

Study analyses the distance children are willing to walk to school, and how it increases with age

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A study conducted by researchers from the universities of Granada, Cambridge and East Anglia (UK) has for the first time analysed the distance that children are willing to walk to school every day, and has quantified how it increases with age.

The results, published in the journal *Health & Place*, have demonstrated that the distance between home and school is an environmental factor that clearly determines the possibility of walking to school or not.

A total of 2064 English schoolchildren participated in this survey. Scientists analysed them for several years, between the ages of 10 and 14. In each case, they analysed the means the [children](#) used to go to school (on foot, bike, by car, or public transport, i.e. by train or bus), as well as the distance that the children had to walk to school, when that was the case.

The results showed that the same group of children at the [age](#) of 10 walked an average of 1.4 km a day to go to school. This figure increased for the same group to 1,6 km at 11, and it went up to 3 km a day at 14, when they walked to high school.

To walk or not to walk: it is all in the distance

According to the PI of this research project, Palma ChillónGarzón, from the Physical Education Department at the U. of Granada, "This project confirms that children and adolescents who live closer to their school or highschool are more willing to walk than those who live further away. Besides, we have for the first time identified the distance which, at each age, children are willing to walk."

Chillón pointed out that walking to school "has multiple benefits for the health of school children, and of society in general. For instance, it diminishes environmental pollution and the danger of accidents at the

entrance to schools during rush hours."

Prof. Chillón thinks that the value of the distance children walk to school "is very useful when it comes to designing policies to facilitate the mobility of young students from home to school. For instance, they can establish the minimum distance required to start using [school](#) transport, and they can also facilitate [walking](#) these distances by establishing parking spaces for vehicles away from the main entrances to schools, depending on the age and on the students in question."

More information: "A longitudinal study of the distance that young people walk to school" *Health & Place*
[dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2014.10.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2014.10.013)

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