

Youth Risk Behaviors: Physical Inactivity



ILLINOIS RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY, ISSUE 3, JANUARY 2010

Increasing Physical Activity in Teens

Physical activity among youth and teens is important to prevent chronic illnesses in adulthood. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that youth and teens participate in moderate physical activities for at least 60 minutes each day. Studies have shown that being active strengthens bones, helps youth maintain a healthy weight and reduces blood pressure.

For the purposes of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, adequate moderate physical activity is defined as having at least 60 minutes of exercise that causes elevated heart rate and heavy breathing on five or more days in the past week.

Chicago Youth Less Physically Active than Illinois, U.S. youth

The percent of youth that participate in recommended amounts of physical activity is strikingly low throughout the United States; Chicago youth report less participation in physical activity. This difference is not statistically significant. Additionally, Chicago youths' prevalence of TV watching is significantly higher than U.S. youth.

Conversely, Illinois youth, excluding Chicago, have significantly higher rates of recommended amounts of physical activity as well as PE class attendance. These factors could be influenced by the state's daily PE requirement for all high school students, which is not present in most other states.

Table 1. Prevalence of Behavior Related to Physical Activity, 2007

	U.S.*	Illinois	Illinois excluding Chicago	Chicago
	% (95% C.I.)	% (95% C.I.)	% (95% C.I.)	% (95% C.I.)
Moderate Physical Activity on 5+ days, past 7 days	34.7 (32.5-37.0)	43.5 (40.1-47.0)	46.1 (42.2-50.1)	28.8 (22.8-35.8)
Go to PE class 1+ times a week	53.6 (47.0-60.1)	75.3 (68.6-81.0)	77.7 (69.8-84.0)	61.1 (51.0-70.4)
Watched 3+ hours of TV a day, average day	35.4 (33.1-37.7)	35.0 (29.7-40.7)	32.9 (26.9-39.6)	45.2 (38.8-51.9)
3+ hours video/computer game use, average day	24.9 (22.9-27.0)	23.8 (21.7-26.0)	23.8 (21.4-26.4)	21.6 (17.4-26.4)

*United States prevalence from National Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Less than half of Illinois youth regularly get recommended amounts of moderate physical activity
- More African-American youth watch 3+ hours of TV compared to other racial and ethnic groups. This is true at national, state and city levels
- In Illinois, especially outside of Chicago, PE class attendance and physical activity are higher than U.S. youth

FAST FACTS

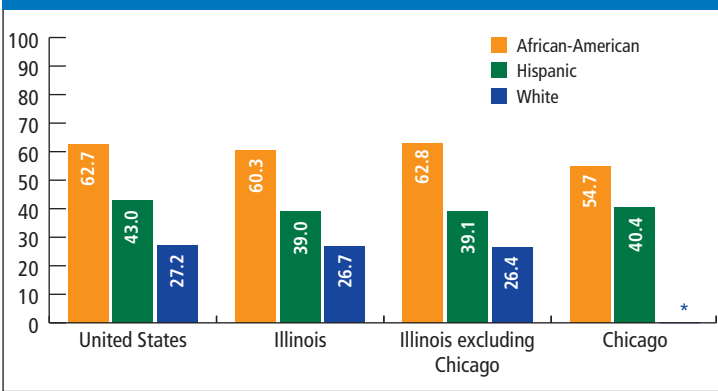
- Physical activity helps to strengthen bones, reduce fat, maintain weight, reduce blood pressure and increase mental health status
- Non-strenuous physical activity, such as walking, is also beneficial to one's health
- Participation in physical activity declines precipitously as individuals age

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/adoles.htm>



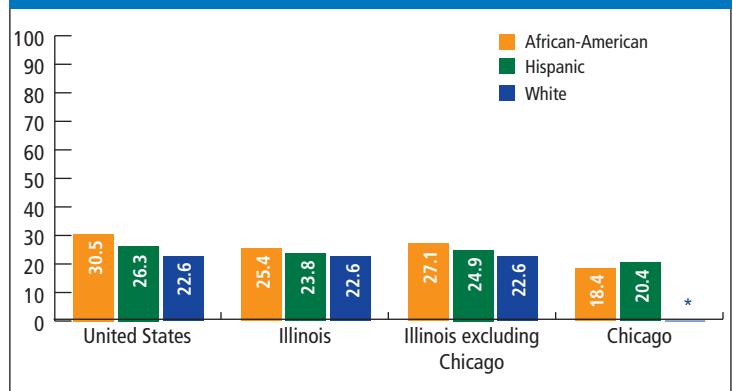
African American Youth Spend More Time Watching TV than Other Youth

Figure 1. Prevalence of Watching 3+ Hours of TV in One Day, 2007



African-Americans report a significantly higher rate of watching three or more hours of TV in one day compared to Hispanic and white youth in the United States, Illinois and Chicago. Hispanic youth also have higher prevalence of TV watching compared to white youth in the United States and Illinois.

Figure 2. Prevalence of Daily Computer Games for 3+ Hours per Day, 2007



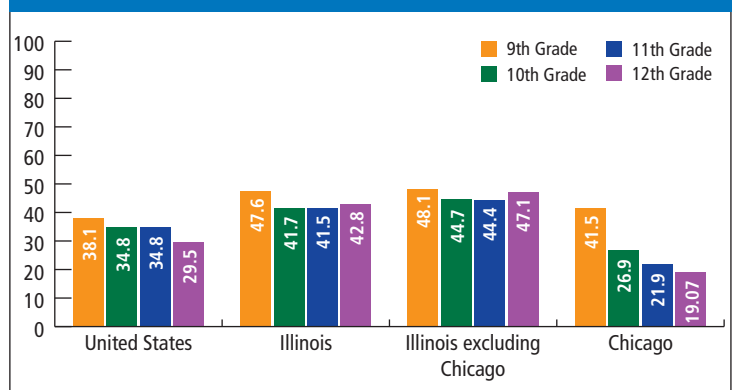
African-Americans report the highest rate of computer use for three or more hours a day at the national level. There is no significant difference among races for computer daily use in Illinois or Chicago.

*The percentage for white youth in Chicago is not shown due to small sample size.

Activity Decline with Age May Be Linked to PE Class Attendance

The percentage of students in Chicago who report being physically active is significantly less than in the rest of Illinois (29% vs. 46%). The prevalence of PE class attendance among Chicago youth also reduces as grade level increases. Eighty-one percent of 9th graders attended a PE class while only 35% of 12th graders attended a PE class. This might indicate that youth who regularly attend PE class are more physically active.

Figure 3. Prevalence of 5 or More Days of Physical Activity in Past 7 Days, 2007



HELPFUL RESOURCES

Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children www.clocc.net
Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance www.iahdperd.org
Illinois Action for Healthy Kids www.actionforhealthykids.org

ABOUT THE YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

The Illinois Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and the Chicago YRBS were completed in randomly selected public high schools in Illinois and Chicago during the spring of 2007. The survey focuses on priority health-risk behaviors that result in the most significant mortality, disability and social problems during both youth and adulthood. Questions cover nutrition, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, physical activity, injuries and sexual behavior resulting in sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. YRBS is one component of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in collaboration with representatives from state and local departments of education and health, other federal agencies and national education and health organizations. For more information visit www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Child Health Data Lab

Jenifer Cartland, PhD, Director | Tracie L. Smith, MPH, Epidemiologist

Children's Memorial Research Center
 2300 Children's Plaza, Box 157 | Chicago, IL 60614

312.573.7772

jcartland@childrensmemorial.org

www.chdl.org

