

Health Behaviour in School-aged Children: Healthy Settings for Young People in Canada (2006)

Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is a World Health Organization survey examining the health behaviours of youth recently conducted in 41 countries. This fact sheet highlights information about the health of 9,672 Canadian youth in grades 6 through 10 in the HBSC study funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

For more information about the HBSC study and for Canada-specific data, please visit www.publichealth.gc.ca. For international data visit the HBSC global site at www.hbsc.org.

Injury and Physical Trauma Among Canadian Youth

Injury and physical trauma are the number one threat to the health and well-being of Canada's youth. Looking at boys and girls across grades 6 to 10, in a 12-month period as many as 48 percent report having at least one medically-treated injury, with as many as 16 percent requiring an overnight stay in hospital.

Boys consistently report more injuries requiring medical treatment than girls. However, the proportion of girls reporting injuries increases as they get older – from 31 percent in grade 6 to 41 percent in grade 10. In general, the incidence of multiple injuries requiring medical treatment also tends to increase with age. Multiple injuries range from 20 to 25 percent of boys and 14 to 19 percent of girls.

Injuries affect youth, their families and society

Injuries can cause pain and suffering, disability or even death. Injuries to young people also affect the lives of parents and other family members, and result in costs to society for health care resources. Beyond those impacts, injuries to young people often result in significant time lost from school or usual activities. One in five students typically

miss one or more days of school or usual activity due to an injury, with higher percentages in higher grades.

As many as 10 percent of students miss a week or more of school or other usual activities due to injuries. Overall, the total number of days missed per year is as high as 2,452 per 1,000 students.

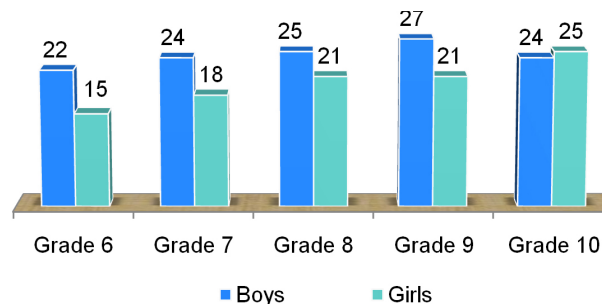
Sports are the leading cause of injury for youth

Playing or training for a sport is a major cause of injury for both boys and girls. Violence also plays a part and, while the proportion of injuries to students from physical fights is small, violence can have a lasting impact beyond physical injuries. Work-related injuries are also uncommon, but increase as young people enter the workforce.

Sport-related injuries increase as students age

The vast majority of injuries to young people happen at sports facilities (16 to 43 percent), at home or in yards (17 to 35 percent), or in school at recess or lunch (10 to 19 percent). As children age, the incidence of injuries at

Missing one or more days from school or usual activities due to an injury (%)



Boyer: pg 108

Health Behaviour in School-aged Children: Healthy Settings for Young People in Canada (2006)

This fact sheet was developed in collaboration with the Joint Consortium for School Health with funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Data for this fact sheet was taken from: Pickett, William. "Injury and Physical Trauma." In *Healthy Settings for Young People in Canada*. W. Boyce, M. King, & J. Roche (Editors). Ottawa, Ontario: The Public Health Agency of Canada, 2008.

home declines, while the incidence of injuries at sports facilities increases. This is consistent with the increase in level of organized activities in young people's lives as they grow.

Although sports are a major cause of injury, riding in or driving a car, fighting and recreational cycling are more likely to lead to injuries requiring significant medical treatment such as casting, stitches or hospital admission.

High academic achievement linked to lower rates of injury

Of all the factors considered in students' social environment, levels of academic achievement have the strongest relationship with injury prevention. Students with the highest academic averages have less than half the number of injuries reported for students with the lowest averages. Similarly, students with a positive attitude towards school report fewer serious injuries.

Family and friends also play a role

Living with both parents and having good relationships with parents have a minor protective impact, as does having friends with highly positive social attitudes. At the same time, a high level of communication with friends is associated with a higher risk of serious injury.

Higher family affluence also correlates to a slightly higher risk of serious injury, possibly because wealthier families can afford more expensive and potentially more dangerous sporting activities and equipment.

What can schools, families and communities do?

Everyone can help make a difference by contributing to healthy, supportive learning environments. Research consistently demonstrates that health and education are inextricably linked – and the most effective way to address issues such as injury is through a comprehensive school health approach.

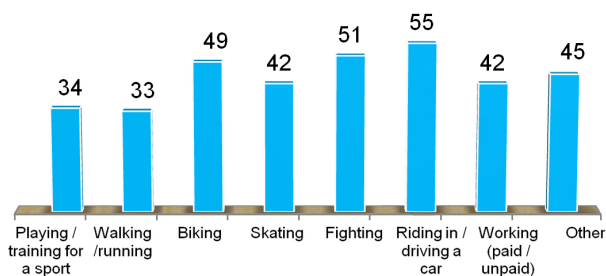
This means not looking at any one issue affecting young people in isolation, but recognizing that all these factors are interconnected with healthy living – and that families, teachers, administrators, school staff, professionals and other community members all have a role to play in supporting young people's healthy development.

Schools that take a comprehensive approach incorporate policies and practices that support students' health and general well-being, including injury prevention, into every aspect of the school environment. This includes providing youth with the information and skills they need to become more safety conscious in their decision-making processes.

For more information on comprehensive school health, visit the Joint Consortium for School Health website at www.jcsh-cces.ca. For information on injury prevention programs in schools, see "Injury Prevention Quick Scan of Activities and Resources in Canadian Schools", available on the Joint Consortium for School Health website.

For more about what's happening in your community, contact your local school or district directly.

Injuries requiring significant medical treatment, by activity (% of injuries)



Boyce: pg 114