Card a particularly reliable basis for forecasting and planning the future policy strategies.

The presentation of the results follows the internationally established structure of Active Healthy Kids Report Card. A particular attention has been paid to appropriate highlight and graphic demonstration of the most important data in the format that can be easily accessed by public media, government agencies and municipalities, NGOs, researchers and other practitioners in the field. It is of our hope that everyone reading this report can gain the insight into Bulgarian youth engagement in the areas of physical activity and sport.
Bulgarian Active Healthy Kids Report Card

SUMMARY

Physical activity
Frequency PA week Duration living Intensity – D/D+
About one third (30%) of children and young people aged up to 18 years reach the recommended rate of at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily. If we add to them 5% declaring such activity six days a week, the share is approaching 35%.

Participation in organized sports – at school, outside school, self-organized - C+
The study uses two indicators for organized sports for children and young people up to 18 years depending on where it happens (in school or out of school). 60,3% of them practice sport at school at least once a week, and 55,9% - out of school. The proportion of intensive sport practiced 3 or more times a week is almost the same in both places (27,3% and 28,5%).

Active play (unstructured outdoor leisure) – C+
55% of children aged 6-18 have outdoor activities 3 or more days weekly
The time spent in active outdoor play is an important measurement of physical activity of children and young people. With a share of 55% declaring outdoor activities three or more times a week Bulgaria stands very well compared to countries such as Ireland (49% of children declaring at least once a game outdoors with friends or parents) and very close to Canada (65 -73% in different studies).

Active transportation (walking, biking, skating, etc. to school and back) – B-/C+
53% - walking, baking, skating, etc. to school and back
The Bulgarian Active Healthy Kids Survey has measured empirically the active transportation of children by two indicators – means of transportation and time necessary to reach school. Since we’ve found that for about 20% it takes less than 5 minutes time, when evaluating the active transportation we have employed a conservative approach and excluded this group. If this group is included in evaluation, then the share of children in active transportation rises to 63,5%. 
Sedentary behaviour – B-/D

Grade B- (65%) of children spending less than two hours daily at screen AND less than two hours sitting on a chair – working, learning, playing chess etc.

Grade D (29%), when this indicator is taken more rigorously and the total time of the two sedentary activities is counted together.

70% of children and young people in Bulgaria spend two or more hours sitting in front of a screen, tablet, and 75% respectively performed two hours or more in other sedentary activities. The clustering of two indicators revealed that those who spend less than one hour daily in front of a screen, and less than two hours a day sitting in other activity are only 16%, while 15% spend more than 6 hours seated. Another 40% of children spend over five hours a day in the two types of sedentary behaviour.

School (Physical education) – B/D

Physical education – children & parents assessment of quality of teachers and classes on physical education and sport, formal requirements, content of curricula, duration of hours

Grade B – average above 60% in different indicators of quality; rigorous, based on categorically positive assessments.

In general, a total of 86,6% of children and young people find the classes on physical education interesting, when the share of answering "very interesting" (57,1%) and "rather yes" (29,5%) are taken together. Also 94% of youngsters express satisfaction with the attitude and motivation of teachers in physical education – “very satisfied” 65,3% and “rather satisfied” 28,7%.

Because of discrepancy registered between the above-mentioned scores and the indicators in this section, we’ve decided to also evaluate it separately:

Opportunities for sport and physical activity at school – D

Sport clubs in schools included in the program, sport opportunities in the extracurricular hours of PE. On average above 20% in different indicators of access to PA and sport at school.

Sport infrastructure and equipment in schools – C

Assessed by parents and kids and complemented by objective data (presence). Conservative assessment – 50,4% firmly consider their sport hall as very good; 56% declare it has been renovated within the last two years; overall positive assessment of sport equipment and outdoor facilities.

Policy of the school in the PA and sports – C

Assessed by parents and kids – there are efforts registered to combine physical education classes with other forms of activity - sport half-day, invitation of external coaches, tourist walks, sport camps. 30,9% of pupils have asserted the presence of a sport club or a team. Many schools have introduced new forms of physical activity beyond the school curriculum, but fail to include such elements in teaching subjects beyond physical education classes.
Family and environment – D-/D
About 1/4 of the Bulgarian families practice sports twice or more a week. In every fourth family there is another member who actively plays sports, and in 1/3 of the families there are sports facilities and / or other sports equipment. Almost every third family finances sport activities of their children. Approximately 1/3 of the families never exercise. Only 9% of children indicate that all their friends are practicing some sport, while another third declare this for about half of friends. The total share of students whose friends do sport two or more times a week was 43%!

Favourable architectural and community environment – B/C
The conservative approach has been deployed again. Although about 65% declare easy access to the near playgrounds and 63% dispose of sport opportunities in the parks with sports facilities 62%, the assessments of the other elements of the sports environment are significantly lower - 41% for bicycle paths, 33% for the running grounds, 30% for swimming pools. The overall positive assessment of the state of these facilities is 45%, and of the various aspects of their safety - between 50 and 60%

Role of municipalities, neighbourhoods and other communities to build their environment for PE and sport; municipal and other policies and regulations relating to the use of sports facilities – Grade C1.

Scores of the main regional municipalities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blagoevgrad</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourgas</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varna</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veliko Turnovo</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vidin</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vratza</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabrovo</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobrich</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kardjali</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kjustendyl</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovech</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pazardjik</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pernik</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleven</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plovdiv</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Razgrad</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruse</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silestra</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sliven</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smolyan</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofia</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stara Zagora</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targovishte</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haskovo</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shumen</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yambol</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 12% of children and young people are informed about the work of sport associations, clubs, and sport and physical activities communities in their neighbourhood.

1The criteria based on Colley R.C., Brownrigg M., Tremblay M.S., 2012: 1) the degree, to which municipalities prioritize sport and physical activities among children and young people; 2) a clear policy and commitment to this issues; 3) clear rules and established procedures for financial and other support; 4) sport and physical activities events. Average grade C is based on: 1) The mean grade is 3.2 (where A = 5; B = 4; C = 3; D = 2; F = 1); 2) The mode grade, i.e. the most frequent assessment, is C.
About one third (30%) of children and young people aged up to 18 years reach the recommended rate of at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily. If we add to them 5 percent declaring such activity six days a week, the share is approaching 35%.

Similar to the data from other developed countries, the proportion of boys is higher than that of girls - respectively 51.3% and 48.7%. It is particularly alarming that while the percentage of boys practicing any physical activity less than 60 minutes per day is 4.4%, the share among the girls reaches 9.8%! The difference between boys and girls declaring more than 60 minutes of physical activity per day is striking.

There are small differences in relation to the type of settlement, as the recommended standard of 60 minutes of physical activity a day is met more often in smaller towns (38.8%), while in the capital it is only 29.9%.

The family environment proves to be the most important factor in this indicator, since more than half (51.3%) of children and youth up to 18 years from families with physical activity more than 3 days a week meet the recommended norm; more young people in this group practice physical activity 5 or 6 of times weekly.
Comparison with the data from Health Behaviour in School-aged Children – HBSC Bulgaria, 2014
Authors: L. Vassileva, A. Alexandrova-Karamanvoa, B. Alexandrova, E. Bogdanova, T. Kotzeva, I. Todorova

The survey is representative for the country, but only among the pupils from 5, 7 and 9 class of school, i.e. aged 11, 13 and 15 years. The registered share of 28.6% of physical activity over 60 minutes per day is practically identical to the one registered by us (25.9%) for the age category 11-15 years if observational error included. The survey has also registered significant gender differences in favour of boys, and the reduction of overall physical activity with age increase.
Participation in organized sports – B
At school, outside school, self-organized

The study uses two indicators for organized sports for children and young people up to 18 years depending on where it happens - in school or out of school. 60.3% of them practice sport at school at least once a week, and 55.9% - out of school. The proportion of intensive sport practiced 3 or more times a week is almost the same in both places (27.3% and 28.5%).

Since some of the children practice sport both in and outside school, we have clustered two indicators in order to establish the proportion of those that relate to the LISPA recommendations (Lifelong Involvement in Sport and Physical Activity Group), namely those who go in for sports two or more times a week. As showed in the graph below, this indicator is met by 68.5% of Bulgarian children – i.e. those in the first four cluster.
"Intensive sport": 3 or more times, both in school and outside;  
"Moderate to intense sport": 2 and more times both in school and outside;  
"Moderate to intense athletes in school": 2 or more times, mainly at school  
"Moderate to intense athletes out of school": 2 or more times outside school  
"Less sporting children": 1 time or less a week in school or outside school  
"No sport at all": no sports both in school and beyond

This indicator is higher among the boys (72.8% to 66.7% for girls) and in the age range 11-15 years it is 74.6%, while the share among the groups of 6-7 and 8-10 years is identical (66.3% and 65.9% correspondingly).

The clustering shows big difference in relation to the type of settlement. In big regional centres children practice sport more (83.2%), followed by those in smaller regional centres (74.4%), those from the rural areas (66.2%) and then by children from small towns (65.1%). The lowest rate is registered in the capital of Sofia (only 48.6%)!
There is a direct correlation between the declared financial status of the family and the level of sport activities, as 79.4% of students from well-to-do families practice sport regularly compared to only 46.2% students from poorer families!

Children from Roma families are thought to have a significantly lower level of sports activities, for the LISPA indicator is set at 52.5%.
The family turns out again to be the greatest influence on the frequency of sport activities, for 38,1% of children come from families where parents or other family member practices sport too. Much less children indicate the influence of their friends (18,6 %) or teachers or coaches (12,2%). The share of respondents (23,6%) go in for sports under the influence of what they read on the Internet or from other sources. In smaller towns the impact of the family (41%) and friends (28,8%) is significantly higher than on average, while the effect of Internet or other sources is higher in major regional centres (32.8%) and the capital (27.6 %).
Active play (unstructured outdoor leisure) – C
55% of children aged 6-18 have outdoor activities 3 or more days weekly

As a rule, how many times a week do you play sport games in open space, open playground or in the sport hall by yourself and with your friends?

- 3 or more times a week: 63%
- 2 times per week: 16%
- 1 a week: 9%
- less: 9%
- never: 3%

The time spent in active outdoor play is an important measure of physical activity of children and young people. With a share of 63% declaring outdoor activities three or more times a week Bulgaria stands very well compared to countries such as Ireland (49% of children declaring at least once a game outdoors with friends or parents) and very close to Canada (65-73% according to different types of studies). Boys spend more time in active play outdoors (59.5% against 50.2% for girls), as well as young children (71.1% in 6-7 year against 55.6% for 11-15 year-olds). The chart below shows the strong correlation in this form of physical activity by age of young people.
As a rule, how many times a week do you play sport games in open space, in the street, open playground or in the hall by yourself and with your friends?

The differences in time spent at outdoor activities are particularly significant among those living in the villages (62.8%), among the Turks (78.1%) and Roma (62.5%). Children in villages are seen to spend more time at outdoor activities, than those from the capital (63% to 43%).

Children from families with intensive sport activities and children intensively practicing sport in or outside school have reached the highest share - 53.8% and 83.5% respectively.
The Bulgarian *Active Healthy Kids Survey* has measured empirically the active transportation of children by two indicators – *means* of transportation and *time* necessary to reach school. Since we’ve found that for about 20% it takes less than 5 minutes time, *when evaluating the active transportation we have employed a conservative approach and excluded this group*. If this group is included in evaluation, then the share of children in active transportation rises to 63.5%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you usually go and come back from school or kindergarten?</th>
<th>6-15 r.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On foot</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By bike, scooter, skateboarding</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By car, bus or other vehicle</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long usually go to school / kindergarten when moving this way?</th>
<th>6-15 r.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 minutes</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 5 to 15 minutes</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between 15 and 30 minutes (half hour)</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;30 minutes (half hour)</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clustering the data simultaneously with both indicators allows to calculate active transportation indicator among children in relation to the time. We have found out that only a small share (4%) of children actively moves to school for more than half an hour, while a large group (63%) actively moves to school between five minutes and half an hour. Along with that, the evidence suggests that the majority (25%) from the group of passively moving children (total 36.5%) need less than 15 minutes to get to school. *There lies a huge potential in addressing public efforts to enabling children to actively move to school.*
In active commuting to and from school there are found no significant differences by gender and age (22% for the boys to 23% for the girls). The children from wealthier families are on average twice or more times as passive as those from poorer families.

The largest share of passive transportation has been found in the capital and in the villages! Obviously with the termination of hundreds of rural schools in the past two decades it seems unsurprising that children living in the villages are two or three times as passive as children living in the cities and towns.
Sedentary behaviour – B-/D

**Grade B- - 65%** of children spending *less than two hours daily* at screen AND less than two hours sitting on a chair – working, learning, playing chess etc.)

**Grade B- (63,3%)**, when this indicator is taken more rigorously and the total time of the two sedentary activities is counted together.

63,3% of children and young people in Bulgaria spend two or more hours sitting in front of a screen, tablet, and 65% respectively performed two hours or more in other sedentary activities.

How many hours a day do you spend sitting in front of a TV, PC, tablet and game console in total?

- Not at all
- Half an hour
- About 1 hour
- About 2 hours
- About 3 hours
- Between 4 to 6 hours
- More than 7 hours
How many hours a day do you do other things sitting (eg preparing homework, reading books, playing chess / cards, listening to music, talking on the phone, etc.)?

Legend: "Non-sedentary": up to 1 hour in front of a screen, up to 2 hours sitting; "Less sedentary": 2 hour in front of a screen, up to 1 hours sitting; "Moderately sedentary": up to 2 hour in front of a screen, 2 hours sitting; "Moderately stronger sedentary": more than 3 hours in front of a screen, 2 hours sitting; "Strong sedentary in teaching": up to 2 hour in front of a screen, 3 hours and more hours sitting; "Strong sedentary": 3 and more hours in front of a screen, 3 and more hours sitting.

Grade D - However, since there is overlap between these two indicators, their clustering reveals unique groups with stable profile simultaneously in both indicators:
Apparently, those who spend less than two hours a day in front of a screen, and less than one hour a day in the other sitting activity comprise only 26% of children, while 14% of them spend more than 6 hours seated (over 3 hours in front of a screen and over 3 hours remaining seated). Another share of 35% of children spends more than five hours a day seated.

The younger children aged 6-7 are the most active (24.4%), whilst among those between 11-15 years old the indicators drops to 14%. In the families with high levels of physical activity the share of children with non-sedentary behaviour is 28.7%. Similar conclusions have been made in relation to the children from small towns (29.6%), and from the Turkish (25%) and Roma (35%) communities.

Comparison with the data from Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC Bulgaria 2014) reveals the following trends:

**Table 4 Sedentary activities two or more hours daily**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>During the week</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV/video</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers/Internet</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekend</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV/video</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers/Internet</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- 53.8% spend three or more hours per day at the computer at home during the weekend, 25% spend the same time at the computer during school days (mostly boys).
- 40.3% watch television three or more hours during the weekend, every sixth is found to do it during school days (mostly girls). Around 10% of the students never watch TV.
School (Physical education) - Grade B/D

**Physical education** - children & parents assessment of quality of teachers and classes on physical education and sport, formal requirements, content of curricula, duration of hours.

**Grade B** - average above 60% in different indicators of quality; rigorous, based on categorically positive assessments.

In general, a total of 86.6% of children and young people find the classes on physical education interesting, when the share of answering "very interesting" (57.1%) and "rather yes" (29.5%) are taken together. Also 94% of youngsters express satisfaction with the attitude and motivation of teachers in physical education – "very satisfied" 65.3% and "rather satisfied" 28.7%.
With the overall high interest and satisfaction registered, students in grades 8-10 have demonstrated relatively lower numbers (48.7%) with highly sedentary (45%) and less sporty (40.8%) children.

Along with the positive subjective assessments, there is an indirect index of the physical education quality that represents the assessment of how the teachers manage to engage and get everyone actively involved in classes. Nearly 86% of the students believe that teachers manage to do so to a large extent.

However, around 1/10 of the students (14%) believe that the majority of their classmates remain passive, and this proportion is twice as high as that among the students in 8-10 grades (17.9%, among the children with the lowest self-organized physical activity (18.6%), as well as among those with strong sedentary behaviour (16%).

**According to the participation of in the classes of physical education and sports at school, how many of the students are active there?**

- 43% All participating actively
- 42% Most actively participate (there are students who only watch)
- 13% Few actively participate (those who watch more)
- 2% Do not know
Because of discrepancy registered between the above-mentioned scores and the indicators in this section, we’ve decided to also evaluate it separately:

**Opportunities for sport and physical activity at school – Grade D**

Sport clubs to schools included in the program, sport opportunities in extracurricular hours of PE (21-40%)(On average above 20% in different indicators of access to PA and sport at school)

The research reveals that the opportunities for sport and physical activity at school are very limited. Only 30.9% of students indicate they have a football club or a team at school. Volleyball and basketball teams are even less present at schools (around 7% each). Martial arts and sport dancing have the share less than 3%. It seems strange that only 1% of students confess the have a school team in athletics, swimming and table tennis. However, since most of the schools offer opportunities for more than one sport, the average value substantially exceeds 20%!

In half the schools no sport is practiced during the physical education classes, in about ¼ of the schools there are tennis lessons, 1/5 of the schools have tourism ones, and in 1/10 - swimming or martial arts. The overall average share of sports offered significantly exceeds 20%!
As it has been expected, the greatest opportunities for sports are found in schools of the capital and major regional cities, but it is interesting that school children from the families with very good financial situation claim to practice sport more often.

The data analysed in the first section attests that the majority of students (61%) practice sport at least once a week at school or kindergarten, and about one-third of them do it three or more times a week!

**Within the last year of your PE classes you have been engaged in:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Students (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swimming, rowing and other water sports</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis, badminton or table tennis</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling and martial arts (karate, judo, etc.)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter sports (skiing, skating, etc.)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Usually, how many times a week do you practice / play sports under the guidance of a teacher, trainer, instructor (including dancing)?**

- **In school/kindergarten**
  - 3 or more times a week: 27%
  - 2 times a week: 6%
  - 1 weekly: 31%
  - Less: 9%
  - Never: 6%
  - I do not go: 0%

- **Out of school/kindergarten**
  - 3 or more times a week: 29%
  - 2 times a week: 9%
  - 1 weekly: 29%
  - Less: 8%
  - Never: 9%
  - I do not go: 0%
Sport infrastructure and equipment in schools - *Grade C*
Assessed by parents and kids and complemented by objective data (presence).

*Conservative assessment* – 50.4% firmly consider their sport hall as very good; 56% declare it has been renovated within the last two years; overall positive assessment of sport equipment and outdoor facilities.

Only 5.2% of Bulgarian students under 15 years are deprived of having physical education classes in their own sport hall. In 4/5 of the schools pupils assess their sport hall as sufficiently large and comfortable, and only 4.8% of students believe their sport hall is not good. The students in the capital are the most critical (12.9% of them consider their hall to be small and inconvenient).

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses](chart.png)

**Is there a sport hall at your school? If yes, do you think it is big enough and comfortable to conduct physical education classes and practice sport there?**

- 95% No gymnasium at school
- 5% Completely
- 9% Rather
- 5% Rather not
- 30% Not at all
Over half of the students have indicated that the hall has not been renovated in recent years. This proportion is slightly higher in rural areas (61.1%) and among the students involved in the renovation of sports facilities (72%).

Albeit slightly lower, students positively evaluate sport gear and equipment, for a total of 74% have rated favourably sport facilities and equipment in the gyms, and 72% of them have asserted this in regards to the state of sports grounds and outdoor facilities. Critical responses in these two groups have reached respectively 20% and 25%. Students from Sofia are the most critical, while in the villages they are more optimistic.
Policy of the school in the PA and sports – Grade C
Assessed by parents and kids

The study shows that in many schools there are efforts to complement physical education classes with other forms of activity. Most often those are half-days sports, invitations of foreign coaches, tourist walks or winter and summer camps:

30.9% of pupils have attested they have a sport club or team at school, with 46.7% being in the capital Sofia!

The introduction of new forms of physical activity is most frequently acknowledged by students in smaller towns and villages. These occupations also include younger children.

Beyond the mandatory hours of physical education and sports, what other options does your school present for additional sports activities and sports games?

- Sport have half-days: 40%
- Conduct sports activities by external trainers: 31%
- The school has a sports club and teams: 30%
- Walk on hiking: 22%
- Walk regularly between the school and other competitions: 18%
- There are winter and summer sports camps (e.g., ski school): 12%
- Other: 2%
- No such conditions: 18%
Many schools are trying to introduce new forms of physical activity outside the school curriculum, but as a matter of fact they fail to include such elements in teaching others beyond physical education classes.

**In your school are students encouraged with brief sport or physical activity breaks between the classes?**

- Yes, regularly: 27%
- Yes, rarely: 49%
- No: 23%

**Do you have other classes, where the lessons are also more lively and include games and other activities for students, rather than just sitting at the desk?**

- Yes: 14%
- No: 9%
- I do not remember: 77%
This takes place in early school years (between 2-4 grades), in small towns and village schools:

Do you have other classes, where the lessons are also more lively and include games and other activities for students, rather than just sitting at the desk?
Family and environment – Grade D/D

a) Physical activity in the family - sports equipment at home; doing sports together (frequency per week, duration, intensity)

About 1/4 of the Bulgarian families practice sports twice or more a week. As a matter of fact, these families are well-off (42.4%) and in smaller towns (8.4%). In every fourth family there is another member who actively plays sports, and in 1/3 of the families there are sports facilities and / or other sports equipment. Almost every third family finances sport activities of their children.

About 1/3 of families never exercise; the same trend is found in families with poor financial situation and in Roma families (60%).

Usually how many times a week you do exercise, play sports games, or have other physical activities with your parents and siblings?

- 3 or more times a week: 23%
- 2 times per week: 14%
- 1 a week: 10%
- less: 13%
- never: 39%
It is in physically active families that the sport equipment is found – more than 50% are well-off, and in 53.3% of those families students have participated in voluntary work in the construction and maintenance of sport facilities in the neighbourhood.

In recent months have you bought tickets or paid a fee to use sports facilities - gyms, playgrounds or sports halls, swimming pools and others?
b) The effects of the environment (peers) – time spent with friends, share of PA during that time; how many of the friends play sports, presence of organized forms of PA in the neighbourhood

The majority of Bulgarian pupils never or rarely play sports during their pastime with their friends. Only 10% of them believe that all their friends practice some sport, while 1/3 attest this for about half of their friends. The total share of students whose friends do sport two or more times a week is 72%! For the students practicing sport intensively the share is over 50%, for children and young people living in large regional centers it is 55%, and for the students from well-off families the number is 48.6%.

How many of your friends are engaged actively in sports or other physical activities associated with rapid pulse or shortness of breath?

How many of your friends are engaged actively in sports or other physical activities associated with rapid pulse or shortness of breath?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>More than half</th>
<th>Less than half</th>
<th>Very little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-7 years</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 years</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18 years</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Favourable architectural and community environment – Grade B/C

The conservative approach has been deployed again. Although about 66% declare to have an easy access to the playgrounds, 63% dispose of sport opportunities in the parks with sport facilities, the assessments of the other elements of the sport environment are significantly lower - 42% for bicycle paths, 32% for the running grounds, 30% for the swimming pools. The overall positive assessment of the state of these facilities is 44%, and that of the various aspects of their safety fluctuates between 50 and 60%.

1. Availability of sports facilities; Conditions for active leisure - swimming pools, playgrounds; Intensity of their use

Do you have the following options for sports and physical activity in the area you live and if so, how often do you use them?

![Bar chart showing the percentage of students using various sports facilities and their frequency of use.]

Over 1/3 of the students live in neighbourhoods with no sport facilities or capacities facilitating physical activity. In the villages that index amounts to 62%, and in the small towns it equals to 47,9%! Sports grounds, parks and gardens with sport facilities, as well as bicycle paths and alleys remain the most available sport amenities. Less than 1/3 of the students have access to the swimming pool (in the villages this share amounts to 4,7%) and about 1/10 of the students have the opportunity to practice winter sports. Sports facilities in the neighbourhoods do not enjoy a huge popularity, as only 1/3 of the students use them two or more times a week.
2. **Evaluation of safety and maintenance conditions of sports facilities**

Students attest the problems pertaining to the use of the existing sports facilities. About 1/3 of the students believe their condition is not good (13.5% as bad). A higher proportion of this assessment is registered in smaller regional centres.

About 15% of students consider the sports facilities in their neighbourhood as dangerous for various reasons, and for about half of them they are more or less safe! There is no significant discrepancy in age, location and other characteristics.

---

**According to you, how safe is it to use the facilities for sports and physical activity in your area in terms of:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality and condition of the equipment and facilities</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>38%</th>
<th>9%</th>
<th>9%</th>
<th>31%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>completely safe</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rather safe</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>more dangerous</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>very dangerous</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible conflicts and threats from other people</th>
<th>23%</th>
<th>34%</th>
<th>12%</th>
<th>6%</th>
<th>26%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>completely safe</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>rather safe</td>
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<tr>
<td>more dangerous</td>
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<tr>
<td>very dangerous</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Way to visit them</th>
<th>21%</th>
<th>39%</th>
<th>9%</th>
<th>3%</th>
<th>29%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>completely safe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>rather safe</td>
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<tr>
<td>more dangerous</td>
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<tr>
<td>very dangerous</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. **Role of municipalities, neighbourhoods and other communities to build their environment for PA and sport**

Only 12% of children and young people are informed about the work of sport associations, clubs, and sport and physical activities communities in their neighbourhood. This proportion is much higher among actively training students (28%), those involved with volunteer work in the construction of sport facilities (35%), pupils from well-off families (22.1%) and from large regional centres (18%). Half of those who know or have participated in such sport events are also aware of the organizers.

**Are there in the area you live in associations, clubs, neighborhood and civic communities supporting sport and physical activity of children?**

- Yes: 49%
- No: 38%
- I do not know: 13%

Most of the children and young people are not well informed about sports life in their neighbourhood or village, and this share is especially significant among physically inactive children (52.8%), and among those from poor families (45.5%).

**Do you know about sports festivals, competitions and other events with free access in the region (or city / village) where you live?**

- I know and I participated: 20%
- I know, but I'm not involved: 58%
- I do not know: 22%
Local authorities take a lead in terms of sport events and activities organization, followed by various economic entities, while the share of local communities and civil society groups is only 8%.

Do you know who has organized these events?

- Mayor, municipality: 47%
- Sports companies and clubs: 29%
- Companies that sponsor such events: 19%
- A group of people from the neighborhood, village, town: 8%
- Another: 3%
- Do not know: 30%

The share of volunteering in sport among children aged 6-15 is low. That index is higher among actively training students (9.5%), students from families with higher physical activity (13.6%), children from well-off families (23.5%) and those from major regional centres (11.8%). However, the declared readiness for volunteering is much higher:

- Yes: 92%
- No: 8%
- I do not know: 6%
Municipal and other policies and regulations  
relating to the use of sports facilities - C 

Based on the criteria and indicators given in Colley R.C., Brownrigg M., Tremblay M.S., 2012:

**Government Strategies and Investments**

- Evidence of leadership and commitment in providing physical activity opportunities for all children and youth
- Allocated funds and resources for the implementation of physical activity promotion strategies and initiatives for all children and youth
- Demonstrated progress through the key stages of public policy making (ie, policy agenda, policy formation, policy implementation, policy evaluation, and decisions about the future)

These criteria in Bulgarian study have been more specifically translated to the following set of indicators, used to assess big regional municipalities: 1) *the degree, to which municipalities prioritize sport and physical activities among children and young people*; 2) *if they have a clear policy and commitment to this issues*; 3) *clear rules and established procedures for financial and other support*; 4) *sport and physical activities events*.

The criteria have been used to evaluate the data collected via detailed check of the presence of the relevant empirical evidences for each of the indicators at the municipalities’ web sites and other sources. The following typology has been introduced:

1) **Low level (F-D)** - just a list of sport clubs, individual sport initiatives requiring minimum levels of funding. The topic is missing or formally mentioned in the plans for development, no special policy documents; relatively few sport clubs without mentions of Youth Policy in them.

2) **Primary level (C)** - presence of sections on physical culture and sport among students and young people in "operational plans / development programs," calendars of sport events, minimum funding rules below initiatives in this area; moderate number of sports clubs;

3) **Moderate level (B)** - institutionalized commitment to support physical activity (example – sport schools, networks of sports clubs, etc.); However, there is scarcity of separate program in the field of physical activity and sport; presence of the sports calendar, but relatively few activities

4) **High level (A)** - as in B with more investment, rich sports calendar, special policy documents and programs.
Scores of the main regional municipalities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blagoevgrad</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Dobrich</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourgas</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Plovdiv</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varna</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Razgrad</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veliko Turnovo</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Lovech</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varna</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Kjustendyl</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourgas</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Kardjali</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varna</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Razgrad</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veliko Turnovo</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Plovdiv</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofia</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Stara Zagora</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kardjali</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Razgrad</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varna</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Kjustendyl</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veliko Turnovo</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Lovech</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varna</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Kjustendyl</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veliko Turnovo</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>Varna</td>
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<td>Kjustendyl</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veliko Turnovo</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Lovech</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipalities (number)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average grade C

Arguments: 1) The mean grade is 3.2, where A = 5; B = 4; C = 3; D = 2; F = 1;

2) The mode grade, i.e. the most frequent assessment as C.

The evaluation of the policy towards physical activity and sport for children and young people at government level will be provided shortly based on the interviews with experts.
Appendix – Methodology of Active Healthy Kids Report Card Assessment


Table 1
International Standardized Grading Scheme (Updated 2018, GM3.0)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>94% - 100%</td>
<td>We are succeeding with a large majority of children and youth (87% - 93%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80% - 86%</td>
<td>We are succeeding with a large majority of children and youth (87% - 93%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>74% - 79%</td>
<td>We are succeeding with well over half of children and youth (67% – 73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>60% - 66%</td>
<td>We are succeeding with well over half of children and youth (67% – 73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>54% - 59%</td>
<td>We are succeeding with about half of children and youth (47% – 53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>40% - 46%</td>
<td>We are succeeding with about half of children and youth (47% – 53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>34% - 39%</td>
<td>We are succeeding with less than half but some children and youth (27% - 33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>20% - 26%</td>
<td>We are succeeding with less than half but some children and youth (27% - 33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 20%</td>
<td>We are succeeding with very few children and youth (&lt; 20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INC = Incomplete—insufficient or inadequate information to assign a grade

Table 2
Benchmarks Used to Guide the Grade Assignment for Each Indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Physical Activity</td>
<td>% of children and youth who meet physical activity guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized Sport Participation</td>
<td>% of children and youth who participate in organized sport and/or physical activity programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Play</td>
<td>% of children and youth who engage in unstructured/unorganized active play for several hours a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Transportation</td>
<td>% of children and youth who use active transportation to get to and from places (school, park, mall, friend’s place)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedentary Behaviour</td>
<td>% of children and youth who meet sedentary behaviour or screen-time guidelines (For two and more hours daily – p.119, I. Tch.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Family and Peers**

- % of parents who facilitate physical activity and sport opportunities for their children (e.g., volunteering, coaching, driving, paying for membership fees and equipment)
- % of parents who meet the physical activity guidelines for adults
- % of parents who are physically active with their kids
- % of children and youth with friends and peers who encourage and support them to be physically active
- % of children and youth who encourage and support their friends and peers to be physically active

**School**

- % of schools with active school policies (e.g., Daily Physical Activity, recess, “everyone plays” approach, bike racks at school, traffic calming on school property, outdoor time)
- % of schools where the majority (≥ 80%) of students are taught by a PE specialist
- % of schools where the majority (≥ 80%) of students are offered at least 150 minutes of PE per week
- % of schools that offer physical activity opportunities (excluding PE) to the majority (≥ 80%) of their students
- % of parents with children and youth who have access to physical activity opportunities at school in addition to PE
- % of schools with students who have regular access to facilities and equipment that support physical activity (e.g., gymnasium, outdoor playgrounds, sporting fields, equipment in good condition)

**Community & the Built Environment**

- % of children or parents who perceive their community/municipality is doing a good job at promoting physical activity (e.g., variety, location, cost, quality)
- % of communities/municipalities that report they have policies promoting physical activity
- % of communities/municipalities that report infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks, trails, paths, bike lanes) specifically geared toward promoting physical activity
- % of children or parents with facilities, programs, parks, and playgrounds available to them in their community
- % of children or parents living in a safe neighbourhood where they can be physically active
- % of children or parents reporting well-maintained facilities, parks/playgrounds in their community that are safe
- % of children and youth who report being outdoors for several hours a day
**Indicator**

**Government Strategies and Investments**
- Evidence of leadership and commitment in providing physical activity opportunities for all children and youth
- Allocated funds and resources for the implementation of physical activity promotion strategies and initiatives for all children and youth
- Demonstrated progress through the key stages of public policy making (i.e., policy agenda, policy formation, policy implementation, policy evaluation, and decisions about the future)

*Abbreviations: PE, Physical Education.*
Examples of applying the standardized international evaluation pattern

2014 Ireland’s Report Card on Physical Activity in Children and Youth

Indicators used in Ireland’s Physical Activity Report Card 2014

Behaviours Related to Physical Activity
1. Overall Physical Activity Levels
2. Organized Sport Participation
3. Active Play
4. Active Transportation
5. Sedentary Behaviours (TV viewing)
6. Physical Education

Settings Related to Physical Activity
7. Home (Family) – support, parental behaviours
8. School – extra-curricular sport participation
9. Community and the Built Environment - perceived quality and safety
10. Government – strategies, policies, investments

Grade  International Standardized Grading Scheme  Benchmark
A. We are succeeding with a large majority of children and youth  > 81%
B. We are succeeding with well over half of children and youth  – 61-80%
C. We are succeeding about half of children and youth  – 41-60%
D. We are succeeding about less than half, but some children and youth  – 21-40%
F. We are succeeding with very few children and youth  – < 20%
INC Inconclusive – Not enough data exists on this indicator

Data sources used in Ireland’s Physical Activity Report Card 2014

Take PART (Physical Activity Research for Teenagers) Studies 2003-2005
Growing up in Ireland (GUI) Wave 1 of the 9 year old cohort 2007-2009
ESRI Keeping them in the Game (2013) which contains a reanalysis of data from 2007-2009
UK Millennium Cohort Study (MCS4) 2008-2009
Baseline Survey of Timetabled PE in Primary Schools in Northern Ireland 2009
Children’s Sport Participation and Physical Activity (CSPPA) 2009 and volunteer survey
Health Behaviour of School-Aged Children (HBSC) wave 2009-2010
Young Persons’ Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (YPBAS) 2010
Census of the Population of Ireland 2011
2014 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card

Unlike other report card publications, which often rely on a single data source, the Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card synthesizes data from multiple data sources and the research literature. The development of indicators and the assignment of grades involve an interdisciplinary Research Work Group, including researchers from across Canada. An annual summary of research data and literature is prepared by staff at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute to facilitate the review of the information.

Grade assignments are determined based on examination of the current data and literature for each indicator against a benchmark or optimal scenario, assessing the indicator to be poor, adequate, good or excellent:

- **A** = We are succeeding with a large majority of children and youth.
- **B** = We are succeeding with well over half of children and youth.
- **C** = We are succeeding with about half of children and youth.
- **D** = We are succeeding with less than half, but some, children and youth.
- **F** = We are succeeding with very few children and youth.