District of Columbia Action Guide

This District of Columbia Action Guide accompanies the *State Indicator Report on Physical Activity*, 2014, and provides a summary of state-specific data and potential actions that the state health department can take to enhance access to places for physical activity. For the full report, visit **http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/resources/reports.html**. In-text superscripts indicate references or additional resources.

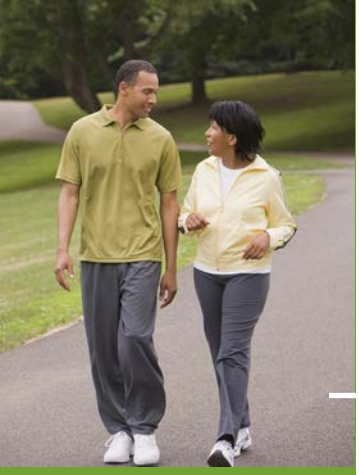
U.S. and District of Columbia Physical Activity Behaviors

Being physically active is one of the most important steps that Americans can take to improve their health. People who are physically active tend to live longer and have a lower risk for heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, depression, some cancers, and obesity. The *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* state that adults need at least 2 and 1/2 hours (150 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity and muscle-strengthening activities at least 2 or more times a week, and youth need at least 1 hour (60 minutes) of physical activity every day.

Nationwide, only about half of adults and less than a third of youth meet the aerobic physical activity guidelines. For District of Columbia, 57.6 percent of adults and 16.8 percent of youth meet the aerobic physical activity guidelines.

Improving Policies and Environments to Increase Physical Activity

To ensure that people get enough physical activity for good health, state health departments can help communities have easy access to safe places for physical activity. The eight policy and environmental indicators presented in the *State Indicator Report on Physical Activity, 2014* reflect three overarching strategies to increase physical activity.[1] The three strategies are: (1) Create or enhance access to safe places for physical activity; (2) Enhance physical education and physical activity in schools and child care settings; and (3) Support street-scale and community-scale design policy.



Strategy 1: Create or Enhance Access to Safe Places for Physical Activity

People may have the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation to be physically active, but if they do not have access to the necessary places where they can be active, they may be restricted or prohibited from being physically active. Opportunities and supports that create or enhance access to safe places for physical activity may include improving neighborhood access to quality parks, sidewalks, walking paths, and local or school physical activity facilities.

Indicator	District of Columbia	U.S.
State provides guidance on policies for school districts or schools on joint-use agreements for physical activity facilities	Yes	20 states
% of youth with parks, community centers, sidewalks in neighborhood*	76.3%	54.5%
% of population living within ½ mile of a park	88.1%	39.2%

Potential Actions

- Provide model joint-use agreement language to school districts or the state department of education.[2]
- Work with school districts to clearly define the potential users of physical activity facilities before establishing joint-use agreements.[3]
- Provide examples of ordinance language that encourages access to safe parks, recreation centers, and facilities within walking distance of communities to state and local departments of parks and recreation.[4]

Strategy 2: Enhance Physical Education & Physical Activity in Schools and Child Care Settings

Schools and child care settings can help children be active by requiring quality physical education, recess, and other opportunities for age-appropriate physical activity. State health departments can work with state departments of education and early child care and education professionals to provide guidance to support these requirements.

Indicator	District of Columbia	U.S.
State provides guidance on policies for school districts or schools on time spent in moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity during physical education class	Yes	28 states
State provides guidance on policies for school districts or schools on recess	Yes	30 states
State provides guidance on policies for school districts or schools on walking or biking to or from school	Yes	34 states
State child care regulations align with national standards for moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity for preschoolers	No	0 states

Potential Actions

- Assess current physical education, physical activity, and recess policies and practices related to time spent in moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity in school districts and child care settings to identify potential opportunities to improve practices.[5-7]
- Work with state Safe Routes to School Coordinators to review state-level policies on walking or biking to or from school to determine what policy guidance is needed for school districts and schools.[8,9]
- Provide training to child care professionals on the different ways child care centers can align licensing regulations, quality rating improvement systems, and early learning standards with national standards on moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity for preschoolers.[6]

Strategy 3: Support Street-Scale and Community-Scale Design Policy

State- and local-level policies that support physical activity through community and urban design, land use, or creating alternative travel options (e.g., walking, biking, or other non-motorized options) are recommended environmental strategies to increase physical activity. These policies can improve and provide the necessary infrastructure to support physical activity in communities.

Indicator	District of Columbia	U.S.
# of states that adopted some form of Complete Streets policy	N/A	27 states

Potential Actions

- Host learning sessions facilitated by transportation planning experts to gain stakeholder support for Complete Streets policies. [10,11]

References & Resources

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Strategies to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases: The CDC Guide to Strategies for Increasing Physical Activity in the Community. In: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, editor. Atlanta 2011.
2. Change Lab Solutions' Model Joint-Use Agreement Resources webpage provides information on various methods for creating a formal agreement between two separate government entities to set forth the terms and conditions for shared use of public property or facilities. http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/model-JUAs-national
3. Finding Space to Play - Legal and Policy Issues Impacting Community Recreational Use of School Property provides information regarding current efforts in the public health community to promote community recreational use of school property. http://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/PHLC_Finding%20Space%20to%20Play_2012.pdf
4. Facilitating Development of a Community Trail and Promoting Its Use to Increase Physical Activity Among Youth and Adults: An Action Guide provides steps to increase access to places to be physically active. http://www.prevent.org/data/files/initiatives/communitytrail.pdf
5. School-based Physical Education Partnership for Prevention Action Guide provides implementation steps for school-based physical education activities. http://www.prevent.org/data/files/initiatives/schoolpe.pdf
6. Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs Second Edition provides select standards from the Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards, 3rd edition. http://cfoc.nrckids.org/WebFiles/PreventingChildhoodObesity2nd.pdf
7. Strategies to Improve the Quality of Physical Education outlines key strategies for increasing the amount of time that students are engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity while in physical education class. http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/pdf/quality_pe.pdf
8. Safe Routes to School Guide provides information on implementation steps for safe routes to school programs. http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/steps/index.cfm
9. National Center for Safe Routes to School assists states in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bicycle to school. http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/
10. National Complete Streets Coalition shares information on how to engage partners in implementing Complete Streets policy. http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/implementation/providing-ongoing-education
11. National Complete Streets Coalition provides steps on how to host a Complete Streets workshop. http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/get-help/workshops

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For more information, visit http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/resources/reports.html