



Physical activity, screen time and sleep of children aged 6-9 in Europe

This factsheet describes physical activity, screen time and sleep of children aged 6-9 years; using data from 25 countries participating in the 4th round of COSI (2015-2017, n=150,651 children). The details of the analysis are described in a peer-reviewed paper by Whiting et al published in Obesity Facts¹. Physical activity levels vary widely between countries.

Healthy screen time and sleep



less than 2 hours
per day

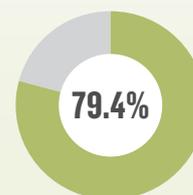


9 to 11 hours
per night



Percentage of children actively playing for at least 1 hour per day

Pooled estimate (%): 79.4 [95%CI: 78.2-80.4]



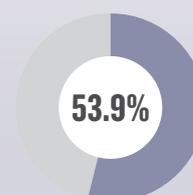
Percentage of children who exclusively used active transport (walking or cycling) to get to and from school¹

Pooled estimate (%): 50.0 [95%CI: 48.0-52.0]



Percentage of children who were not members of sports/dancing clubs or did not practise sports or dance at all

Pooled estimate (%): 53.9 [95%CI: 51.9-56.0]



Girls compared to boys were slightly less engaged in active play in 10 countries. In Central Asian countries more children actively travelled to school but were less likely to be a member of a sport or dancing club compared to countries in Southern Europe.

¹ Whiting S, Buonchristiano M, Gelius P et al. Physical Activity, Screen Time and Sleep Duration of Children Aged 6-9 Years in 25 Countries: An Analysis within the WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative – COSI 2015/2017. Obes Facts.

Acronyms: ALB – Albania; BUL – Bulgaria; CRO-Croatia; CZH-Czechia; DEN-Denmark; EST-Estonia; FRA-France; GEO-Georgia; IRE-Ireland; ITA-Italy; KAZ-Kazakhstan; KGZ-Kyrgyzstan; LTU-Lithuania; LVA-Latvia; MAT-Malta; MNE- Montenegro; POL-Poland; POR-Portugal; ROM-Romania; RUS-Moscow; SMR-San Marino; SPA-Spain; TJK-Tajikistan; TKM-Turkmenistan; TUR-Turkey



Policy implications

Children's physical activity, screen time and sleep vary across countries in the WHO European region



This variation is likely due to a multitude of factors; including differences in policy, built environment, availability of facilities, culture and climate. In some countries boys seemed to be more active than girls, while others saw the opposite.

WHO recommends that children aged 6-9 average 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity every day. Limiting screen time and achieving optimal sleep duration is also important for good physical and mental health.

Policymakers have a key role to play in enhancing the affordability and accessibility of physical activity for children. The variation between countries found in this study demonstrates opportunities for national policymakers to learn from experiences across the region and implement what works.

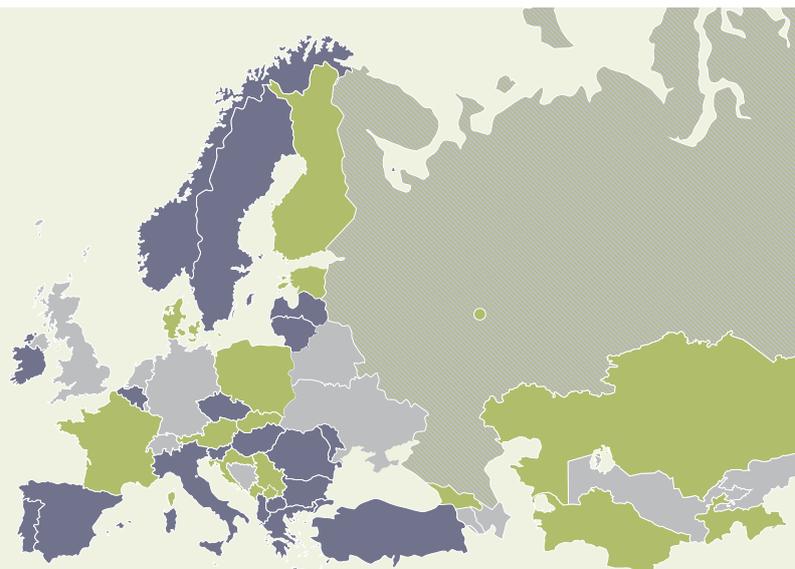
WHO has called on policy-makers in the European region to promote wellbeing in children through:

- Nationwide implementation and monitoring of regular, high quality, age appropriate physical education in schools
- Promoting physical activity among school children through diverse means; such as making sure playgrounds are available and safe, training staff to deliver active breaks and investing in safe walking and cycling routes to facilitate active transport
- Ensuring available public open spaces and recreational facilities, and fostering collaboration between sport, health and education sectors to promote out of school physical activity
- 'Sport-for-all' approaches with incentive schemes for children in low socioeconomic groups
- Providing clear public health recommendations for physical activity, screen time and sleep
- Surveillance of physical activity among children that includes sex disaggregated data and qualitative exploration of disparities
- Evaluations of existing strategies to promote physical activity targeting young people.

About COSI

The WHO European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (or COSI) is a unique system that for over 10 years has measured trends in overweight and obesity among primary school aged children. COSI involves taking standardized weight and height measurements from over 300 000 children across the WHO European Region every three years. This provides nationally representative data for participating countries, as well as a large Region-wide data set for analysis of the determinants of childhood overweight and obesity. This vital collaboration between the World Health Organization and research institutions from across Europe provides high-quality data that is needed to inform policy and practice in response to the challenge of childhood overweight and obesity.

For more information about COSI and recent publications please visit <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/nutrition/activities/who-european-childhood-obesity-surveillance-initiative-cosi>



■ Countries included in the analysis ■ Countries not included in the analysis but participated in COSI