Features and Utility of the Youth Activity Profile

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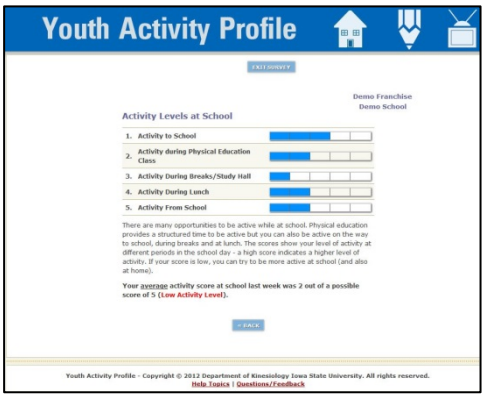
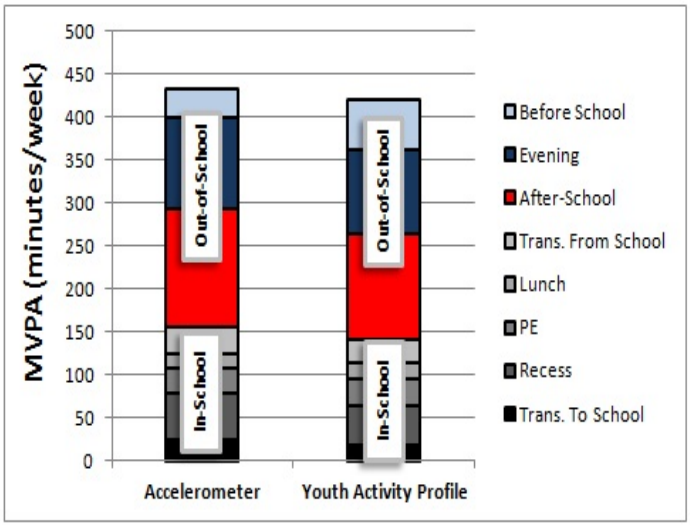
Physical education programs have historically emphasized the assessment of physical fitness but the only way for youth to become more fit is to become more physically active. Therefore, a key need in physical education is a tool that can accurately assess physical activity behavior. This type of tool would allow teachers to teach and promote physical activity more directly in the curriculum.



Our team created a simple online self-report tool called the Youth Activity Profile (YAP) that makes it easy for teachers and schools to assess physical activity. The tool consists of a series of 15 simple equations that captures time spent in physical activity both at school (e.g. before school, walking to school, in recess, in PE and during lunch) as well as at home (e.g. on the way home, at home, in the evening and on the weekends). It also capture time spent in sedentary pursuits such as TV, video games, computer and texting). The instrument has a customized interface that provides a different view for elementary, middle and high school students. Children receive feedback about their activity patterns at the end of the assessment and this can be saved and printed as a pdf file. The most important and unique feature of the YAP is that we have conducted calibration research that enables us to accurately estimate the time children spend in physical activity (min/week) as well as the time they spend in sedentary behaviors. This makes it effective for tracking physical activity across the full age range (see sample bar plots at right). The Cooper Institute has embedded the YAP within the FITNESSGRAM software to enable more schools to use this tool as part of school physical education programming.

A unique feature of the online version of the YAP is that it is developed in a way to allow us to customize the interface so that it is specific for each school (i.e. school / district logos). The interface can also be set up to enable tracking of student IDs or set to make it anonymous (depending on preferences). The YAP is designed to make it easier for teachers and schools to help youth learn how to be more physically active but it also provides a good tool for district assessments since it can directly estimate time spent in PA. Additional information is available on our lab webpage (www.physicalactivitylab.org). Please contact us if you have questions or want to learn more. Thanks