Parents play a major role in supporting health behaviours and providing children opportunities for healthy, active living. In Canada, between 1979 and 2004, rates of obesity in children more than doubled. Physical activity is important for promoting and maintaining healthy weights.

This infographic presents results from a telephone survey of 3,206 parents living in Ontario, conducted between February and March, 2015. All results are parent-reported.

**How are parents doing?**

- **80%** Take part in physical activities with child
- **82%** Enroll child in sports teams, clubs, or community programs
- **86%** Encourage child to walk/cycle to places if reasonably close
- **87%** Watch child play sports or do other activities
- **91%** Encourage child to use resources in community
- **94%** Take child to places where he/she can be active
- **97%** Encourage child to be active outdoors with others

**Parent-reported proportion of children meeting physical activity guidelines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>1-4 yrs</th>
<th>5-8 yrs</th>
<th>9-12 yrs</th>
<th>13-17 yrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These rates are higher than the most recent Canadian estimates based on objective measures of child physical activity, which suggest that 9.3% of children aged 5-17 are meeting guidelines. This highlights the difference between actual rates in Ontario and parents’ perceptions.

**Gender differences in adolescence**

13 to 17-year-olds showed significant differences between the proportion of females (52.5%) and males (67.5%) meeting physical activity guidelines. Females often experience sharp declines in physical activity as they progress through adolescence.

**What can you do?**

*Outside in nature*  
*Using community resources*  
*Together as a family*

**Overcoming barriers to outdoor play**

- Screen time: Use of video games, TVs.
- Parental constraints: Attempts to keep child safe from harm.
- Seasonal weather: Some activities are limited to certain months.

For more information about this study please contact Evaluation Services at Public Health Ontario: hpcdip@oahpp.ca

Document references can be found at [www.publichealthontario.ca/ParentalSupport](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/ParentalSupport)