

Canada's Children's Fitness Tax Credit benefits wealthier families

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When it comes to who gets the biggest bang for the buck from Canada's Children's Fitness Tax Credit (CFTC), it's wealthier families that benefit most, University of Alberta researchers have found.

It's the first study to look at the uptake and effectiveness of a tax credit to increase physical activity levels of children.

Behavioural scientist John Spence, and a team of researchers in the Faculty of [Physical Education](#) and Recreation, conducted an internet-based panel survey in March 2009 to see how effective the \$500 tax credit was in helping children become more active.

Of 2135 Canadians taking part in the survey, 1004 were [parents](#) of children between the ages of 2 and 18 years. Participants were asked if their child was involved in an organized physical activity program, what the costs were to register for the program, whether they were aware of the fitness tax credit; if they'd claimed for it in the 2007 tax year, and whether they planned to claim for it the next year.

Among parents, 54.4 per cent said their child was enrolled in an organized physical activity program; 55.5 per cent of them were aware of the program; 26.1 per cent of parents made claims for the tax credit in 2007, and 33.1 per cent of them planned to do so in 2008.

Overall, only 15.6 per cent reported that it had increased their children's participation in physical activity programs; however, lower-income

families used the [tax credit](#) less than wealthier families because they couldn't afford the registration fees for [physical activity](#) programs to begin with.

More information: The study was published in BMC Public Health in July 2010.

Provided by University of Alberta

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