

The Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile

GENDER DIFFERENCES

The *Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile, 3rd Edition*, is based on a comprehensive review of national and provincial data sources and extensive consultations with experts from many fields. The *CICH Profile* contains ten chapters and 398 charts pertaining to the health and well-being of children and youth. It provides a relevant and clear picture of where our children are today, and gives some direction for where we might assist them as they explore their futures.

The following information from the *CICH Profile* reports on gender differences in the health and well-being of school-aged children and youth. The main sources of the data presented include the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, The Health Behaviours of School-Aged Children Survey and the Adolescent Health Survey of British Columbia.

School performance

- Girls aged 4-11 years are more likely than boys of the same age to be reading very well (42% compared to 33%), writing very well (33% compared to 21%) and doing very well overall (39% compared to 29%).

Emotional and behavioural problems

- The rates of emotional and behavioural problems among children 4 - 11 years of age vary somewhat by gender. 11% of boys and 8% of girls exhibit behaviour consistent with conduct disorder. 14% of boys and 6% of girls exhibit hyperactive behaviour. 9% of boys and 9% of girls exhibit emotional problems. 24% of boys and 17% of girls have one or more problem.
- According to their parents, boys aged 4 - 11 years are more likely than girls of the same age to use direct aggression (for example, pushing or hitting). 16% of boys and 9% of girls used direct aggression. According to their parents, girls were more likely than boys to use indirect aggression (for example, excluding certain children from play). 14% of girls and 10% of boys used indirect aggression.

Nutrition and dental hygiene

- Boys in grades 6 - 10 are more likely to eat breakfast than girls in the same grades. In 1998, 55% of boys in grade 10 reported eating breakfast daily compared to 41% of girls.
- Girls were slightly more likely to be daily consumers of fruit. In 1998, 77% of girls in grade 6 ate fruit daily compared to 69% of boys. The gender difference diminished by grade 10, with 65% of girls eating fruit daily compared with 62% of boys.
- Girls in grades 6 - 10 were more likely to brush their teeth two or more times a day. In 1998, 68% of girls and 55% of boys in grade 6 brushed their teeth two or more times daily. Among children in grade 8, 73% of girls and 56% of boys did. In grade 10, 80% of girls and 57% of boys reported brushing their teeth two or more times daily.

Exercise and participation in extracurricular activities

- Girls aged 6- 11 years were more likely than boys to report "almost never" participating in supervised sports (42% compared to 29%). Boys were more likely than girls to report that they "almost never" participated in "the arts" (76% compared to 55%).
- Boys were more likely to report exercising two or more times a week outside of school hours. Among students in grade 6, 71% of boys and 57% of girls reported doing so. Among students in grade 10, 75% of boys and 54% of girls reported exercising two or more times a week outside of school hours.
- In BC, female students were more likely than male students to report participating in two or more extracurricular activities (39% compared to 24%).

Body image

- Among students in grade 10, girls are more likely than boys to report wanting to change something about their bodies (77% compared to 52%). The girls were also more likely than the boys to be on a diet or to feel that they need to lose weight (45% of girls in grade 10 compared to 18% of boys in grade 10).

Experiences of discrimination

- Girls in grades 7 - 12 were more likely than boys to report experiencing discrimination. 26% of girls reported being discriminated against on the basis of gender compared to 7% of boys. 27% of girls reported being discriminated against on the basis of age compared to 17% of boys. 28% of girls and 22% of boys reported being discriminated against on the basis of their physical appearance.



For information about the sources of the data, please refer to *The Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile, 3rd Edition*. To order your copy of the *CICH Profile*, please contact:



Canadian Institute of Child Health
384 Bank Street, Suite 300
Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 1Y4
Tel: (613) 230-8838 Fax: (613) 230-6654
E-mail: cich@cich.ca Internet: www.cich.ca