


IRIS
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Time Kids Spend Outdoors¹

A Research Brief in the IRIS Series²

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² The Internet Research Information Series (IRIS) is an internet accessible science report series covering outdoor recreation statistics (RECSTATS), the National Kids survey (NKSSTATS), natural lands research (NATLAND) and other human-dimension and demographics research (DEMOSTATS) related to natural resources. This research is a collaborative effort between the USDA Forest Service's Southern Research Station and its Forestry Sciences Laboratory in Athens, Georgia; the University of Georgia in Athens; and the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee.

<http://warnell.forestry.uga.edu/nrrt/nsre/IrisReports.html>

Time Kids Spend Outdoors

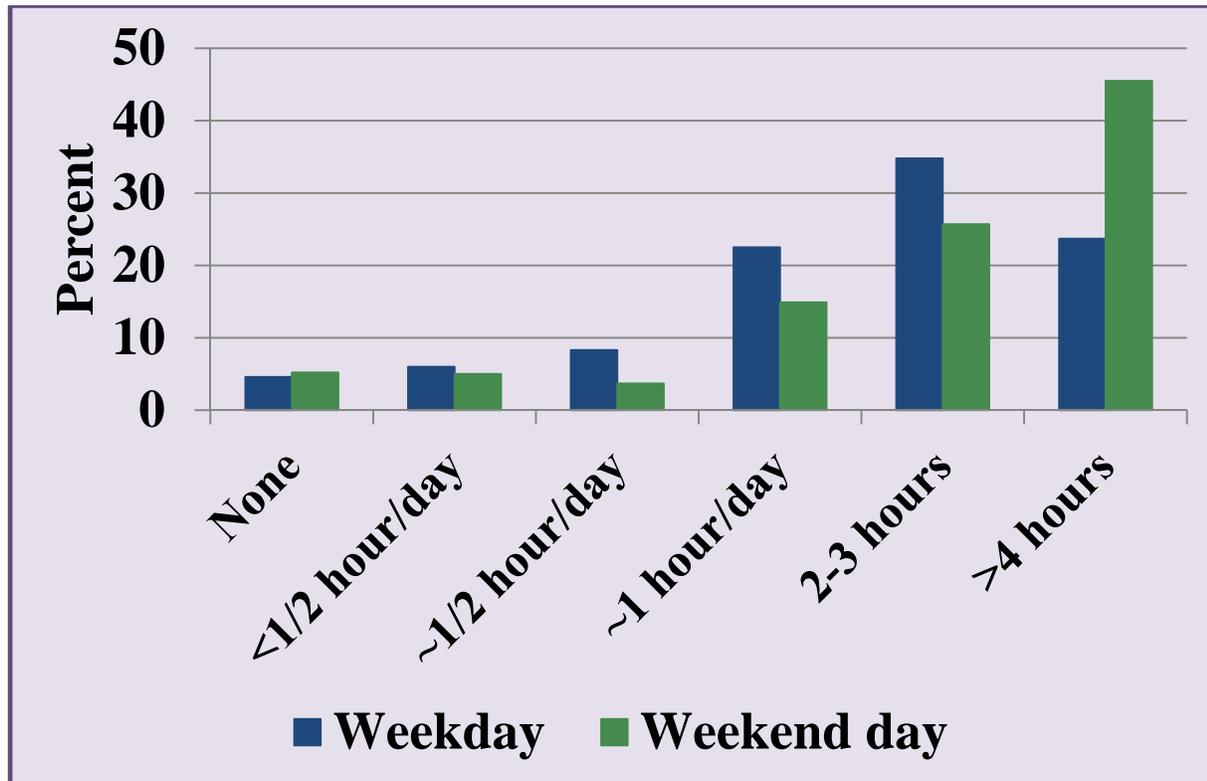
The National Kids Survey (NKS) has been ongoing since the fall of 2007. This IRIS report provides an update of findings from the NKS, up to early 2012. The survey has been conducted as a telephone interview with households across the country with children ages 6 to 19. Data about kids 6 to 15 was provided by a household adult answering for the young person selected. Data about kids 16 to 19 was provided directly by the young person themselves. The sample includes about 2,100 youth nationally. The NKS is a partnership between the Forest Service, the University of Tennessee and the University of Georgia.

Over the life of the NKS, percentages of youth spending four or more hours per day outdoors on both weekdays or weekend days have been larger than percentages spending one hour or less (see the bar graph below). In fact, around 45 percent spend 4 or more hours outside per day on weekend days (Saturday and Sunday).

The NKS has consistently shown very small proportions spending no time outdoors---around 5 percent.



Percent of youth 6 to 19 by time outdoors per day on weekdays and weekend days (2007-2012)



An important question asked by organizations, private industry and government agencies nationwide is whether the trend in kids' time outdoors is increasing, decreasing or staying about the same over time. Data collected from the fall of 2007 through to early 2012 were divided into four periods including from September 2007 to July 2008; August 2008 to April 2009; May 2009 to September 2010; and October 2010 to March 2012.

Percentages of youth represented in the NKS who reported spending 2 or more hours outdoors were computed for each of these periods for both weekend and week days. The results are shown in the line graph below. For both weekend and week days, it appears there has been a slight increase in the percentages spending 2 or more hours outside between late 2007 and early 2012. This slight increase trend

has been consistent across all the four periods for week days. However, there was a decrease in percentages reporting 2 or more hours outdoors for weekend days between late 2009 and early 2012. Consistent across the four periods are higher percentages spending two or more hours outdoors on weekend days.

Trend in percentage of youth 6-19 spending time outdoors on weekend and on week days by time period

