

Walking or cycling to school can improve children's concentration (Denmark)



Country:

Denmark

Topic:

Walking and cycling

If you are in the habit of driving your children to school, you're not really doing them much of a favour. Instead, walking or cycling to school has been shown to improve concentration levels of children in a study in Denmark. A recently published Danish study shows that walking and cycling to school increases children's ability to concentrate in school. Children that were taken to school in a car by their parents or who took public transport, performed less well in a test measuring concentration levels, than children who walked or cycled.

The study was conducted in cooperation with researchers at the university of Aarhus and Copenhagen as part of the Danish project 'Mass Experiment 2012' - which aimed to examine the link between diet, exercise and the power of concentration. Mass Experiment is a Danish project that is carried out each year focusing on a different school related theme.

Nearly 20 000 school pupils aged 5-19 participated in the study. The students were asked about their exercise habits and a simple concentration test was performed.

Niels Egelund, one of the authors, says that exercise achieved by walking or cycling to school is reflected in the level of concentration a student has around four hours later. The researchers were astonished by the results, as their original intention was to test the impact of eating breakfast and lunch on the children's ability to concentrate. The results showed that having breakfast and lunch do have an influence but to less of an extent than having exercised. Egelund continues that although many people feel re-freshed after having exercised, it is surprising that the effect actually lasts so long.
