Physical Activity Pattern of Malaysian Preschoolers: Environment, Barriers, and Motivators for Active Play

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Abstract

Children’s physical activity has been correlated with child characteristics and social or physical environment. This study aimed to compare preschoolers’ physical activity among various sociodemographic characteristics and to determine barriers, motivators, and environmental factors for active play. A total of 835 preschoolers were included in this analysis. Time spent on active play, quiet play, and screen time was reported by parents. Boys spent significantly more time on active play and screen time than girls. Time spent on quiet play was highest in East Coast Peninsular Malaysia and lowest in Sarawak. Some 40% of children achieved active play recommendation while 27% exceeded daily screen time recommendation. Most parents reported that their child played actively in the house area; and that the main barrier and motivator to active play were safety and child’s enjoyment, respectively. These findings demonstrate that sociodemographic characteristics and environment should be considered in designing physical activity intervention programs.

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