Active transportation among children and youth

Health indicator report

Background

- The purpose of this health indicator report is to provide information about the modes of transportation that children and youth aged 3-17 used when going to school in the past seven days, and the use of active forms of transportation when traveling to school in the past seven days.
- Using active transportation is beneficial for children and youth. It increases cardiorespiratory fitness,[1] helps maintain a healthy weight,[1] encourages a sense of autonomy and independence,[2] improves mental health,[2] builds social skills,[3] and enhances school performance.[4,5]
- Using active transportation is also beneficial for the environment in that it decreases greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and congestion,[6] and builds a sense of community.[5,7]
- This health indicator report uses data from the Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth (CHSCY).[8,9,10]
- In this report, active transportation includes traveling to school by bicycle, walking, or another form of active transportation in the past seven days.

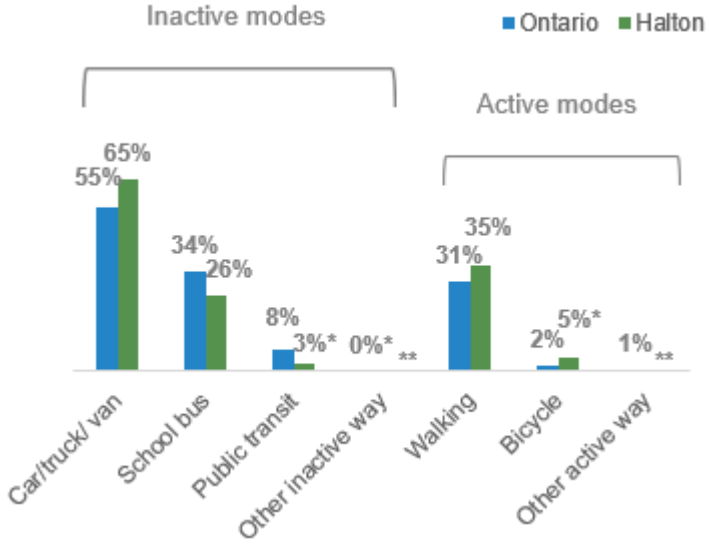
Key findings

- In 2019, the most commonly reported mode of transportation to school among Halton children and youth aged 3-17 in the past 7 days was by car, truck, or van.
- In 2019, 38% of Halton children and youth aged 3-17 and 32% of Ontario children and youth aged 3-17 reported using at least one form of active transportation (walking, bicycling, or other active way) to get to school in the past seven days. This difference **was statistically significant**.
- In 2019, Halton children and youth aged 3-17 who lived in Burlington, and those that were non-immigrants were most likely to report using at least one form of active transportation to get to school in the past seven days.
- There were no differences by sex, age, income, or parents' highest level of education in the proportion of Halton children and youth ages 3-17 who reported using at least one form of active transportation to get to school in the past seven days.

Active Transportation

Halton vs. Ontario: Modes of transportation

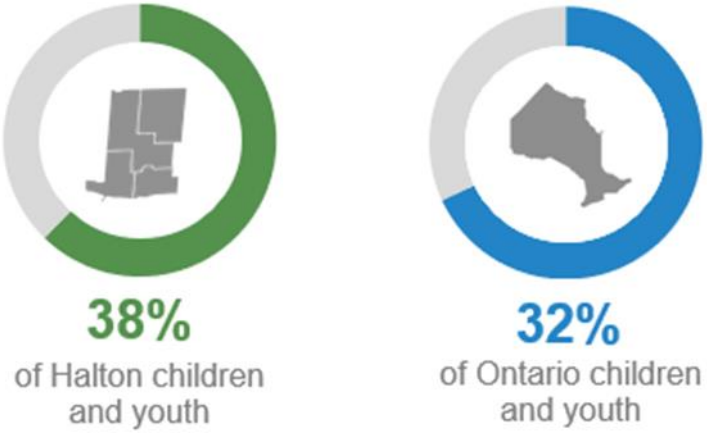
- In 2019, the most commonly reported mode of transportation to school among Halton and Ontario children and youth aged 3-17 in the past 7 days was by car, truck, or van.
- In 2019, Halton children and youth aged 3-17 were more likely than Ontario children and youth to have traveled to school in a car, truck, or van (65% vs. 55%), by walking (35% vs. 31%), or by bicycle (5% vs. 2%) in the past 7 days. These differences were **statistically significant**.
- In 2019, Halton children and youth aged 3-17 were less likely than Ontario children and youth to have traveled to school in a school bus (26% vs. 34%) or by public transit (3% vs. 8%) in the past 7 days. These differences were **statistically significant**.



Percentage of children and youth ages 3-17 who traveled to school at least once by car/truck/van, walking, school bus, bicycle, public transit, another active way, or another inactive way in the past 7 days, Halton Region and Ontario, 2019
Note: Percentages do not add to 100% since children and youth may have used more than one mode of transportation

Halton vs. Ontario: Active forms of transportation

- In 2019, a higher proportion of Halton children and youth aged 3-17 (38%) reported using at least one form of active transportation (walking, bicycling, other active way) to get to school in the past 7 days, compared to Ontario children and youth (32%). This difference was **statistically significant**.



Percentage of children and youth ages 3-17 who used at least one form of active transportation to get to school in the past 7 days, Halton Region and Ontario, 2019

Estimates marked with an asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability.
Estimates marked with a double asterisk (**) are not reportable.

Active Transportation

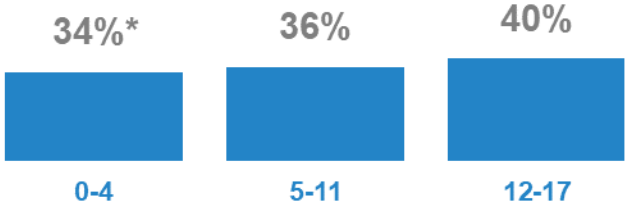
Sex

- In 2019, there were no statistically significant differences by sex in the proportion of Halton children and youth aged 3-17 who reported using at least one form of active transportation (walking, bicycling, other active way) to get to school in the past seven days.

Percentage of children and youth ages 3-17 who used at least one form of active transportation to get to school in the past 7 days, by sex, Halton Region, 2019

Age

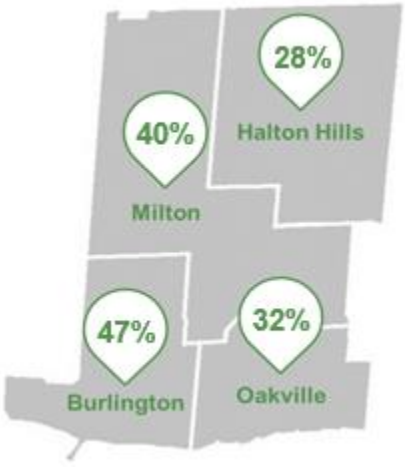
- In 2019, there were no statistically significant differences by age in the proportion of Halton children and youth aged 3-17 who reported using at least one form of active transportation (walking, bicycling, other active way) to get to school in the past seven days.



Percentage of children and youth ages 3-17 who used at least one form of active transportation to get to school in the past 7 days, by age group, Halton Region, 2019

Municipality

- In 2019, children and youth aged 3-17 who lived in Burlington (47%) were more likely than children and youth aged 3-17 who lived in Halton Hills (28%) or Oakville (32%) to report using at least one form of active transportation (walking, bicycling, other active way) to get to school in the past 7 days. These differences were **statistically significant**.



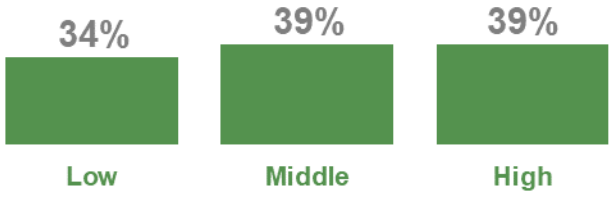
Percentage of children and youth ages 3-17 who used at least one form of active transportation to get to school in the past 7 days, by municipality, Halton Region, 2019

Estimates marked with an asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability.

Active Transportation

Income

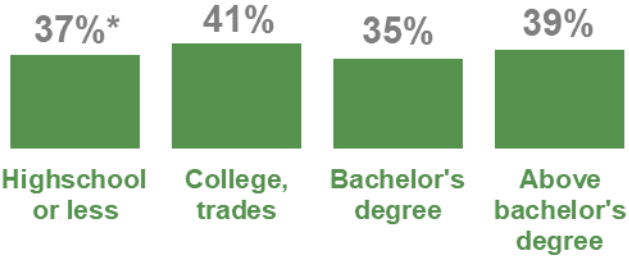
- In 2019, there were no statistically significant differences by income in the proportion of Halton children and youth aged 3-17 who reported using at least one form of active transportation (walking, bicycling, other active way) to get to school in the past seven days.



Percentage of children and youth ages 3-17 who used at least one form of active transportation to get to school in the past 7 days, by income, Halton Region, 2019

Parents' education

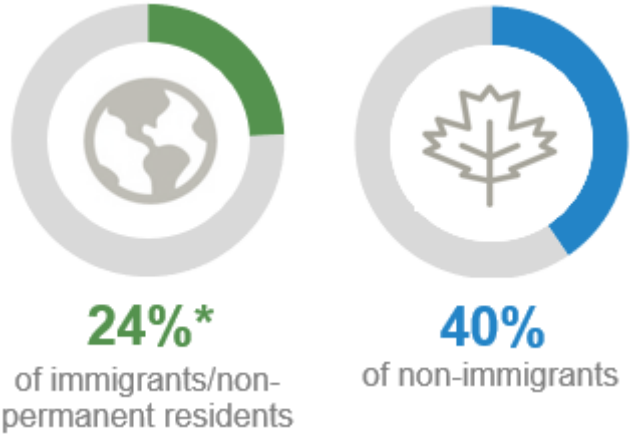
- In 2019, there were no statistically significant differences by parents' highest level of education in the proportion of Halton children and youth aged 3-17 who reported using at least one form of active transportation (walking, bicycling, other active way) to get to school in the past seven days.



Percentage of children and youth ages 3-17 who used at least one form of active transportation to get to school in the past 7 days, by parents' highest level of education, Halton Region, 2019

Immigrant status

- In 2019, children and youth aged 3-17 who were non-immigrants (40%) were more likely than children and youth aged 3-17 who were immigrants or non-permanent residents (24%*) to report using at least one form of active transportation (walking, bicycling, other active way) to get to school in the past 7 days. This difference was **statistically significant**.



Percentage of children and youth ages 3-17 who used at least one form of active transportation to get to school in the past 7 days, by child's immigrant status, Halton Region, 2019

Estimates marked with an asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability.

About CHSCY

- The Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth (CHSCY) explores issues that have an impact on the physical and mental health of children and youth. CHSCY was developed by Statistics Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Offord Centre.
- CHSCY is an occasional and voluntary survey that is designed to provide reliable estimates at the provincial level and across age groups. CHSCY was first conducted in 2019 and included 50,000 children and youth ages 1-17 from across Canada's provinces and territories, including 1,138 children and youth in Halton and 22,651 children and youth in Ontario.[8]
- In 2019, CHSCY was administered as a cross-sectional survey, meaning that respondents were surveyed at a single point in time.[8] In 2023, a longitudinal component is being added to the cross-sectional survey, and respondents from the previous cycle (2019) will be resurveyed to assess changes in health and well-being over time.[9]
- Two questionnaires were used to collect survey data. One questionnaire was administered to the Person Most Knowledgeable (PMK) about the selected child or youth aged 1 to 17.[10] A separate questionnaire was administered directly to the selected youth aged 12 to 17.[10] Youth aged 15 to 17 could be identified as their own PMK if they lived on their own or did not live with a parent.[10]
- For more information on CHSCY methodology and limitations, see the CHSCY Data Notes and Data Interpretation Guide at www.halton.ca/For-Residents/Public-Health/Health-Statistics.

Data notes

Definitions: **Active transportation** includes those who traveled to or from school by bicycle, walking, or another form of active transportation in the past seven days.

Data Source: Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth [2019], Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario MOHLTC

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References

1. Voss C. Public health benefits of active transportation. Children's Active Transportation, 2018;1-20.
2. Kleszczewska D, Mazur J, Bucksch J, et al. Active transport to school may reduce psychosomatic symptoms in school-aged children: Data from nine countries. Int J Environ Res Public Health, 2020;17(23):8709.
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4. Martinez-Gomez D, Ruiz JR, Gomez-Martinez S, et al. Active commuting to school and cognitive performance in adolescents: The AVENA study. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med, 2011;165(4):300-5.
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6. Hong A. Environmental benefits of active transportation. Children's Active Transportation, 2018;21-38.
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8. Statistics Canada. 2019. Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth. Accessed May 2023. https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=1215270
9. Statistics Canada. 2023. Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth. Accessed May 2023. https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5233#a2
10. Statistics Canada. 2020. 2019 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth (CHSCY): User Guide.

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