Kids on Track: Investigating the Effectiveness of a Rewards-Based Fitness Program Using Activity Trackers with Elementary Students

Stark, Madison

Today's children are spending over fifty hours a week immersed in technology (Burke, 2003) and yet, seventy-five percent of these children fail to meet the World Health Organization's recommended physical activity level of sixty minutes a day. The purpose of this study was to determine the feasibility of developing a school-wide, rewards-based fitness program using fitness trackers for elementary children (kindergarten through 4th grade) with student mentors. In addition, the impact of age and gender on compliance was investigated. It was hypothesized that: it would be possible to establish a school-wide, rewards-based fitness program that would increase the physical activity of children; as age increased, the compliance of wearing the tracker daily would increase; male subjects would be more compliant and walk more steps when compared to females; and younger subjects (kindergarten - first grade) would have a greater step counts when compared to the older subjects. The following conclusions can be drawn: students walked the same amount of steps when rewarded as they did for their initial baselines. As age increased, the compliance did not always increase. The third graders had the lowest compliance levels compared to the other grade levels. The males did walk more when compared to females and that difference was statistically significant; however, they did not wear the trackers more then females.

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