

## **Formative Research to Develop the IDEFICS Physical Activity Intervention Component: Findings From Focus Groups With Children and Parents**

Leen Liesbeth Haerens, Ilse De Bourdeaudhuij, Gabriele Eiben,  
Fabio Lauria, Silvia Bel, Katharina Keimer

### **ABSTRACT**

#### **Background:**

The current study aimed at describing influencing factors for physical activity among young children to determine the best approaches for developing the IDEFICS community based intervention.

#### **Methods:**

In 8 European sites a trained moderator conducted a minimum of 4 focus groups using standardized questioning guides. A total of 56 focus groups were conducted including 36 focus groups with parents and 20 focus groups with children, of which 74 were boys and 81 girls. Key findings were identified through independent reviews of focus group summary reports using content analysis methods.

#### **Findings:**

Findings were generally consistent across countries. The greatest emphasis was on environmental physical (eg, seasonal influences, availability of facilities and safety), institutional (eg, length of breaks at school), and social factors (eg, role modeling of parents). Most cited personal factors by parents were age, social economical status, and perceived barriers. Both children and parents mentioned the importance of children's preferences.

#### **Conclusions:**

To increase physical activity levels of young children the intervention should aim at creating an environment (physical, institutional, social) supportive of physical activity. On the other hand strategies should take into account personal factors like age and social economical status and should consider personal barriers too.