



Children's Participation in Organised Sport - 2000, 2003, 2006

National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics

**Report prepared for the Standing Committee on
Recreation and Sport**

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Executive Summary

This paper examines changes in the patterns of participation of children aged 5-14 years in sport and other recreational activities undertaken outside of school hours. Data is presented from the Survey of Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities conducted in 2000, 2003 and 2006. Information includes the participation rates of children including hours and frequency of participation, by sex and age group.

Information on children's participation in selected other activities is also included to enable comparisons to be made with participation in organised sport. Throughout this report, the term 'organised sport', includes organised dancing lessons.

- Children's participation in organised sport increased between 2000 (64%) and 2003 (67%), with little change occurring in 2006 (68%). Most of the increase is due to increased participation by girls and by children aged 5-8 years.
- An increase in the average hours of participation by children in organised sport (in the 2 weeks prior to interview) occurred between 2003 (5.2 hours) and 2006 (6.4 hours). This increase occurred for both boys and girls and for children of all age groups.
- An increase in the average frequency of children's participation in organised sport (in the 12 months prior to interview) occurred between 2003 (75 times per year) and 2006 (81 times per year). This increase was primarily by children aged 9-11 years and by girls of all ages.
- There were no significant changes in the participation rates in organised sport between 2000 and 2006 for South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory. However, statistically significant changes occurred in New South Wales between 2000 (65%) and 2006 (70%); Queensland between 2003 (59%) and 2006 (66%); and Victoria between 2000 (63%) and 2003 (70%).
- There were increases in the average hours of participation between 2000 and 2006 in New South Wales (from 5.7 to 6.2 hours) and in Queensland (from 5.8 to 6.7 hours). An increase in hours participated was also recorded for children in Victoria between 2003 and 2006 (from 5.2 to 6.2 hours).
- In Australian Capital Territory, South Australia and Tasmania, where overall participation rates remained similar, there was an increase in the average hours of participation; from 5.2 to 6.9 in the ACT between 2000 and 2006; from 4.7 to 6.3 in South Australia and from 4.3 to 6.5 in Tasmania (both in between 2003 and 2006).
- The sport which showed the largest increase in organised participation outside school hours for boys and girls was swimming, in which participation increased from 14% in 2000 to 17% in 2006.
- The average hours that boys and girls spent watching television, videos or DVDs decreased from 22 hours in 2000 and 2003, to 20 hours in 2006.
- The proportion of children playing computer games decreased from 71% in 2003 to 64% in 2006. However, the average hours of participation increased from 7.5 hours over a 2 week period in 2003 to 7.9 hours in 2006. In 2006, more boys played computer games (77%) than girls (50%). Boys also spent more time playing computer games (9.3 hours) than girls (5.7 hours).
- Children increased their participation in bike riding (in the 2 weeks prior to interview) from 62% in 2003 from 68% in 2006. This increase was recorded primarily among girls.

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These are available at:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4901.0Apr%202006?OpenDocument>

1.0 Introduction

Children's participation in physical activities is an important factor in the current debate about concerns over childhood obesity. Children's participation in organised sport is an important element of a child's social development.

This paper examines changes in the participation of children aged 5-14 years in organised sport and other recreational activities undertaken outside of school hours between 2000 and 2006. Data is presented from the Survey of Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities conducted in 2000, 2003 and 2006.

Information includes the participation rates of children including hours and frequency of participation, by sex and age group. Information is also included on participation in organised cultural activities (playing a musical instrument, music lessons, singing, drama) and selected other activities (watching television or videos, reading for pleasure, bike riding, playing computer games and homework). Information on participation in organised dancing lessons and performances has been included with organised sport throughout this report.

The scope of sport activities included in the surveys is however, limited to participation in organised sport undertaken outside of normal school hours. This limits the ability to inform analyses about the total levels of children's physical activity. Information on bike riding and skateboarding however, are included to provide some complementary data on children's involvement in definable physical recreation activities.

1.1. Methodology - ABS Survey of Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities

The Survey of Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities was conducted throughout Australia as part of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) Monthly Population Survey (MPS) in April 2000, 2003 and 2006.

Information on children's participation in selected organised sports and organised cultural activities was collected in regard to the 12 months prior to interview. Information on children's participation in selected other activities was collected in regard to the two weeks prior to interview.

Reading for pleasure was introduced as an activity in the 2003 survey and homework in 2006. Children's attendance at selected cultural venues and events (libraries, museums or art galleries and performing arts events) was also introduced in the 2006 survey. Data on cultural attendance has not been presented in this report as there is no time series data available.

Information was collected through interviews conducted over a two week period during April of the survey year, from any responsible adult (mainly parents and guardians) in the household. Information was obtained about the activities of up to three children (up to six children for the 2000 survey) aged 5–14 years in the household.

Further information on the survey, can be found in the explanatory notes to the publication Children's Participation in Selected Culture and Leisure Activities (ABS catalogue no 4901.0).

1.2. Dancing included with Organised Sport

In addition to a question about participation in organised sport, the survey included a question about children's participation in dance classes and lessons undertaken outside of school hours in the 12 month prior to interview. At the 2006 survey, almost one quarter (23%) of girls reported participating in organised dancing outside school hours compared to just 2% of

boys. Table 1 shows how the participation rates of girls and boys compare when dancing is combined with organised sports. Combining sport with dancing increases the apparent participation rate by girls from 56% to 66%.

Table 1: Participation rate(a)(b) in sport and “sport and/or dancing”, by sex, April 2006

	Sport	Sport and/or Dancing
	%	%
Boys	68.9	69.4
Girls	57.8	66.4
Total	63.5	67.9

(a) Total aged 5-14 years

(b) Outside of school hours, during the 12 months prior to interview.

As this report aims to provide information on the level of children's participation in organised physical activity, data on children who reported dancing has been included with the data on children who participated in organised sport and throughout this report, the term "organised sport" includes organised dancing.

2.0. Organised sport, by age group and sex

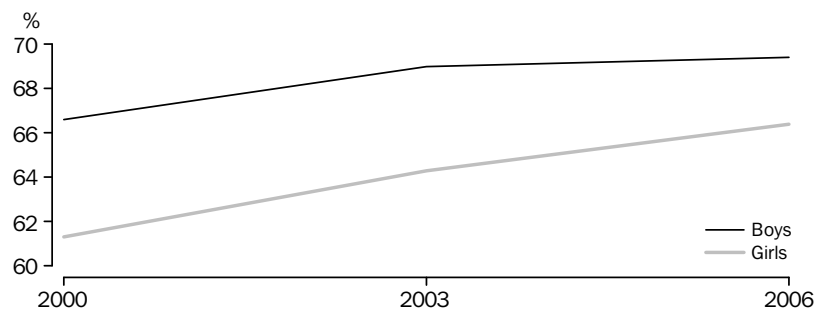
2.1. Participation (number and participation rate)

The participation rate by children in organised sport increased significantly from 64% in 2000 to 67% in 2003. There was no significant change between 2003 and 2006 where the latest survey shows a participation rate of (68%). Overall though, this represented an increase of 118,500 children participating in organised sport between 2000 and 2006.

The participation rate for girls increased significantly from 61% in 2000 to 64% in 2003 with no significant change between 2003 and 2006 (66%). This represented an additional 72,400 girls participating in organised sport between 2000 and 2006. There was no significant change in the participation rate of boys over the six year period.

There was no significant difference between the participation rate of boys and girls between 2006 and 2003 (69% and 66% respectively in 2006) whereas there had previously been a significant difference between boys and girls from 2000 to 2003. However, for children aged 12-14 years, the opposite was observed with there being no significant difference between the participation rates of boys and girls in 2000 and 2003, but in 2006, boys (72%) had a significantly higher participation rate than girls (64%). This is shown in figure 1.

FIGURE 1: PARTICIPATION RATE OF CHILDREN(a)(b), by sex—
2000, 2003, 2006



(a) Children aged 5-14 years

(b) Organised Sport outside of school hours, 12 months prior to interview, in April of the survey year

(c) Includes organised dancing.

Considering the age of the children, those aged 9-11 years compared to the other age groups had the highest participation rate in organised sport over the three surveys. Children aged 5-8 years consistently had the lowest participation rate in each survey. Children in this latter group however significantly increased their participation rate in organised sport from 57% in 2000 to 61% in 2003 and then recorded a similar rate of participation in 2006. This represented an additional 51,400 children aged 5-8 years participating in organised sport in 2006, compared to 2000. Children aged 9-11 years, and children aged 12-14 years, showed no significant change in participation rates over the three surveys. These data are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Participation(a) in sport and/or dancing, by age and sex, 2000, 2003, 2006

	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
	Number ('000)			Participation Rate (%)		
Boys						
5-8 years	320.1	341.2	336.5	58.9	63.7	63.4
9-11 years	315.3	307.2	309.9	74.3	74.3	74.7
12-14 years	267.1	288.9	302.1	69.2	70.7	71.7
Total	902.4	937.4	948.5	66.6	69.0	69.4
Girls						
5-8 years	283.0	297.3	318.0	55.3	58.6	63.1
9-11 years	264.5	276.9	289.1	67.5	70.5	73.5
12-14 years	241.9	255.1	254.7	63.1	65.4	63.6
Total	789.4	829.3	861.8	61.3	64.3	66.4
Total						
5-8 years	603.1	638.5	654.5	57.1	61.2	63.3
9-11 years	579.7	584.1	599.0	71.0	72.5	74.1
12-14 years	509.0	544.0	556.8	66.1	68.1	67.8
Total	1691.8	1766.7	1810.3	64.0	66.7	67.9

(a) Outside of school hours, during the 12 months prior to interview in April of the survey year.

In summary, the significant changes in participation rates in organised sport occurred between the earlier surveys of 2000 and 2003, primarily by children aged 5-8 years and by girls.

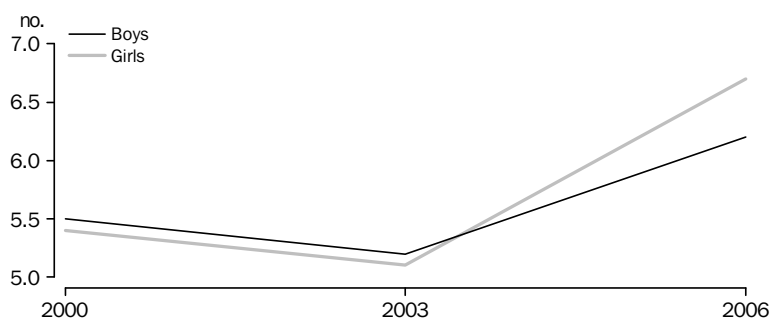
2.2. Hours of participation

There was little change in the average hours of participation between 2000 and 2003, however between 2003 and 2006, in the 2 weeks prior to interview, the average hours for all children increased significantly from 5.2 hours in 2003 to 6.4 hours in 2006. This increase also applied to both boys and girls with the average hours recorded for boys increasing from 5.2 hours in 2003 to 6.2 hours in 2006 whereas hours for girls increased from 5.1 hours in 2003 to 6.7 hours in 2006.

Considering age, children aged 12-14 years participated for the highest average number of hours in all surveys (2000, 2003 and 2006) and those aged 5-8 years had the lowest average hours of participation. Children of all age groups, however, significantly increased their average hours of participation between 2003 and 2006.

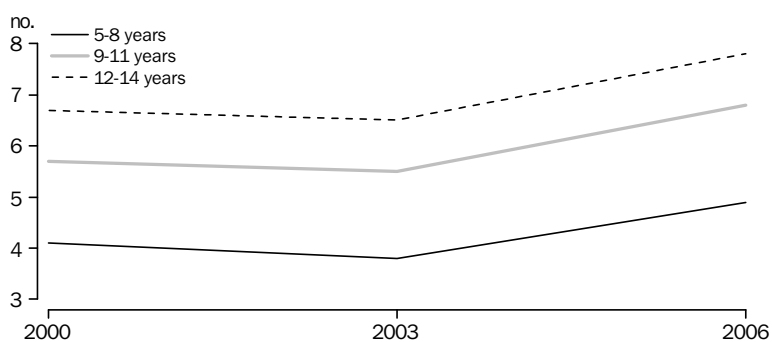
These data, summarising the average hours of children's participation in organised sport by sex and age group in 2000, 2003 and 2006, are shown in figures 2 and 3 and in table 3.

FIGURE 2: MEAN HOURS PARTICIPATED(a) (b), by sex—2000, 2003, 2006



(a) Children aged 5-14 years
 (b) Organised Sport outside of school hours, 2 weeks prior to interview, in April of survey year.
 (c) Includes organised dancing.

FIGURE 3: MEAN HOURS PARTICIPATED(a), by age group—2000, 2003, 2006



(a) Organised Sport outside of school hours, 2 weeks prior to interview, in April of survey year.
 (b) Includes organised dancing.

Table 3: Mean hours of participation(a) in sport and/or dancing, by age and sex, 2000, 2003, 2006

	2000	2003	2006
	Mean hours (no.)		
Boys			
5-8 years	4.4	3.7	4.8
9-11 years	5.6	5.4	6.1
12-14 years	6.7	6.7	7.8
Total	5.5	5.2	6.2
Girls			
5-8 years	3.8	3.8	5.1
9-11 years	5.8	5.6	7.5
12-14 years	6.7	6.2	7.7
Total	5.4	5.1	6.7
Total			
5-8 years	4.1	3.8	4.9
9-11 years	5.7	5.5	6.8
12-14 years	6.7	6.5	7.8
Total	5.4	5.2	6.4

(a) Outside of school hours, during the 2 weeks prior to interview in April of the survey year.

As well as the increase in average hours of participation between 2003 and 2006, the proportion of children participating for 10 hours or more also increased significantly from 10%

in 2003 to 13% in 2006. This increase represented an additional 44,600 boys and 50,100 girls participating for 10 hours or more in 2006 compared to 2003.

The highest participation rate over the three surveys however was for periods of 2 hours or less with about a quarter of all both boys and girls recording participation of this duration. The distribution of hours of participation for boys and girls over the three surveys is shown in table 4.

Table 4: Participation(a)(b) in sport and/or dancing, by hours and sex, 2000, 2003, 2006

	2000	2003	2006	2003	2003	2006
	Number ('000)			Participation Rate (%)		
Boys						
less than 2 hours (c)	298.3	321.4	305.0	22.0	23.7	22.3
3-4 hours	203.7	225.2	203.2	15.0	16.6	14.9
5-9 hours	250.1	254.0	258.9	18.5	18.7	18.9
10 hours or more	150.4	136.8	181.4	11.1	10.1	13.3
Girls						
less than 2 hours (c)	318.3	337.3	325.7	24.7	26.1	25.1
3-4 hours	177.7	188.9	184.1	13.8	14.6	14.2
5-9 hours	170.1	185.2	184.0	13.2	14.4	14.2
10 hours or more	123.2	117.9	168.0	9.6	9.1	12.9
Total						
less than 2 hours (c)	616.8	658.6	630.7	23.3	24.9	23.7
3-4 hours	381.4	414.2	387.3	14.4	15.6	14.5
5-9 hours	420.2	439.2	442.9	15.9	16.6	16.6
10 hours or more	273.5	254.6	349.4	10.4	9.6	13.1

(a) Total aged 5-14 years

(b) Outside of school hours during the 2 weeks prior to interview in April of the survey year

(c) Includes those who participated in the last 12 months but may have had zero hours in the 2 weeks prior to interview.

In summary, the increases in the average hours of participation by children in organised sport occurred between the latest surveys of 2003 and 2006 by both boys and girls, and by children of all age groups.

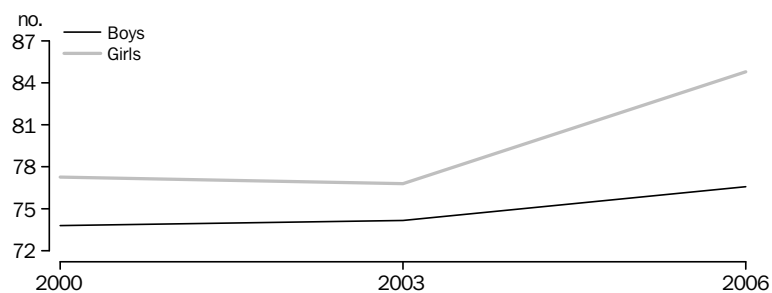
2.3. Frequency of participation (in the 12 months prior to interview)

Girls significantly increased their average frequency of participation in a 12 month period from 77 times in 2000 and 2003, to 85 times in 2006. There was no statistically significant change for boys over this period. Overall, the average frequency of participation for all children significantly increased from 75 times in 2000 and 2003 to 81 times in 2006.

Children aged 5-8 years had the lowest average frequency of participation (in the 12 months prior to interview) over the three surveys, compared to children aged 9-11 years and 12-14 years. However, consistent with the overall increase in participation by those in this youngest age group, these children showed a significant increase in average frequency of participation between 2000 (57 times) and 2006 (61 times). Children aged 9-11 years also significantly increased their average frequency of participation but from 2003 (79 times) to 2006 (88 times). Children aged 12-14 years showed no significant changes in the average frequency of participation over the three surveys.

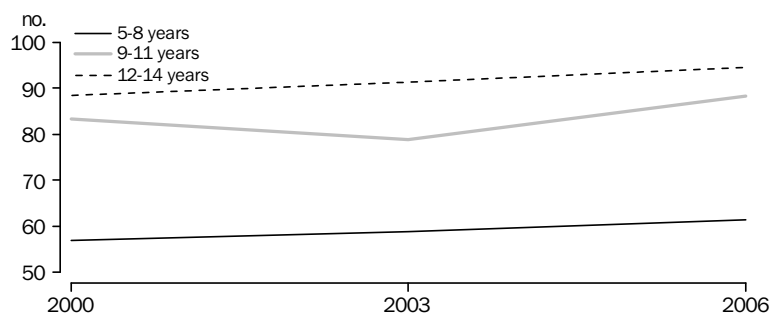
This data on frequency of participation in organised sport are shown in figures 4 and 5 and in table 5.

FIGURE 4: MEAN FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION(a)(b), by sex—
2000, 2003, 2006



(a) Children aged 5-14 years.
(b) Organised Sport outside of school hours, 12 months prior to interview, in April of survey year.
(c) Includes organised dancing.

FIGURE 5: MEAN FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION(a), by age group—
2000, 2003, 2006



(a) Organised Sport outside of school hours, 12 months prior to interview, in April of survey year.
(b) Includes organised dancing.

Table 5: Mean frequency of participation(a) in sport and/or dancing(a), by age and sex, 2000, 2003, 2006

	2000	2003	2006
	Mean times (no.)		
Boys			
5-8 years	56.4	55.5	59.4
9-11 years	80.6	78.1	79.8
12-14 years	86.7	92.1	92.5
Total	73.8	74.2	76.6
Girls			
5-8 years	57.4	62.6	63.6
9-11 years	86.6	79.6	97.4
12-14 years	90.3	90.4	96.9
Total	77.3	76.8	84.8
Total			
5-8 years	56.9	58.8	61.4
9-11 years	83.3	78.8	88.3
12-14 years	88.4	91.3	94.5
Total	75.4	75.4	80.5

(a) Outside of school hours, during the 12 months prior to interview in April of the survey year.

Looking at the distribution in the frequency of participation, there were relatively few infrequent participants with most children who participated, participating for 27-52 times, 53-104 times or 105 times over the twelve month period in each of the three surveys.

Overall, the proportion of total children participating for 105 times or more significantly increased to 16% in 2006 from 14% in 2003. This represented an additional 40,100 children participating for 105 times or more in 2006 than in 2003. This was mainly attributable to an increase in the frequency of participation by girls where the proportion who participated for 105 times or more increased significantly to 16% in 2006 from 14% in 2003.

For the other frequencies of participation, there was little change in the proportion of children who participated for 1-13 times, 14-16 times, 27-52 times and 53-104 times over the three surveys. These data are summarised in table 6.

Table 6: Participation(a)(b) in sport and/or dancing, by frequency and sex, 2000, 2003, 2006

	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
	Number ('000)			Participation Rate (%)		
Boys						
1-13 times	105.9	93.5	104.8	7.8	6.9	7.7
14-26 times	84.4	101.7	95.3	6.2	7.5	7.0
27-52 times	239.3	251.1	243.6	17.7	18.5	17.8
53-104 times	280.6	296.1	298.7	20.7	21.8	21.9
105 times or more	192.1	194.9	206.0	14.2	14.4	15.1
Girls						
1-13 times	106.0	99.8	98.7	8.2	7.7	7.6
14-26 times	74.1	78.9	82.7	5.8	6.1	6.4
27-52 times	223.5	236.5	250.9	17.4	18.3	19.3
53-104 times	215.9	232.6	218.9	16.8	18.0	16.9
105 times or more	169.7	181.6	210.6	13.2	14.1	16.2
Total						
1-13 times	211.8	193.2	203.6	8.0	7.3	7.6
14-26 times	158.6	180.6	178.0	6.0	6.8	6.7
27-52 times	462.9	487.6	494.5	17.5	18.4	18.6
53-104 times	496.5	528.7	517.6	18.8	20.0	19.4
105 times or more	361.8	376.5	416.6	13.7	14.2	15.6

(a) Total aged 5-14 year

(b) Outside of school hours during the 2 weeks prior to interview in April of the survey year.

In summary, the increase in the average frequency of children's participation in organised sport occurred between 2003 and 2006 and was recorded primarily by children aged 9-11 years and by girls of all ages.

2.4. State or territory

There were statistically significant increases in organised sport participation rates by children in New South Wales between 2000 (65%) and 2006 (70%); in Queensland between 2003 (59%) and 2006 (66%); and in Victoria between 2000 (63%) and 2003 (70%). However, no other states or territories showed any significant changes in participation rates throughout these periods. These data are shown in table 7.

Table 7: Participation(a)(b) in sport and/or dancing, by state of usual residence, 2000, 2003, 2006

	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
	Number ('000)			Participation rate (%)		
New South Wales	576.1	595.7	617.2	65.1	67.6	69.7
Victoria	405.1	451.6	435.4	63.0	69.8	67.2
Queensland	310.0	310.8	356.6	61.0	59.2	65.6
South Australia	129.8	131.6	127.7	65.2	67.3	66.5
Western Australia	181.9	192.4	184.6	67.3	71.8	69.6
Tasmania	42.5	42.4	41.2	62.4	64.6	62.7
Northern Territory(c)	17.2	14.2	16.2	68.5	62.0	69.8
Australian Capital Territory	29.2	28.1	31.3	67.1	66.0	75.1
Australia	1 691.8	1 766.7	1 810.3	64.0	66.7	67.9

(a) Total aged 5-14 years

(b) Outside of school hours, during the 12 months prior to interview in April of the survey year

(c) Excludes those living in very remote parts of Australia. In the Northern Territory, this accounted for 29% of population in 2006, 22% of in 2003 and 23% in 2000.

The increases in overall participation rates are reflected in the increases in the duration of participation by children in the relevant states. From 2000 to 2006, the average hours in the two-week period increased from 5.7 to 6.7 hours in New South Wales and from 5.8 to 6.7 hours in Queensland. The increase in Victoria however was recorded between 2003 and 2006 (from 5.2 to 6.2 hours).

However, in some other states where the participation rates in the three surveys were similar, the average hours increased from 5.2 to 6.9 in the Australian Capital Territory between 2000 and 2006; from 4.7 to 6.3 in South Australia; and from 4.3 to 6.5 in Tasmania (both in between 2003 and 2006).

At the same time, the frequency of participation over the twelve-month period increased in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania.

The mean hours and number of times participated for each state are shown in tables 8 and 9.

Table 8: Participation(a)(b) in sport and/or dancing, by state of usual residence, 2000, 2003, 2006

	2000			2003			2006		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
	Mean hours (c)								
New South Wales	5.5	5.9	5.7	5.2	5.3	5.3	6.3	7.1	6.7
Victoria	5.8	5.0	5.4	5.2	5.2	5.2	6.1	6.3	6.2
Queensland	6.1	5.4	5.8	5.8	5.4	5.6	6.6	6.7	6.7
South Australia	4.7	4.9	4.8	5.2	4.2	4.7	5.8	6.9	6.3
Western Australia	4.8	5.4	5.1	4.4	4.7	4.6	4.9	5.9	5.4
Tasmania	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.0	4.7	4.3	6.5	6.6	6.5
Northern Territory (d)	5.9	5.3	5.6	5.0	7.0	5.9	6.0	7.6	6.7
Australian Capital Territory	5.8	4.5	5.2	5.4	4.3	4.9	6.0	7.8	6.9
Australia	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.1	5.2	6.1	6.7	6.4

(a) Total aged 5-14 years

(b) Outside of school hours, during the 12 months prior to interview in April of the survey year

(c) Mean hours participated in all sports and dancing in last two weeks of school term prior to interview

(d) Excludes those living in very remote parts of Australia. In the Northern Territory, this accounted for 29% of population in 2006, 22% of in 2003 and 23% in 2000.

Table 9: Participation(a)(b) in sport and/or dancing, by state of usual residence, 2000, 2003, 2006

	2000			2003			2006		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
	Mean times (c)								
New South Wales	73.9	84.0	78.5	77.5	79.1	78.2	80.3	90.0	84.9
Victoria	75.9	74.6	75.3	72.0	75.4	73.7	74.5	78.0	76.1
Queensland	76.7	71.0	74.1	71.3	85.2	77.8	77.8	88.5	82.9
South Australia	73.8	74.1	73.9	72.6	72.6	72.6	74.0	79.3	76.5
Western Australia	65.5	78.1	71.6	75.5	65.6	70.7	71.4	83.7	77.4
Tasmania	61.0	67.6	64.3	60.4	63.3	61.7	72.4	75.2	73.8
Northern Territory (d)	68.8	64.9	67.0	92.5	95.7	93.9	64.7	68.3	66.3
Australian Capital Territory	81.2	67.7	74.9	79.4	71.3	75.4	74.1	81.0	77.5
Australia	73.8	77.0	75.3	74.2	76.8	75.4	76.6	84.8	80.5

(a) Total aged 5-14 years

(b) Outside of school hours, during the 12 months prior to interview in April of the survey year

(c) Mean times participated in all sports and dancing in last twelve months

(d) Excludes those living in very remote parts of Australia. In the Northern Territory, this accounted for 29% of population in 2006, 22% of in 2003 and 23% in 2000.

Over the three surveys, children aged 5-8 years had the lowest participation rate, the lowest average number of hours and the lowest average frequency of participation in organised sport, compared with children aged 9-11 years and children aged 12-14 years. This was consistent in all state and territories. Factors associated with stages of childhood development may be related to this. However the minimum age of children before they are allowed to participate in school-organised sports competitions (undertaken outside school hours) may also need to be taken into account when interpreting this information. For example, the minimum age of participation varies between the states and territories; from 8 years in the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia to 9 years in Victoria and 10 years in Queensland and the Northern Territory.

3.0. Most popular sports

The sport with the most noticeable change in the participation rate was swimming, which significantly increased from 14% in 2000 to 17% in 2006. This increase occurred for both boys and girls and represents an additional 82,400 children participating in swimming in 2006 compared to 2000.

3.1. Boys

In 2000, 2003 and 2006, the organised sports which consistently reported the highest participation rate for boys were soccer (outdoor), swimming and Australian rules football.

The sport with the most noticeable change in participation rates for boys was swimming, which increased significantly from 13% in 2000 to 17% in 2006. This represented an additional 48,700 boys participating in swimming. This increase was primarily recorded for boys aged 5-8 years who increased their participation from 18% in 2000 to 24% in 2006, an increase of 28,300 boys.

3.2. Girls

In 2000, 2003 and 2006, the organised sports which consistently reported the highest participation rate by girls were dancing, swimming and netball.

The sports with the largest change in participation rates for girls between 2000 and 2006 were dancing and soccer (outdoor).

Girl's participation in dancing increased from 20% in 2000 to 24% in 2006, representing an additional 56,900 girls. This was recorded, primarily for girls aged 5-8 years between 2000 (23%) and 2003 (27%) and for girls aged 12-14 years between 2000 (14%) and 2003 (20%). This represented an additional 21,700 and 22,500 girls respectively participating over this period.

The participation rate for girls in soccer (outdoor) increased from 3% in 2000 to 6% in 2006. This increase represented an additional 45,300 girls between 2000 and 2006 and was seen in girls across all age groups.

The top ten sports are summarised in table 10. Further detail of the sports undertaken by boys and girls in each age group in 2000, 2003 and 2006 is included in the table in Appendix 1.

Table 10: Participation(a)(b), ranked by the most popular organised sports in 2006, by sex, 2000, 2003, 2006

		2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
		Number ('000)			Participation Rate (%)		
Boys							
1	Soccer (outdoor)	265.0	301.1	268.5	19.6	22.2	19.6
2	Swimming	177.0	213.6	225.7	13.1	15.7	16.5
3	Australian rules football	170.3	184.2	188.5	12.6	13.6	13.8
4	Cricket (outdoor)	133.6	124.2	137.8	9.9	9.1	10.1
5	Tennis	124.8	128.3	109.3	9.2	9.5	8.0
6	Rugby league	92.5	76.2	107.6	6.8	5.6	7.9
7	Basketball	119.6	116.1	101.7	8.8	8.6	7.4
8	Martial arts	72.7	83.9	83.4	5.4	6.2	6.1
9	Rugby union	36.1	32.5	53.5	2.7	2.4	3.9
10	Soccer (indoor)	19.1	25.8	44.8	1.4	1.9	3.3
Girls							
1	Dancing(c)	251.7	309.7	308.6	19.5	24.0	23.8
2	Swimming	203.1	225.5	236.8	15.8	17.5	18.2
3	Netball	234.9	233.0	224.1	18.2	18.1	17.3
4	Tennis	99.0	100.1	85.8	7.7	7.8	6.6
5	Soccer (outdoor)	37.3	54.8	82.6	2.9	4.2	6.4
6	Basketball	80.7	88.9	74.6	6.3	6.9	5.7
7	Gymnastics	55.1	69.9	71.7	4.3	5.4	5.5
8	Athletics / track and field	51.9	48.6	41.5	4.0	3.8	3.2
9	Martial arts	31.9	45.8	37.0	2.5	3.6	2.9
10	Horse riding and equestrian events	25.4	28.0	36.1	2.0	2.2	2.8

Table 10 (cont): Participation(a)(b), ranked by the most popular organised sports in 2006, by sex, 2000, 2003, 2006

		2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
		Number ('000)			Participation Rate (%)		
Total							
1	Swimming	380.1	439.1	462.5	14.4	16.6	17.4
2	Soccer (outdoor)	302.3	355.9	351.1	11.4	13.4	13.2
3	Dancing(c)	274.7	332.3	341.6	10.4	12.6	12.8
4	Netball	241.4	241.2	225.8	9.1	9.1	8.5
5	Australian rules football	174.4	193.6	200.4	6.6	7.3	7.5
6	Tennis	223.8	228.5	195.1	8.5	8.6	7.3
7	Basketball	200.3	205.0	176.3	7.6	7.7	6.6
8	Cricket (outdoor)	140.9	133.6	143.5	5.3	5.0	5.4
9	Martial arts	104.6	129.7	120.4	4.0	4.9	4.5
10	Rugby league	95.1	77.1	111.5	3.6	2.9	4.2

(a) Total aged 5-14 years

(b) Outside of school hours, during the 12 months prior to interview in April of the survey year

(c) Includes total whose participation in dancing was recorded as either an organised sport or as an organised cultural activity.

4.0. Selected other activities (in the 2 weeks prior to interview) and organised cultural activities

4.1. Selected other activities

In the two weeks prior to interview in April 2006, the selected activities with the significantly highest participation rate by children outside of school hours were:

- watching television, videos or DVDs (97% or 2.6 million children);
- homework (83% or 2.2 million) and
- reading for pleasure (75% or 2.0 million).

These activities also featured amongst those in which children spent the highest average hours in the two-week period but with the addition of playing computer and electronic games. The highest average hours were:

- watching television, videos or DVDs (19.9 hours);
- playing electronic computer games (7.9 hours);
- reading for pleasure (7.3 hours) and
- homework (7.2 hours).

In comparison, in 2006, 68% (1.8 million) children participated in organised sport, spending an average of 6.4 hours over the same two-week period on sport.

4.2. Watching television, videos or DVDs

There was little change in the participation rates of children watching television, videos or DVDs over the three surveys. However, the average time that children spent watching television significantly decreased from 21.9 hours in 2003 to 19.9 hours in 2006. This reduction occurred for both boys and girls.

The participation rates for watching television, videos or DVDs were similar for boys and girls and they also spent a similar average number of hours watching television, videos or DVDs.

4.3. Playing electronic or computer games

In 2006, boys had a significantly higher participation rate for playing electronic or computer games (77%) than girls (50%). However the participation rate reduced significantly for both compared to 2003 with the participation rate for boys decreasing from 82% in 2003 to 77% in 2006 and girls from 59% to 50% over the same period. This represented a decrease of 61,800 boys and 112,900 girls playing electronic or computer games between these surveys.

The overall participation rate decreased from 64% in 2006 to 71% in 2003. This was after increasing from 69% in 2000.

However, the average time that both boys and girls spent playing electronic or computer games increased significantly from 7.5 hours in 2003 to 7.9 hours in 2006. Boys also spent a significantly higher average number of hours playing electronic or computer games (9.3 hours), compared to girls (5.7 hours) in 2006.

4.4. Bike riding

The participation rates for children involved in bike riding as a leisure activity increased significantly to 68% in 2006 from 62% in 2003. There was no significant change between 2003 and 2000 (64%). Between 2000 and 2006, this represented an additional 120,100 children participating in bike riding. This increase was primarily recorded for girls with there being no significant change in the participation rate for boys over the three survey periods. Boys however had a significantly higher participation rate (73%) than girls (62%) in 2006.

The average hours that boys spent bike riding decreased significantly from 7.2 hours in 2000 to 6.3 hours in 2003, with no significant change between 2003 and 2006 (6.7 hours). There was little change in the average hours that girls spent bike riding. In 2006, boys participated in bike riding for a significantly higher average number of hours (6.7 hours) than girls (4.6 hours).

4.5. Skateboarding and rollerblading

The participation rate for children in skateboarding or rollerblading decreased from 31% in 2000 to 23% in 2003, with no significant change between 2003 and 2006. This significant decrease was recorded for both boys and girls. Boys' participation decreased from 36% in 2000 to 29% in 2003, and girls' participation reduced from 26% in 2000 to 17% in 2003. This represented a decrease of 82,300 boys and 107,300 girls participating in this activity between 2000 and 2006. In 2006, boys had a significantly higher participation rate in skateboarding or rollerblading (29%) than girls (18%).

The average hours of boys' participation also showed a significant decrease between 2000 and 2003 (6.4 to 5.7 hours) before returning to 6.4 hours in 2006. There was little change in the average hours that girls spent on this activity. In 2006, boys participated in skateboarding or rollerblading for a significantly higher average number of hours (6.4 hours) than girls (3.9 hours).

4.6. Art and craft

The participation rate for children in art and craft activities significantly increased from 44% in 2000 to 50% in 2003 but with no significant change between 2003 and 2006. This was due to increases by both boys and girls. Boys' participation increased from 34% in 2000 to 39% in 2003 and girls participation increased from 55% in 2000 to 61% in 2003. This represented an increase of 45,500 boys and 92,900 girls between 2000 and 2006. In 2006, girls had a significantly higher participation rate in art and craft activities (61%) than boys (37%).

In contrast, the average hours that children spent on art and craft activities significantly decreased from 6.8 hours in 2000 to 6.0 hours in 2003, with no significant change between

2003 and 2006. This was due to decreases by both boys and girls. The average hours of boys' participation decreased from 6.1 hours in 2000 to 5.2 hours in 2003 with girls' participation reducing from 7.3 hours in 2000 to 6.5 hours in 2003. In 2006, girls participated for a significantly higher average number of hours in art and craft activities (6.4 hours) than boys (4.9 hours).

4.7. Organised cultural activities (playing a musical instrument, singing and drama)

The participation rate for children who played a musical instrument significantly increased to 20% in 2006 from 18% in 2000. This represented an additional 46,600 children doing this activity between 2000 and 2006. The average hours that children spent playing a musical instrument also significantly increased to 5.7 hours in 2006 from 4.8 hours in 2000.

The participation rate of children involved in organised singing activities significantly increased to 6% in 2006 from 5% in 2000, representing an additional 22,400 children. However, there was little change in the average hours of participation by children in organised singing activities.

There was minimal change in the participation rate, or average hours, of children participating in drama activities between 2000 and 2006.

More detailed data on the participation rates and average hours participated in selected other and cultural activities by sex in 2000, 2003 and 2006 are included in the tables in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1: Most popular sports by sex and age group

Table 1: Boys' participation(a) ranked by the most popular organised sports in 2006, by age, 2000, 2003, 2006

		2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
		Number ('000)			Participation Rate(b) %		
5-8 years							
1	Swimming	97.9	126.9	126.2	18.0	23.7	23.8
2	Soccer (outdoor)	105.2	118.7	106.6	19.4	22.2	20.1
3	Australian rules football	52.8	68.5	63.5	9.7	12.8	12.0
4	Tennis	39.5	39.3	37.2	7.3	7.3	7.0
5	Cricket (outdoor)	26.1	26.5	34.7	4.8	4.9	6.5
6	Martial arts	30.2	38.3	34.6	5.6	7.2	6.5
7	Rugby league	26.5	18.2	33.4	4.9	3.4	6.3
8	Basketball	26.7	26.0	21.3	4.9	4.9	4.0
9	Athletics / track and field	21.7	19.3	16.9	4.0	3.6	3.2
10	Gymnastics	9.6	13.8	15.9	1.8	2.6	3.0
9-11 years							
1	Soccer (outdoor)	100.0	103.7	88.2	23.6	25.1	21.3
2	Australian rules football	65.3	53.9	69.1	15.4	13.0	16.7
3	Swimming	55.6	64.8	64.7	13.1	15.7	15.6
4	Cricket (outdoor)	55.2	44.4	45.9	13.0	10.7	11.1
5	Tennis	48.0	52.7	38.0	11.3	12.7	9.2
6	Rugby league	31.9	28.5	38.0	7.5	6.9	9.2
7	Basketball	52.0	43.9	35.5	12.2	10.6	8.6
8	Martial arts	24.5	22.3	27.8	5.8	5.4	6.7
9	Rugby union	14.0	10.0	16.9	3.3	2.4	4.1
10	Soccer (indoor)	7.4	6.7	16.5	1.7	1.6	4.0
12-14 years							
1	Soccer (outdoor)	59.8	78.7	73.6	15.5	19.3	17.5
2	Cricket (outdoor)	52.3	53.2	57.2	13.5	13.0	13.6
3	Australian rules football	52.2	61.7	55.9	13.5	15.1	13.3
4	Basketball	40.9	46.3	44.9	10.6	11.3	10.7
5	Rugby league	34.1	29.6	36.2	8.8	7.2	8.6
6	Swimming	23.5	21.9	34.8	6.1	5.4	8.3
7	Tennis	37.4	36.3	34.1	9.7	8.9	8.1
8	Rugby union	13.5	16.8	25.3	3.5	4.1	6.0
9	Martial arts	18.1	23.2	21.0	4.7	5.7	5.0
10	Soccer (indoor)	*5.8	11.7	14.4	*1.5	2.9	3.4

* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

(a) Outside of school hours during the 12 months prior to interview in April of the survey year

(b) Figures may differ slightly to the figures published in the ABS publication Total's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities (cat. no. 4901.0) due to rounding of decimal points.

Table 2: Girls' participation(a) ranked by the most popular organised sports in 2006, by age, 2000, 2003, 2006

		2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
		Number ('000)			Participation Rate(b) %		
5-8 years							
1	Dancing(c)	116.4	138.1	139.8	22.7	27.2	27.7
2	Swimming	104.0	117.7	128.2	20.3	23.2	25.4
3	Gymnastics	34.4	44.3	45.8	6.7	8.7	9.1
4	Netball	37.2	44.4	44.4	7.3	8.8	8.8
5	Soccer (outdoor)	11.7	13.7	22.9	2.3	2.7	4.5
6	Tennis	31.3	26.7	22.6	6.1	5.3	4.5
7	Basketball	15.0	22.0	15.0	2.9	4.3	3.0
8	Martial arts	12.3	13.4	14.7	2.4	2.6	2.9
9	Athletics / track and field	15.1	15.9	13.1	2.9	3.1	2.6
10	Horse riding and equestrian events	*5.7	6.7	9.0	*1.1	1.3	1.8
9-11 years							
1	Netball	102.9	91.3	98.0	26.3	23.3	24.9
2	Dancing(c)	80.7	94.5	93.0	20.6	24.1	23.6
3	Swimming	64.2	75.2	75.1	16.4	19.2	19.1
4	Tennis	35.7	41.3	33.8	9.1	10.5	8.6
5	Soccer (outdoor)	11.1	21.2	29.6	2.8	5.4	7.5
6	Basketball	34.5	31.9	28.8	8.8	8.1	7.3
7	Gymnastics	15.9	17.8	19.2	4.1	4.5	4.9
8	Athletics / track and field	21.9	16.9	18.1	5.6	4.3	4.6
9	Horse riding and equestrian events	9.3	10.1	12.8	2.4	2.6	3.3
10	Martial arts	13.2	19.4	11.5	3.4	4.9	2.9
12-14 years							
1	Netball	94.8	97.4	81.6	24.7	25.0	20.4
2	Dancing(c)	54.6	77.1	75.8	14.2	19.8	18.9
3	Swimming	34.8	32.7	33.6	9.1	8.4	8.4
4	Basketball	31.2	34.9	30.8	8.1	8.9	7.7
5	Soccer (outdoor)	14.5	20.0	30.1	3.8	5.1	7.5
6	Tennis	32.0	32.2	29.4	8.3	8.3	7.3
7	Horse riding and equestrian events	10.4	11.1	14.3	2.7	2.8	3.6
8	Hockey	13.4	15.3	12.6	3.5	3.9	3.1
9	Touch football	11.4	12.8	12.3	3.0	3.3	3.1
10	Martial arts	*6.5	13.0	10.8	1.7	3.3	2.7

* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

(a) Outside of school hours during the 12 months prior to interview in April of the survey year

(b) Figures may differ slightly to the figures published in the ABS publication Total's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities (cat. no. 4901.0) due to rounding of decimal points

(c) Includes Total whose participation in dancing was recorded as either an organised sport or as an organised cultural activity.

Table 3: Total participation(a) ranked by the most popular organised sports in 2006, by age, 2000, 2003, 2006

		2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
		Number ('000)			Participation Rate(b) %		
5-8 years							
1	Swimming	202.0	244.6	254.3	19.1	23.5	24.6
2	Dancing (c)	124.9	145.4	152.9	11.8	13.9	14.8
3	Soccer (outdoor)	116.9	132.3	129.6	11.1	12.7	12.5
4	Australian rules football	54.7	71.3	69.8	5.2	6.8	6.7
5	Gymnastics	43.9	58.1	61.7	4.2	5.6	6.0
6	Tennis	70.8	66.0	59.8	6.7	6.3	5.8
7	Martial arts	42.4	51.7	49.3	4.0	5.0	4.8
8	Netball	38.2	46.0	44.7	3.6	4.4	4.3
9	Basketball	41.7	48.0	36.3	4.0	4.6	3.5
10	Cricket (outdoor)	26.7	28.5	36.2	2.5	2.7	3.5
9-11 years							
1	Swimming	119.8	139.9	139.8	14.7	17.4	17.3
2	Soccer (outdoor)	111.1	124.9	117.8	13.6	15.5	14.6
3	Dancing(c)	85.8	104.4	105.4	10.5	13.0	13.0
4	Netball	106.5	94.6	99.5	13.0	11.7	12.3
5	Australian rules football	66.2	59.6	73.5	8.1	7.4	9.1
6	Tennis	83.6	94.0	71.9	10.2	11.7	8.9
7	Basketball	86.5	75.8	64.3	10.6	9.4	8.0
8	Cricket (outdoor)	57.5	48.1	47.9	7.0	6.0	5.9
9	Martial arts	37.7	41.7	39.3	4.6	5.2	4.9
10	Rugby league	33.4	29.0	38.8	4.1	3.6	4.8
12-14 years							
1	Soccer (outdoor)	74.3	98.7	103.7	9.7	12.4	12.6
2	Dancing(c)	63.9	82.4	83.3	8.3	10.3	10.1
3	Netball	96.6	100.6	81.6	12.6	12.6	9.9
4	Basketball	72.1	81.2	75.8	9.4	10.2	9.2
5	Swimming	58.3	54.6	68.4	7.6	6.8	8.3
6	Tennis	69.4	68.5	63.5	9.0	8.6	7.7
7	Cricket (outdoor)	56.7	57.0	59.3	7.4	7.1	7.2
8	Australian rules football	53.5	62.7	57.1	7.0	7.8	6.9
9	Rugby league	34.4	29.9	36.8	4.5	3.7	4.5
10	Martial arts	24.5	36.3	31.8	3.2	4.5	3.9

(a) Outside of school hours during the 12 months prior to interview in April of the survey year

(b) Figures may differ slightly to the figures published in the ABS publication Total's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities (cat. no. 4901.0) due to rounding of decimal points

(c) Includes Total whose participation in dancing was recorded as either an organised sport or as an organised cultural activity.

Appendix 2: Selected other activities and organised cultural activities

Table 1 Participation(a) in selected leisure activities(b) and organised cultural activities(c), by sex, 2000, 2003, 2006

	2000	2003	2006	2000	2003	2006
	Number ('000)			Participation Rate (d) (%)		
Boys						
Other Activities (b)						
Watching TV, videos or DVDs	1 312.2	1 338.6	1 333.5	96.9	98.7	97.6
Homework	..	..	1 107.1	..	..	81.0
Reading	..	919.2	940.8	..	67.8	68.8
Bike riding	963.1	957.4	1 003.0	71.1	70.6	73.4
Playing electronic or computer games	1 071.5	1 110.8	1 049.0	79.1	81.9	76.8
Art and crafts	466.1	529.8	511.6	34.4	39.1	37.4
Skateboarding or rollerblading	481.6	386.4	399.3	35.6	28.5	29.2
Organised Cultural activities (c)						
Playing a musical instrument	213.8	179.0	240.0	15.8	13.2	17.6
Singing	38.9	31.6	39.2	2.9	2.3	2.9
Drama	42.8	31.5	38.6	3.2	2.3	2.8
Girls						
Other Activities (b)						
Watching TV, videos or DVDs	1 248.1	1 262.4	1 262.5	96.9	98.2	97.3
Homework	..	..	1 102.0	..	..	84.9
Reading	..	1 061.8	1 043.3	..	82.6	80.4
Bike riding	723.0	687.4	803.2	56.2	53.5	61.9
Playing electronic or computer games	747.5	759.7	646.8	58.1	59.1	49.8
Art and crafts	704.6	781.5	797.5	54.7	60.8	61.4
Skateboarding or rollerblading	335.8	218.2	228.5	26.1	17.0	17.6
Organised Cultural activities (c)						
Playing a musical instrument	260.1	266.5	280.6	20.2	20.7	21.6
Singing	85.6	90.9	107.8	6.6	7.0	8.3
Drama	79.0	81.0	80.5	6.1	6.3	6.2
Total						
Other Activities (b)						
Watching TV, videos or DVDs	2 560.3	2 601.0	2 596.0	96.9	98.5	97.4
Homework	..	..	2 209.1	..	..	82.9
Reading	..	1 981.0	1 984.0	..	75.0	74.5
Bike riding	1 686.1	1 644.8	1 806.2	63.8	62.3	67.8
Playing electronic or computer games	1 818.9	1 870.5	1 695.8	68.9	70.8	63.6
Art and crafts	1 170.7	1 311.2	1 309.1	44.3	49.6	49.1
Skateboarding or rollerblading	817.4	604.5	627.8	30.9	22.9	23.6
Organised Cultural activities (c)						
Playing a musical instrument	473.9	445.5	520.5	17.9	16.8	19.5
Singing	124.6	122.5	147.0	4.7	4.6	5.5
Drama	121.8	112.6	119.1	4.6	4.3	4.5

.. Not available

(a) Total aged 5-14 years.

(b) Outside of school hours during the 2 weeks prior to interview in April of the survey year.

(c) Outside of school hours during the 12 months prior to interview in April of the survey year.

Table 2: Mean hours of participation(a) in selected leisure activities(b) and organised cultural activities(c), by sex, 2000, 2003, 2006

	2000	2003	2006
	Mean hours		
Boys			
Other Activities (b)			
Watching TV, videos or DVDs	21.7	22.3	20.1
Homework	..	..	6.8
Reading	..	7.1	6.6
Bike riding	7.2	6.3	6.7
Playing electronic or computer games	9.0	9.0	9.3
Art and crafts	6.1	5.2	4.9
Skateboarding or rollerblading	6.4	5.7	6.4
Organised Cultural activities (c)			
Playing a musical instrument	4.5	3.9	5.6
Singing	2.6	2.6	2.8
Drama	2.6	2.0	2.0
Girls			
Other Activities (b)			
Watching TV, videos or DVDs	21.6	21.4	19.7
Homework	..	..	7.6
Reading	..	8.6	7.9
Bike riding	4.9	4.6	4.6
Playing electronic or computer games	5.6	5.3	5.7
Art and crafts	7.3	6.5	6.4
Skateboarding or rollerblading	3.9	4.1	3.9
Organised Cultural activities (c)			
Playing a musical instrument	5.0	5.0	5.8
Singing	2.7	3.0	3.3
Drama	2.7	2.2	3.3
Total			
Other Activities (b)			
Watching TV, videos or DVDs	21.7	21.9	19.9
Homework	..	..	7.2
Reading	..	7.9	7.3
Bike riding	6.2	5.6	5.8
Playing electronic or computer games	7.6	7.5	7.9
Art and crafts	6.8	6.0	5.8
Skateboarding or rollerblading	5.4	5.2	5.5
Organised Cultural activities (c)			
Playing a musical instrument	4.8	4.5	5.7
Singing	2.7	2.9	3.1
Drama	2.6	2.1	2.9

.. Not available

(a) Total aged 5-14 years

(b) Outside of school hours during the 2 weeks prior to interview in April of the survey year

(c) Outside of school hours during the 12 months prior to interview in April of the survey year.