

# State Indicator Report on Physical Activity, 2010

## North Carolina Action Guide

The *State Indicator Report on Physical Activity, 2010* provides information on the physical activity (PA) levels of North Carolina residents and policy and environmental supports for PA within the state. This action guide summarizes North Carolina's PA levels in comparison to the nation and also provides potential action items to support state-level policy and environmental changes to increase PA.

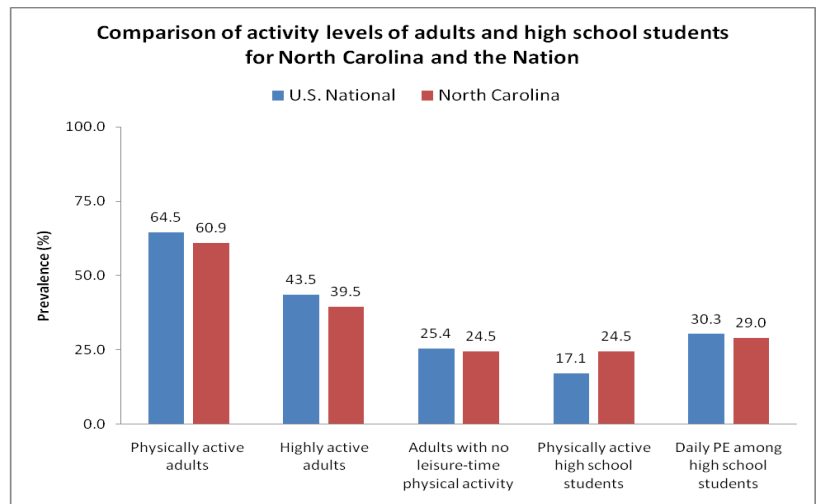
North Carolina's state-specific information is reported for PA behavioral, policy, and environmental indicators. The behavioral indicators are derived from the PA objectives in *Healthy People 2010* and from recommendations in the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans (2008 Guidelines)*. The policy and environmental indicators are taken from multiple data sources and measure several aspects of a state's ability to support changes to increase PA.

Additional actions to promote PA can be found in the National Physical Activity Plan at <http://www.physicalactivityplan.org/plan.htm>. This plan is a broad and comprehensive effort that can provide a framework for increasing PA among U.S. children, adolescents, and adults.

### Behavioral Indicators

The *2008 Guidelines*, which provide science-based guidance to help Americans improve their health through recommended levels of PA, recommend that children should do at least 60 minutes or more of PA daily. Most of the 60 minutes should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity PA. Adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity PA per week or an equivalent combination of the two. For additional health benefits, adults should do more than 300 minutes of moderate intensity or 150 minutes of vigorous intensity PA per week or an equivalent combination of the two.

In this section, the activity levels of North Carolina residents are compared with national levels. These data come from the 2007 and 2008 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and from the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System.



### Policy and Environmental Indicators

Various opportunities exist for North Carolina to improve access and venues for PA. The indicators below represent key areas in which policy and environmental support can help increase PA levels.

#### Create or Enhance Access to Places for PA

Creating and enhancing access to safe places for PA can provide environmental opportunities, support, and cues to help people develop healthier behaviors.

Indicator	North Carolina	National
• Percentage of middle and high schools that allow community-sponsored use of PA facilities by youth outside of normal school hours	88.9%	89.4%*
• Percentage of youth with parks or playgrounds, community centers, and sidewalks or walking paths available in their neighborhood	34.6%	50.0%
• Percentage of census blocks that have at least one park located within the block or ½ mile from the block boundary	11.3%	20.3%
• Percentage of census blocks that have at least one fitness or recreation center located within the block or ½ mile from the block boundary	13.9%	16.6%

#### Potential Action Items

- Create, maintain, and enhance parks, recreation, sports, and fitness facilities to provide various PA options for diverse populations that are safe, appealing, and supervised.
- Form partnerships with organizations for the development of interconnected parks and open space systems.
- Develop guidelines or ordinances that foster the development of parks, recreation, sports, and fitness facilities within walking distance of targeted populations or underserved communities.
- Encourage schools to provide access to their PA spaces and facilities for youth outside of normal school hours.



## Enhance Physical Education and PA in Schools and PA in Child Care Settings

Schools and child care settings are well-positioned to model and reinforce healthful behaviors by assuring standards, requiring daily physical education (PE) classes and recess, and providing safe routes to schools for active transport.

Indicator	North Carolina	National
• State requires or recommends regular elementary school recess	Yes	20 states
• State requires elementary, middle, and high schools to teach PE	Yes	37 states
• Percentage of middle and high schools in state that support or promote walking or biking to and from school	26.7%	46.1%*
• State requires moderate- or vigorous-intensity PA in licensed, regulated child care centers	Yes	8 states

### Potential Action Items

- Work with local school districts to incorporate evidence-based curricula to improve the quality of PE and increase the amount of moderate to vigorous PA in PE classes.
- Require at least one daily period of recess for at least 20 minutes in length; and provide facilities that are attractive and enjoyable for students.
- Adopt time requirements for PE in elementary, middle, and high schools which require daily PE for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (150 minutes per week for elementary schools and 225 minutes per week for middle and high schools); and create systems to monitor district compliance with meeting the requirements.
- Implement and promote safe walk and bicycle to school programs; develop programs to support safe walk-to-school events and programs and to teach youth and parents about the benefits of walkable communities; and encourage building schools in more central and walkable areas.
- Develop moderate to vigorous PA policies and regulations in child care settings by collaborating with policy makers, health professionals, child care practitioners, and licensing offices.

## Support Urban Design, Land Use, and Transportation Policies

The design of communities and neighborhoods can encourage or discourage PA among residents. Safe, walkable neighborhoods can promote routine PA, regardless of an individual's fitness level.

Indicator	North Carolina	National
• Existence of at least one enacted community-scale urban design/land use policy in the state	Yes	27 states
• Existence of at least one enacted street-scale urban design/land use policy in the state	No	23 states
• Existence of at least one enacted transportation and travel policy in the state	Yes	36 states

### Potential Action Items

- Develop and encourage the use of local bicycle and pedestrian project funding criteria to increase efforts in areas with higher concentrations of youth, elderly, low-income, and ethnic minority populations.
- Adopt and support "Complete Streets" ordinances, which ensure that streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users.
- Collaborate with transportation planning agencies in the development of short and long-range master plans.
- Plan, build, and retrofit residential and mixed-used streets to reduce speeds, accommodate bicyclists, and improve the walkability of the environment.
- Plan, build, and maintain a well-connected network of off-street trails and paths for pedestrians and bicyclists.

## Develop and Maintain a Public Health Workforce Competent in PA

Full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel in state health departments dedicated to PA promotion are necessary to develop, implement, monitor, and maintain PA interventions and programs as well as foster partnerships that advocate for PA policies.

Indicator	North Carolina	National
• Number of state health department full-time equivalent personnel primarily focused on state PA	2.0	1.0*

### Potential Action Items

- Support a PA and health unit in state public health departments that function as part of an integrated and coordinated approach to chronic disease prevention.
- Support the hiring of PA credentialed health professionals and the PA credentialing activities of existing staff members at state health departments.
- Provide continuing education opportunities where appropriate from credentialing organizations, member associations, academic institutions, and other groups.

#### Data Sources for Policy and Environmental Indicators

School Health Profiles, 2006; National Survey of Children's Health, 2007; Geographic Data Technology Database, 2007; Info USA Database, 2010; School Health Policies and Programs Study, 2006; Kaphingst, K.M., & Story, M. (2009). Childcare as an untapped setting for obesity prevention: State childcare licensing regulations related to nutrition, physical activity, and media use for preschool-aged children in the United States. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 6(1), 1-13.; CDC Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Legislative Database; National Conference of State Legislatures Healthy Community Design and Access to Healthy Food Legislative Database.

#### Key

NA = Not Available  
\* Median

