



ACTIVE HEALTHY KIDS IRELAND



THE 2022 IRELAND NORTH AND SOUTH REPORT CARD ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS SUMMARY

This summary can be accessed along with the long form at <https://activehealthykidsireland.org>. Details of all the countries that have produced a Report Card in 2022 can be found at <https://www.activehealthykids.org>

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Introduction



Across the island of Ireland, children (6-17 years) are recommended to accumulate at least 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity (MVPA) (1), or an average of at least 60 minutes of MVPA per day across the week, for health (2).



Strategies including **2016 National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland and the new Active Living - Sport and Physical Activity Strategy** for Northern Ireland (3,4,5) aim to increase participation in physical activity (PA) amongst our children and adolescents and set out specific targets to increase the proportion of children undertaking PA regularly.



Despite the recommendations and targets not all children on the island of Ireland are meeting daily physical activity recommendations. The 2022 Report Card for Children and Adolescents graded overall physical activity levels a C- and assigned an F for children with disabilities.



The **2022 Ireland North and South Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Adolescents**, is produced as part of the Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance (AHKGA) and its purpose is to monitor changes and update the grades for a range of PA indicators considering new data that has emerged since 2016.



The Report Card aims to serve as a tool for practitioners and policy makers to:



provoke change in priorities, practices and funding in relation to children's PA across the island of Ireland



identify key needs and gaps



advocate for and allocate funds to children's PA promotion initiatives.



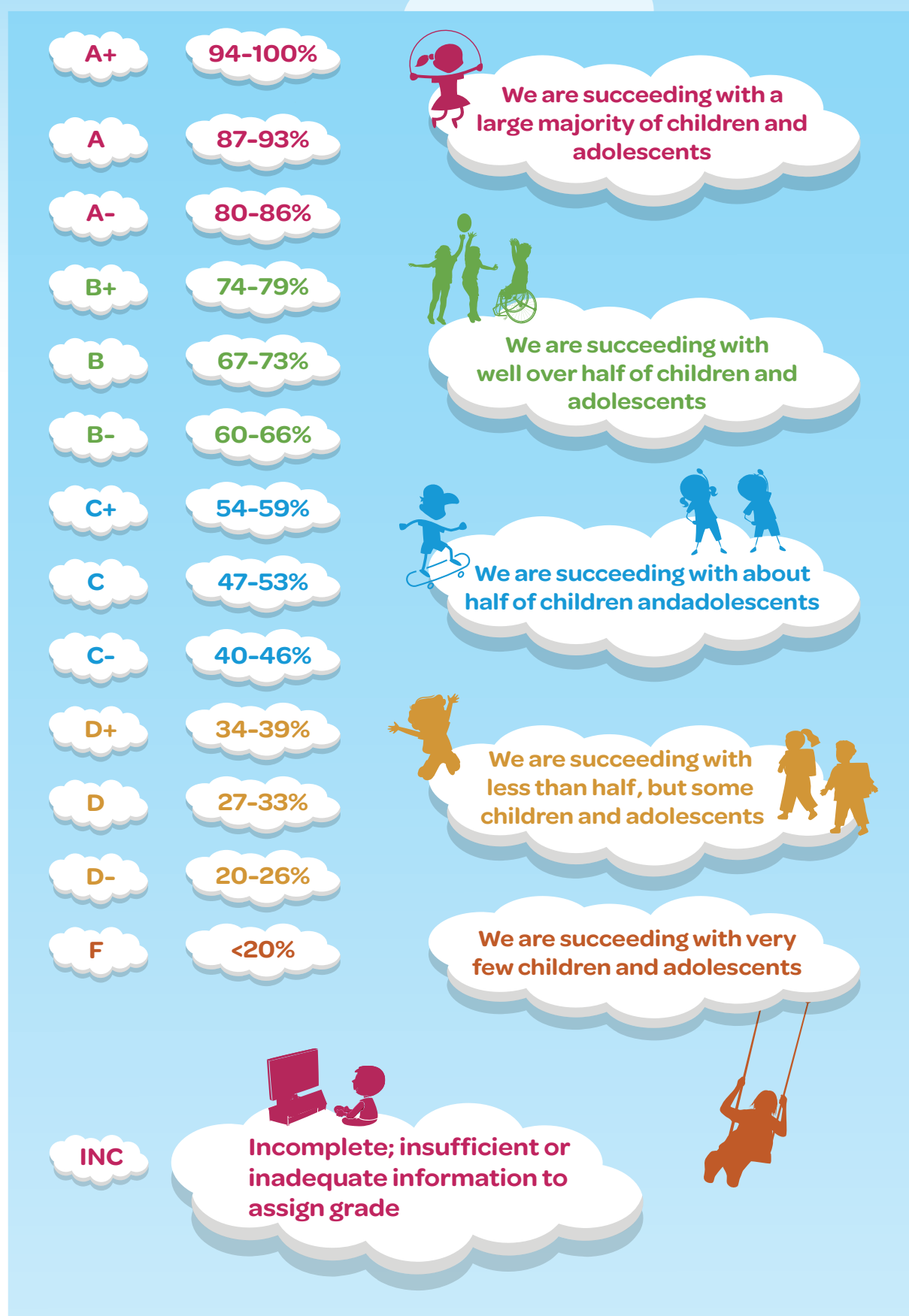
This Report Card builds on the work from previous Report Cards in 2014 (7) and 2016 (6). The 2022 Report Card will, for the first time, include an indicator on Physical Fitness and a set of grades specific to children and adolescents with disabilities.



Figure 1: Key stages of creating the Ireland North and South Physical Activity Report Card 2022



Figure 2: International Standardised Grading Scheme for Global Matrix 4.0



Data sources used

The following main data sources were used in the 2022 Ireland North and South Physical Activity Report Card. For some indicators, main data sources were supplemented by smaller research studies and/or grey literature. Further detail, on study characteristics and specific data considered in grading of each indicator is provided in the indicator chapters in the long form report.

Ireland datasets

Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) (8,9,10)

Data from the GUI Cohort '08 and Cohort '98 Wave 3 (8), Wave 4 (9) and Wave 5 (10) were used in this report card. GUI is a longitudinal study in Ireland, conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin and funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Data for both cohorts were collected using self-report questionnaires completed either by the primary caregiver, the child, or both.

Heath Behaviour of School-aged Children (HBSC) (11)

The HBSC: WHO Collaborative Cross-National study (11) is a collaborative, cross-national, school-based survey undertaken every four years that aims to gain insight on young people's health and wellbeing in a social context (at home, in school or with family and friends) in Ireland. The HBSC study was funded by the Department of Health, with data collected by the National University of Ireland Galway. Data collection took place between April and December 2018 in 254 schools (109 primary schools and 145 secondary schools). Data were collected using self-report questionnaires completed by school children.

Northern Ireland datasets

UK Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) (12)

The UK MCS is a UK-wide longitudinal study that follows the lives of children born in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The MCS is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and is organised by The Centre for Longitudinal Studies (part of the University College London Social Research Institute). For this edition of the Report Card, self-reported data from Wave 7 Northern Ireland sub-sample were collated (12).

Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitude Survey (YPBAS) (13)

The YPBAS is commissioned by a consortium of government departments and examines a wide range of behaviours and attitudes of topics relevant to 11–16-year-olds in Northern Ireland. The YPBAS aims to evaluate the behaviours and lifestyles of secondary pupils and uses this insight to inform government policy and practice in relation to young people. The results of the seventh round of this survey were included in this Report Card (13). Data were collected using a self-report questionnaire, completed by the child.

Continuous Household Survey (14)

The Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey (14) is administered by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency to collect information on a variety of topics relevant to Northern Ireland. Households are randomly selected to complete the survey. Data included in this report were collected in 2019/2020, with data on children's active transport self-reported by a parent/guardian.

Both Ireland and Northern Ireland

Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Study (CSPPA) (15)

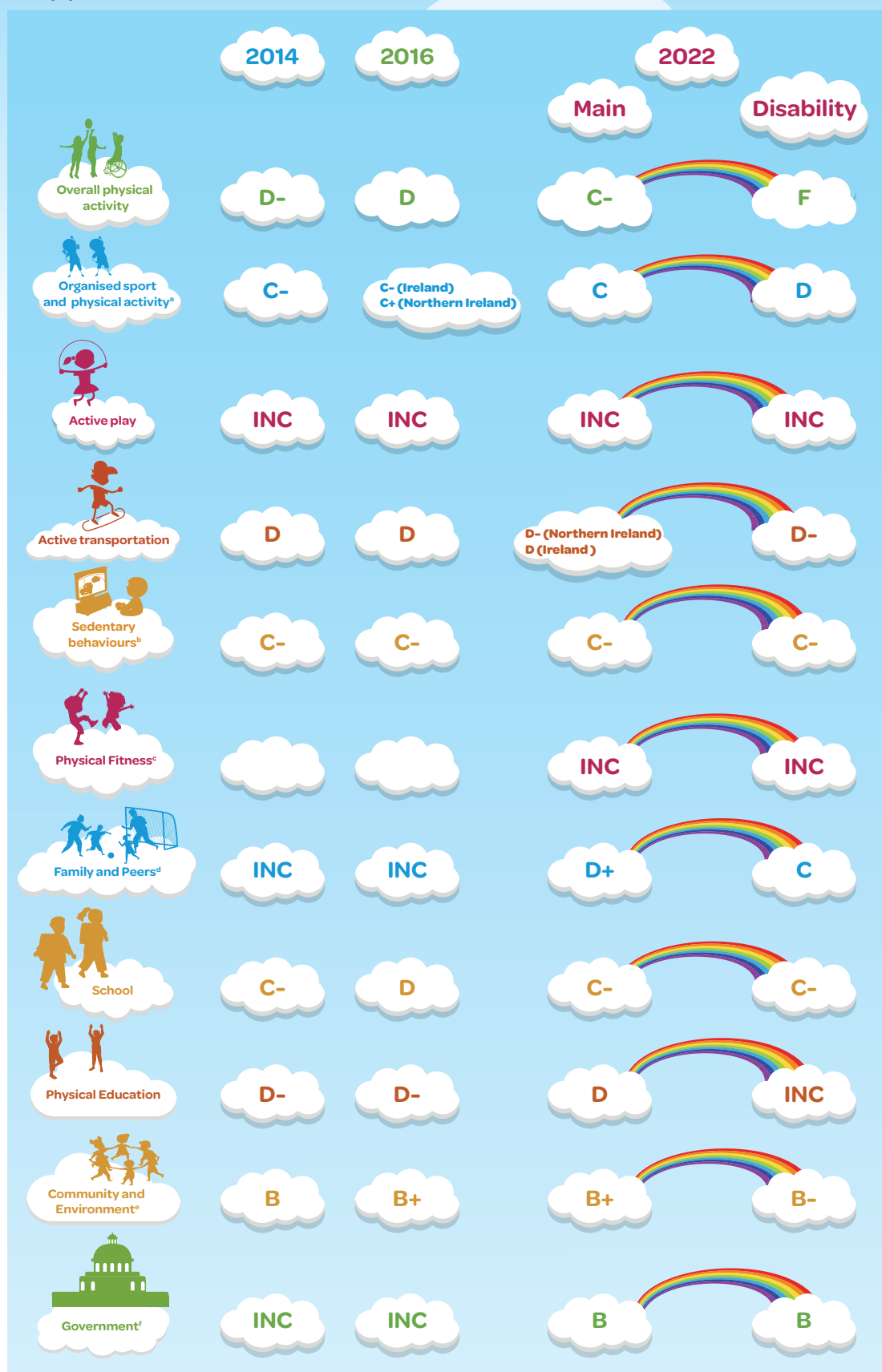
CSPPA is a cross-sectional study examining participation in sport, PA and physical education among children aged 10 to 18 years. Prior to 2018 CSPPA, data were only collected for Ireland, in 2018, a Northern Ireland sample was included, for the first time. This work is a result of collaboration between Sport Ireland, Sport NI and Healthy Ireland. Self-report, self administered questionnaire data from a sample of 6651 primary and secondary level pupils (aged 10–18 years) was included (15).

Every Minute Counts (16)

The purpose of the 2019 Every Minute Counts study (16) was to investigate daily PA patterns of 8- to 9-year-old children from socially disadvantaged areas, in both Ireland and Northern Ireland. PA of a sample of 408 children was measured and reported using PA measuring devices (accelerometers) over a 4-day period. This data were included in the 2022 Report Card.



Figure 3: Summary of grades awarded to each indicator for Irish Report Card 2014 (7), 2016 (6), 2022



INC: Incomplete

^a Previously known as Organised Sport Participation

^b Previously known as Sedentary Behaviour: TV viewing

^c Physical Fitness not previously included as an indicator

^d Previously known as Home (Family)

^e Previously known as Community and Built Environment

^f Previously known as Government Strategies and Investments

Summary of findings for the 2022 Ireland North and South Physical Activity Report Card



The 2022 Ireland North and South Report Card on physical activity for Children and Adolescents has shown we are making progress in relation to children's PA across the island of Ireland.



Positive trends observed across a number of indicators. Grades for three indicators ('Overall PA', 'School' and 'Physical Education') increased.



Two indicators ('Family and Peers' and 'Government') were assigned a grade for the first time, having previously been graded as 'Incomplete'.



The majority of grades remained unchanged for other indicators.



'Physical Fitness' was included as a new indicator in this edition of the Report Card but was graded as 'Incomplete'.



The availability of new data sources which have collated data on an all-island basis are valuable in adding to the evidence base around PA levels among children and young people.



As with previous editions of the Report Card, there were difficulties aligning data to the proposed benchmarks, primarily due to either the phrasing of questions, or the reporting of findings.



Grades on disability were included for the first time. Eight indicators were graded. Three indicators, 'Active Play', 'Physical Fitness', and 'Physical Education' were graded as 'Incomplete'.



When data specific to disability were compared to the overall grades, grades were generally lower for each indicator with the exception of Family and Peers, where the grade was higher.



Recommendations



Continue to develop policy measures that address inequalities highlighted in the report across a range of determinants including disability, gender, socioeconomic status, and age impact on children and adolescent PA levels.



Continue to progress the development of a framework for the systematic surveillance of indicators related to PA for children and adolescents with disabilities. These include greater representation, and consistency of measurement tools in policy.



Prioritise research specifically designed to measure levels of activity in children and adolescents with disabilities.



Address persistent gaps in data availability in relation to a number of indicators, for example, 'Active Play' and for some sub-groups of children and adolescents, for example, data in younger children.



Increase the use of objective measures across the indicators to help overcome a reliance on self-reported data in relation to PA.



Action the grade on the Government indicator (B+), which was assigned a grade for the first time, to provide further rationale and support for the implementation of the National Physical Activity Plan in Ireland and "Active Living" Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland.



Future report cards will need to consider the impact of COVID-19 public health measures on PA as data from March 2020 were not included in the grading of this Report Card. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on indicators will need to feature in subsequent Report Cards, when more robust data is available.

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