



**KEY FINDINGS FACT SHEET NO. 1**

**Results from the Western Australian Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (CAPANS) 2003**

# Active Play



In 2003, the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce, Healthway and the Department of Health commissioned the University of Notre Dame to undertake a Statewide survey to collect baseline data on child and adolescent physical activity behaviours, eating patterns and physiques.

### SURVEY SAMPLE

Data were collected from 2,275 students across nineteen primary schools (58.9%) and seventeen secondary schools (41.1%). Of the sample 49.8% were males and 50.2% were females. Primary school students ranged from 7-12 years of age (school years 3,5,7) and secondary school students from 12-16 years of age (school years 8,10,11).

### WHAT IS ACTIVE PLAY?

**Active play** included any non-organised activity of **moderate intensity** (e.g. playing with pets, bike riding and skateboarding) or **vigorous intensity** (e.g. jogging or running and playing tag or chasey).

### PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVE PLAY

- Almost 30% of primary school students did not participate in active play.
- 50% of secondary school students did not participate in active play.
- Students participated in more **moderate intensity** rather than **vigorous intensity** active play.
- Students participate in less active play activities as they get older.
- Participation in active play activities was similar for most **metropolitan** and **non-metropolitan** students.
- A higher percentage of **metropolitan** secondary males (11%) compared to **non-metropolitan** males (7.9%) participated in no active play.

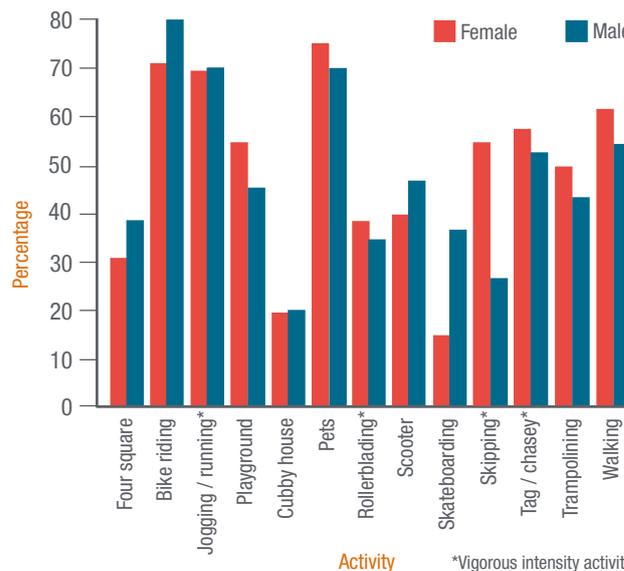
### TYPE OF ACTIVE PLAY

#### PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (AGE 7-12 YEARS)

Among primary school students, the most prevalent active play activities were similar for males and females (Figure 2). Playing with pets was the most popular activity for females and bike riding for males. The most popular active play activities were:

- bike riding – 80.2% males, 70.9% females;
- playing with pets – 69.8% males, 74.5% females;
- jogging or running – 68.6% males, 68.3% females; and
- walking for exercise - 54.1% males, 61.5% females.

Figure 1. Prevalence of active play activities for primary school males and females



#### SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (AGE 12-16 YEARS)

Among secondary school students, the **prevalence** of active play activities differed for males and females.

The most popular active play activities for males were:

- bike riding (58.3%);
- playing with pets (40.7%);
- jogging or running (37.4%);
- walking for exercise (22.4%); and
- skateboarding (18.6%).

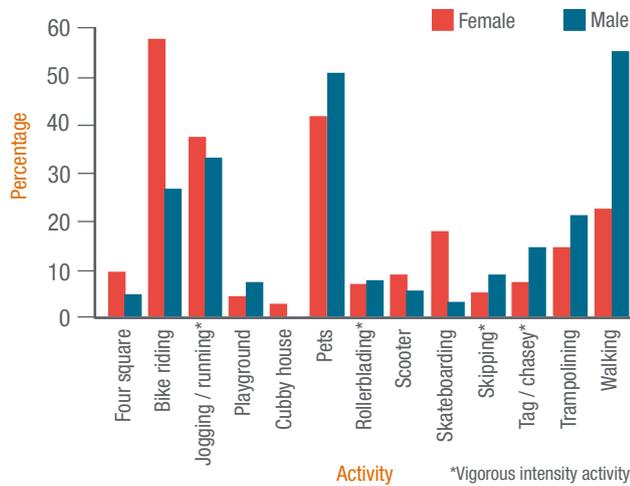
The most popular active play activities for females were:

- walking for exercise (53.7%);
- playing with pets (50.7%);
- jogging or running (31.6%);
- bike riding (26.8%); and
- trampolining (21.1%).





Figure 2. Prevalence of active play secondary school males and females



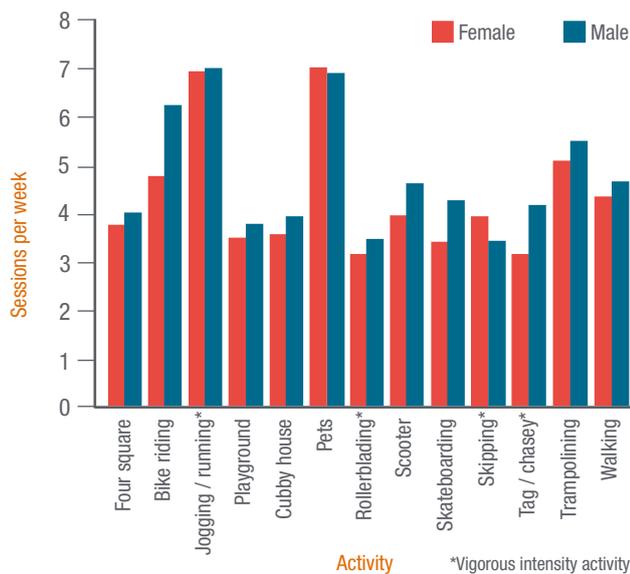
## FREQUENCY OF ACTIVE PLAY

### PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (AGE 7–12 YEARS)

**Frequency** (sessions per week) for most activities was similar for males and females. The most frequent activities were:

- females – playing with pets (7 sessions); trampolining (5.1 sessions) and bike riding (4.7 sessions); and
- males – playing with pets (6.9 sessions); bike riding (6.2 sessions) and trampolining (5.4 sessions).

Figure 3. Frequency of active play activities for primary school males and females



### SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS (AGE 12 TO 16 YEARS)

The most **frequent** (sessions per week) activities were:

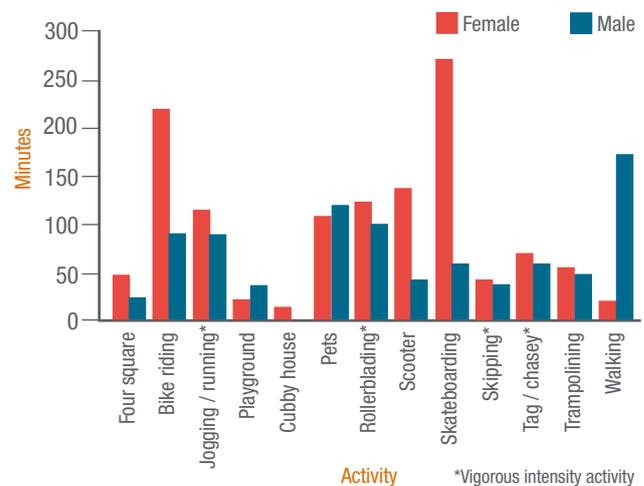
- males - playing with pets (7 sessions) and bike riding (6 sessions);
- females - playing with pets (6.9 sessions) and walking for exercise (3.7 sessions); and
- males participated more frequently than females in all activities, particularly bike riding, rollerblading, scooter, 4-square and skateboard.

## DURATION OF ACTIVE PLAY

Duration (minutes per week) of activities differed for males and females (collected for years 8,10, and 11 only).

- Males spent more time on most activities.
- Time spent playing with pets was similar for males (101.6 min) and females (105.2 min).
- Males spent more time bike riding (216.6 min) than females (82.1 min).
- Females spent more time walking for **exercise** (119.2 min) than males (14.9 min).

Figure 4. Duration of active play activities for secondary school students



## AUSTRALIAN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILDREN (5–12 YEARS) AND YOUTH (12–18 YEARS)

1. Children and youth should participate in at least 60 minutes (and up to several hours) of **moderate** to **vigorous intensity** physical activity every day.
2. Children and youth should not spend more than 2 hours per day using electronic media such as TV, computer games and the internet for entertainment, particularly during daylight hours.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Recommendations for increasing the levels of physical activity in children as well as other key findings can be found in the CAPANS report<sup>1</sup> at [www.patf.dpc.wa.gov.au](http://www.patf.dpc.wa.gov.au) or by contacting the Physical Activity Taskforce Secretariat on 9382 5980.

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Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce  
Department of Health



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<sup>1</sup> Hands, B., Parker, H., Glasson, C., Brinkman, S. & Read, H. (2004). *Physical Activity and Nutrition Levels in Western Australian Children and Adolescents: Report*. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government.