

Project emphasizes the need to persuade parents to make their children walk to school

November 7 2014

An international research project, which includes researchers from the University of Granada, has proved the need for campaigns to persuade parents of the benefits involved in having their children walk to school. This also includes work on the perception about the security of the paths their children need to follow on the way to school. This research points out, besides, the need for public administrations to actively campaign to persuade children and their families to walk more often as part of their daily routines.

Many different surveys have demonstrated that [walking](#) to school on a daily basis has many positive effects upon [children's](#) health. This is the reason why researchers deem it important to be aware of the factors that influence this habit with a view to promoting it.

This research was published in the *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*. 1.219 children between 8 and 11, and 1.007 parents from 18 different US schools participated in it.

It aimed to analyze which factors influence the children's decision to walk to school, or fail to do so. These included sociodemographic factors (such as ethnicity and socioeconomic level); physical environment (climate and the nature of the paths leading to the school, as regards whether they are fit to be walking paths, or paths that lend themselves for the use of bicycles); the perceptions of the parents, in particular as regards the obstacles and even dangers which might discourage walking to school, and the need for social and peer support in terms of more

children within a given neighbourhood walking in groups to school.

Palma Chillón Garzón, a professor from the Department of Physical and Sports Education at the U. of Granada, and the leading researcher in the project, pointed out that the project concluded that parental attitudes and perceptions are fundamental when it comes to encouraging their children to walk to school, or fail to do so.

"Our research concludes that we must work to improve parental attitudes and perceptions, above all as regards the safety of the paths and the urban environment that children may be exposed to on their way to [school](#)."

More information: "A cross-sectional study of demographic, environmental and parental barriers to active school travel among children in the United States." *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 2014, 11:61 [DOI: 10.1186/1479-5868-11-61](#)

Provided by University of Granada

Citation: Project emphasizes the need to persuade parents to make their children walk to school (2014, November 7) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-11-emphasizes-parents-children-school.html>

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