

CLASS BRIEF

Classification of Laws Associated with School Students



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Contextual Influences on Weight Status Among Impoverished Adolescents: Neighborhood Amenities for Physical Activity and State Laws for Physical Education Time Requirements¹



#1 BACKGROUND

Inactivity persists among children from low-income homes.

Children whose families are of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to be inactive.² They do not spend as much time playing, and they watch more TV.³

#2 BACKGROUND

They're also more likely to live in areas without many recreational resources.

Children from low-income homes do not have equitable access to parks and nature trails, youth organizations, YMCAs, or other public facilities compared to their peers. They are less likely to have safe biking or walking routes to school.⁴



#3 FINDINGS

Schools may have a role to play in giving children from low-income homes a chance to be physically active and maintain a healthy weight.

States that mandate a physical education time requirement had fewer obese children. The data support state-mandated physical education time requirements. Mandating time requirements and helping communities offer more opportunities for exercise and recreation could help reduce obesity in children living in low-income households.



#4 FINDINGS

Children of lower socioeconomic status who lived in states with either strong physical education laws or sufficient neighborhood amenities for physical activity were less likely to be obese.



Children of lower socioeconomic status living in states with lengthier physical activity time requirements were 45 percent more likely to not be obese than children living in states with shorter physical activity time requirements.

The result for law requiring physical education adjusts for the influence of gender, age, race/ethnicity, and neighborhood amenities.



Children of lower socioeconomic status living in neighborhoods with more amenities were 15 percent more likely to not be obese than children with fewer neighborhood amenities.

The result for number of neighborhood amenities adjusts for the influence of gender, age, race/ethnicity, and state law requiring physical education.

#5 CONCLUSION

Researchers

Future research may benefit from determining what aspects of the neighborhood environment are important for physical activity in children from low-income homes.

Policymakers

Physical education time requirements could be considered in state-level policies to help children be more physically active.

Teachers, School Boards,
Family Members

Family members and educators may benefit from learning more about factors associated with physical activity and obesity among children from low-income homes.

About CLASS

Classification of Laws Associated with School Students (CLASS) is a scoring system used to monitor and evaluate state-level school physical education and nutrition policies that have been codified into law. CLASS briefs are 1-2 page summaries of publications and analyses of CLASS-related data and informational materials. For more information, go to class.cancer.gov.

REFERENCES

1. For a full summary of the research discussed in this CLASS brief, please refer to the source publication. Oh A, Hennessy E, McSpadden KE, Perna FM. Contextual influences on weight status among impoverished adolescents: Neighborhood amenities for physical activity and state laws for physical education time requirements. *J Phys Act Health*. 2015; 12(6): 875-878.
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