

MEDIA RELEASE

Attention: Assignment/Health/Education/Lifestyle/News/Research & Science Editors

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For Immediate Release

**CANADA'S FIRST ANNUAL NATIONAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
REPORT CARD ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

TORONTO, ON (December 2, 2004): Dr. Mark Tremblay, Chair of Active Healthy Kids Canada, tonight presents the results from a three day multi-sectoral symposium with leading issue experts from across North America. These results will inform the first annual Canadian Physical Activity Report Card on Canada's children and youth and will be presented tonight at Active Healthy Kids Canada Annual Meeting, with Guest Speaker Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of State for Public Health. The Canadian Physical Activity Symposium is supported by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

The first annual National Physical Activity Report Card on Canada's children and youth will be a comprehensive measurement/benchmark of how, as a country, Canada is accountable for fostering active, healthy kids. The Canadian Physical Activity Report Card will look at a number of determinants that impact physical activity and childhood obesity including familial, environmental, cultural, socioeconomic, physical activity & inactivity, infrastructure of communities, government policy and education.

"Given the emerging worldwide childhood obesity pandemic, the knowledge and insight gained will provide us with an excellent opportunity to help influence building better programs, developing better policies and creating better messages for Canada" said Dr. Mark Tremblay. He insists that "we need to move the nation from awareness to action. This movement needs to be multi-level and cross-sectoral."

The Heart and Stroke Foundation (www.heartandstroke.ca) is a leading funder of heart and stroke research in Canada. Our mission is to improve the health of Canadians by preventing and reducing disability and death from heart disease and stroke through research, health promotion and advocacy.

Active Healthy Kids Canada (formerly The Foundation for Active Healthy Kids), was established as a charitable organization in 1994 to advocate the importance of physical activity for children and youth. As a national leader in this area, Active Healthy Kids Canada provides expertise and direction to decision makers at all levels, from policy-makers to parents, in order to increase the attention given to, investment in, and effective implementation of physical activity opportunities for all Canadian children and youth.

BACKGROUND

Health Implications of Physical Inactivity Indicators

- Assessment of Body Mass Index
- Assessment of Physical Fitness
- Assessment of Bone Health
- Assessment of Blood Pressure
- Assessment of Insulin Resistance
- Exploration of Mental Health Indicators

Physical Activity Indicators

- Proportion of children and youth accumulating sufficient moderate to vigorous activity for health benefit per week
- Average minutes of sedentary behaviour among children and youth per day
- Average minutes of "screen time", particularly television, per day

Familial

- Proportion of parents who identify 60 minutes per day of physical activity as important
- Parents who arrange transport for their children to physical activity opportunities
- Parents who limit "screen time" in the home to two hours per day

School Indicators

- Proportion of schools offering a quality physical education program each day
- Proportion of physical education programs that engage students in moderate to vigorous activity at least 50% of the class
- Proportion of schools offering physical education programs run by trained and qualified professionals
- Proportion of schools offering quality physical activity opportunities outside of class
- School administrator accountability for delivery of physical education outcomes

Community opportunities & Built Infrastructure Indicators

- Walkability and playability of community: Street connectivity and density - distance between home, school, play, family activity, peer activity
- Land use mix - parks, open spaces
- Safety
- Accessibility to diverse child and youth-centered physical activity programs being offered by caring adults
- Initiatives to reduce disparities

Cultural/Socioeconomic Indicators

- Assessment of Disparities - gender, socioeconomic status, ethnic, racial, geography, special needs,
- Barriers to physical activity
- Assess the "meaning" of physical activity for children and youth
- Assess what motivates physical activity or inactivity for children and youth

Government Policy Indicators

- Cross cutting across all other category areas as policy implications are relevant in each
- Assessment and monitoring of government policy incentives that promote physical activity (e.g. taxation)
- Tracking investment at all levels of government
- Monitoring of government strategy and policy implementation regarding physical activity promotion (e.g. Pan-Canadian, Healthy Living Strategy, provincial curriculum policies)

For a complete summary of results visit
www.activehealthykids.ca/symposium.cfm