Park Use and Physical Activity among Children in Low-Income Communities of Color

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In low-income neighborhoods, just 4 out of 10 parents report a park within a 10 minute walk of their home. The same number say they’re concerned about safety near the park.
How can we help more kids get to neighborhood parks and be active?
Who is (not) playing where?

- Physical activity during childhood is related to multiple short- and long-term benefits.

- Parks are resources that contribute to children’s physical activity levels.

- We need better evaluation of park design contribution to children’s park-based physical activity.
Children in low-income communities

- **Who:** Children 5 – 10 years of age
- **What:** Physical activity and play
- **When:** 2017 – 2018
- **Where:** New York City, Durham, and Raleigh
  - 40 parks in majority minority neighborhoods
  - African American, Latinx, Asian American
- **Where:** National Qualtrics Panel
METHODS

1. Household Survey
   - Qualtrics Panel

2. Systematic Observation
   - SOPARC
   - CPAT
   - ANC

3. In-park Monitoring
   - Accelerometer + GPS
   - Parent Survey
Civic trust and social capital

- 40.2% disagree that people can be trusted
- 39.3% disagree that you can count on adults to watch out that children are safe and do not get into trouble
- n = 1,583
In comparing high social capital

- The odds of visiting a park with your child at least once per week is 1.510 (1.234, 1.848) greater.

- The odds of visiting a park with your child for at least one hour per visit is 1.218 (0.996, 1.489; p=0.055) greater.

- The odds of your child being physically active, or playing sports, at a park or playground during the past seven days is 1.443 (1.129, 1.844) greater.
Systematic observations of play

- Almost 17,000 children during 79 park visits (NYC)

- 40% Latinx
  - Playgrounds and swings

- 33% Asian American
  - Playgrounds and basketball courts

- 20% African American
  - Basketball courts and swings
Most used spaces were also most active

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% MVPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swings</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splash pad</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball courts</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective measures of space and activity

- $n=383$ (NYC & NC)
- Parks in neighborhoods...

- Latinx
  - 74% Latinx
  - 90% active

- Asian American
  - 67% Asian American
  - 84% active

- African American
  - 66% African American
  - 90% active
Higher PA on largest playset
Lower PA around playsets with benches
Higher PA in playgrounds
Lower PA in water features
Kids are more likely to be active in neighborhood parks that are safe to get to and offer amenities for all ages. Learn more: www.paresearchcenter.org
Is it different now?

- Space
- Diversity
- Programming
- Access
- Alternatives