

New CDC Child and Parent Survey Explores Relationship Between Economic Status and Physical Activity Opportunities

Survey Findings Published in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

According to parents of children in low-income families, their children have far fewer opportunities to participate in physical activity than their peers with parents in higher-income brackets, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Youth Media Campaign Longitudinal Survey released August 21 in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*.

The CDC conducted the telephone survey of 3,120 tweens (ages 9 – 13) and their parents. The survey sought information about how much time children participated in organized and free-time physical activity over a 7-day period. Parents also were asked about their perceptions of potential barriers that prevent their children's participation in physical activities.

A Quick Look at Some of the Survey Findings:

- ❑ Children of parents whose earnings are less than \$25,000 per year are less likely to participate in organized physical activities (23.5%) than children whose families earn more than \$50,000 per year (49.1%).
- ❑ African American tweens (24.1%) and Hispanic tweens (25.9%) are less likely to participate in organized physical activities, while their white counterparts (46.6%) are more likely to participate.
- ❑ Parents who have more than a high school education are more likely to have children who participate in organized physical activities (46.8%) than parents with less than a high school education (19.4%).
- ❑ Fewer tweens reported involvement in organized sports (38.5%) than in free-time physical activity (77.4%).
- ❑ The largest barrier for parents in the lower-income bracket was that engagement in physical activity costs too much (70.6%). Transportation was also a barrier for low-income parents (44.5%).

Throughout the past two decades, tweens have begun living more sedentary lifestyles, which contributes to the alarming statistics involving overweight and obese children. The survey findings will help state and local health departments assess current and future needs of tweens and plan physical activity programs and interventions. To access more of the survey results or information about physical activity, visit the *MMWR* Web site, www.cdc.gov/mmwr.

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