

Kids run more slowly than 30 years ago

22nd November, 2013



A new report from the American Heart Association says fitness levels in children are lower today than they were 30 years ago. The

researchers looked at data from the past 46 years. The statistics were on more than 25 million children in 28 countries. The research team found that on average, today's children run one kilometre about one minute slower than their parents did three decades ago. The figures were roughly the same for boys and girls. The distance a child can run is decreasing by around half of one per cent every year. One of the biggest reasons for the slowdown in children's running ability is obesity. Kids are overweight because they are eating too much and not exercising enough.

The researchers say their report is worrying. If children are becoming fatter and less fit, they will be unhealthier in the future. Lead researcher Dr Grant Tomkinson said: "If a young person is generally unfit now, then they are more likely to develop conditions like heart disease later in life." Dr Tomkinson said: "We need to help to inspire children and youth to develop fitness habits that will keep them healthy now and into the future. They need to choose a range of physical activities they like or think they might like to try, and they need to get moving." He added: "Young people can be fit in different ways. They can be strong like a weightlifter, or flexible like a gymnast, or skillful like a tennis player."

Sources: BBC / Daily Mail / Heart.org

Writing

All children should do one hour of exercise every day at school. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

report / 30 years ago / data / statistics / on average / boys and girls / obesity / eating / worrying / unhealthier / unfit / heart disease / inspire / physical activities / flexible

True / False

- Kids are running more slowly because they have shorter legs. T / F
- Researches looked at statistics on over 25 million kids worldwide. T / F
- Boys are running much more slowly than girls. T / F
- Obesity is one of the biggest reasons for kids running more slowly. T / F
- The researchers are not so concerned about what they found out. T / F
- The researchers said too many kids today have heart disease. T / F
- A doctor said we need to inspire children to start exercising. T / F
- The doctor suggested kids could become a gymnast or tennis player. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. levels | a. figures |
| 2. data | b. concerning |
| 3. roughly | c. variety |
| 4. reasons | d. rates |
| 5. decreasing | e. usually |
| 6. worrying | f. dropping |
| 7. generally | g. about |
| 8. conditions | h. talented |
| 9. range | i. causes |
| 10. skillful | j. illnesses |

Discussion – Student A

- How fit are you?
- What exercise did you like and dislike when you were younger?
- Why are kids not as fit as their parents were at the same age?
- Who is more responsible for less-fit kids – parents, schools or the government?
- Do you like exercise?
- Do you think this trend will turn around in the future?
- Is exercise for children in danger of disappearing?
- Will obesity get worse in the future? How much worse?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. A new report from the | a. habits |
| 2. fitness levels in children | b. run is decreasing |
| 3. run one kilometre about one minute | c. are eating too much |
| 4. The distance a child can | d. a gymnast |
| 5. Kids are overweight because they | e. of physical activities |
| 6. children are becoming fatter | f. slower than their parents |
| 7. develop conditions like heart disease | g. American Heart Association |
| 8. develop fitness | h. and less fit |
| 9. They need to choose a range | i. are lower today |
| 10. flexible like | j. later in life |

Discussion – Student B

- Will (do) you make sure your kids get a lot of exercise?
- Which is more enjoyable, a video game or playing a team sport?
- How fit are children in your country?
- Should local communities start fitness programmes for kids?
- How can we make kids exercise more?
- How can you get fitter by studying English?
- What sport would you like to be really good at?
- What would you like to ask a fitness expert about kids' health?

Spelling

- the American Heart isictAason
- atscissitt were on more than 25 million
- The figures were rhugylo the same for boys
- The siacdtne a child can run
- ivrweeothg because they are eating too much
- not exercising eoqgnu
- The researchers say their report is ogrrwnyi
- a young person is aenyrglel unfit
- conditions like heart sdsaiee later in life
- We need to help to ipnersi children
- a range of hicyplsa activities
- lbexiefl like a gymnast

Answers – Synonym Match

1. d	2. a	3. g	4. i	5. f
6. b	7. e	8. j	9. c	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Play outside

You think playing outside is the best way for kids to keep fit. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ideas. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): having no fast food, cycling everywhere or playing sport at school.

Role B – No fast food

You think having no fast food is the best way for kids to keep fit. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ideas. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): playing outside, cycling everywhere or playing sport at school.

Role C – Cycle everywhere

You think cycling everywhere is the best way for kids to keep fit. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ideas. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): having no fast food, playing outside or playing sport at school.

Role D – Sport at school

You think playing sport at school is the best way for kids to keep fit. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their ideas. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): having no fast food, cycling everywhere or playing outside.

Speaking -

Rank these.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| • playing outside | • exercise bike at home |
| • school sports classes | • cycling to school |
| • club activities | • the gym |
| • sport with family | • exercises in their room |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.