

NCCOR Youth Active Travel to School Initiative

What is the challenge?

Young people in the United States do not get enough physical activity. Only a quarter of youth aged 6–17 report getting 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each day, as recommended by the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition.

How can youth active travel to school (ATS) help?

Walking or biking to school can help children move more throughout the day, yet little is known about youth ATS behaviors.

How is NCCOR responding?

NCCOR is committed to advancing ATS research. Since 2017, the ATS Surveillance Initiative Workgroup has:

- Commissioned a systematic review on youth ATS surveillance systems that found few surveillance systems in North America capture data on youth ATS and limited monitoring exists for the policies, programs, or environmental changes that promote ATS.
- Convened a virtual workshop in October 2020 with experts in the field who identified key challenges related to surveillance and measurement of youth ATS.
- Published a white paper summarizing priorities from the workshop to address research gaps related to youth ATS.
- Published a commentary offering more insight into strengthening surveillance and data collection of ATS behaviors, as well as ATS environmental, policy, and program supports.

NCCOR's work aims to improve the public health surveillance of youth ATS across three content areas: youth behaviors, environmental supports, and program and policy supports.

NCCOR identified the following metrics to prioritize for ATS surveillance:

YOUTH BEHAVIORS:

	Mode of travel to/from school
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ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS:

	Traffic/route safety
	Distance from home to school
	Micro-scale built environment supports
	Macro-scale built environment supports
	Time spent traveling to/from school

PROGRAM AND POLICY SUPPORTS:

	Adoption of Safe Routes to School and other programs
	Zoning/land use policies establishing pedestrian-oriented communities and requiring sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes
	Adult presence
	Speed zones around schools
	State funding for AT/ATS programs

How can I learn more?

Visit the NCCOR website at www.nccor.org/physical-activity/ATS to learn more about the history of the ATS project and discover a suite of recently published resources to advance research in this area.

