

Active Healthy Kids

Greenland

Global Matrix 4.0

2022





**NUNARSUARMI TIMIMIK
AALATITSINERPAAQ**
VERDENS MEST FYSISK AKTIVE LAND

#Aalasa



**KOMMUNEQARFIK
SERMERSOOQ**



KALAALLIT NUNAANNI TIMERSOQATIGIIT KATUFFIAT
GRØNLANDS IDRÆTSFORBUND



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Introduction

This is the first time Greenland is participating in the *Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance* international network, which compares the development of physical activity in children and adolescents across countries.

The international network was set up in 2014, with 15 countries participating. Since then, participation has increased, and in 2022 Greenland will join 68 other countries.

The Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance examines a range of indicators that have been assessed nationally and internationally to impact the physical activity of children and adolescents. The indicators provide a broad and nuanced picture of physical activity and exercise that cut across many sectors and initiatives.

The participants in Active Healthy Kids Greenland represent different organisations. There are representatives from the Sports Confederation of Greenland, the Centre for Public Health in Greenland, HBSC Greenland, the Institute of Learning at the University of Greenland - Ilisimatusarfik, the Ministry of Education, the National Prevention Unit Paarisa, and the Administration for Children and Schools in Sermersooq Municipality. The network thus provides an opportunity for cross-sectoral collaboration. It is hoped that the network will expand to include more members over time.

The participants in the network have each contributed to the content of this report.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of what we know about physical activity among children and adolescents in Greenland. It is a good starting point for discussions on where it makes sense to take action. The next step will be translating this knowledge into specific recommendations to promote physical activity among children and adolescents. The goal is to implement the recommendations in a multidisciplinary collaboration, where the Active Healthy Kids Greenland network contributes to the action.

During the autumn of 2022, the network for active healthy kids in Greenland will arrange one or more seminars to develop action plans and specific proposals that translate the knowledge gained and collaboration into specific actions and measures.

Enjoy!



Method of grading

The Active Healthy Kids Greenland report has been prepared by a network group with representatives from different organisations and institutions, covering broad experience and knowledge in research, analysis, and implementation.

The report is based on nationwide surveys, project collections and reports, as well as a dialogue-based collection of, for example, sports policies and implementation measures.

The network group has discussed each indicator and graded them with a letter and a grading between A+ (highest) and F (lowest). Inconclusive (INC) is indicated in cases with an insufficient basis to assign a grade. To provide a basis for comparison with other countries, each indicator has been assessed using criteria developed by the international *Active Healthy kids network*. The criteria are described in the introduction to each indicator.



Summary

No.	Indicator	Grade	Basis
1	Government	B	<p>Three Parliament of Greenland Acts specifically promote opportunities for children and adolescents to be physically active, focusing on sport and exercise, cultural and leisure activities, and state school.</p> <p>Funds have been allocated in the Finance Bill to promote a healthy and active childhood, develop culture, and sport, and provide grants to the Sports Confederation of Greenland (GIF) and Elite Sport Greenland (ESG). Several national strategies aim to promote physical activity among children and adolescents.</p>
2	School	INC	<p>It has not been possible to analyse this indicator thoroughly. One reason is that the legislation does not allocate a fixed number of hours to physical education and outdoor activities.</p> <p>Thus, each school/municipality must decide whether to allocate the hours. On average, municipalities allocated 2 hours per week to physical education and outdoor activities in the 2020-2021 school year.</p>
3	Organised sports	D	<p>A census conducted by the Sports Confederation of Greenland in 2021 shows that approximately 29% of all children and adolescents in Greenland were members of a sports association under the Sports Confederation of Greenland.</p> <p>This figure is supported by the study <i>Greenlandic Sport in Motion: Analysis of Greenlandic sporting habits 2019</i>, where just over 25% of children aged 9-15 said they were members of a sports club.</p>
4	Community and environment	D+	<p>In the <i>Greenlandic Sport in Motion study: Analysis of Greenlandic sporting habits 2019</i>, 38% of the children surveyed said that the opportunities to be physically active in the town/settlement meet their needs. One in five children (20%) asked for the opportunity to do other specific sports/exercise, while there is also some demand for the opportunity to do indoor sports/exercise (18%), weight training/fitness (14%), outdoor football (14%) or other outdoor activities (12%).</p> <p>Regarding satisfaction, 35% of children said they are satisfied with the sports facilities, while 19% said they are not. 39% of children surveyed said they have no opinion about sports facilities.</p>
5	Active play	INC	<p>There is insufficient knowledge about the extent and quality of active play by Greenlandic children and adolescents.</p>



			The most relevant study was conducted by Greenlandic Sport in Motion in 2020. It shows that four out of ten children feel that they are physically active at least once a week when they <i>play</i> in their free time. Either at the playground or other outdoor places (43%) or when <i>playing</i> indoors in, for instance, a club/after-school centre, at home or other indoor areas (39%).
6	Physical activity and sedentary behaviour	D-	The 2018 HBSC survey shows that 21% of children met the international recommendation of 60 minutes of daily physical activity. The proportion decreased with age, with 29% of 11-12-year-olds meeting the recommendations, 17% of 13-14-year-olds and 15% of 15-17-year-olds.
7	Family and friends	INC	The 2018 Population Survey provides an insight into the level of leisure-time physical activity in households with children under 18. The data show that activity levels vary according to the season. Adults with children in the household report the following activity levels during the summer period: 18% participated in sports or other physically demanding activities for at least 4 hours a week. 51% of respondents said they got light exercise at least 4 hours a week. 13% were sedentary in their free time. During the winter, 10% participated in sports or other physically demanding activities for at least 4 hours a week. 47% did light exercise at least 4 hours a week, while 24% reported their activity level as sedentary.
8	Active transport	INC	There are no studies that have adequately investigated the use of active transport by children and adolescents. In the <i>Greenlandic Sport in Motion study: Analysis of Greenlandic sporting habits 2019</i> , 44% of children and adolescents said they use walking as active transport at least 5 times a week. 20% said they use their bicycle as a means of transport.
9	Physical fitness/overweight	INC	There is insufficient data examining the physical fitness of children and adolescents. Children's BMI is measured during the entrance examinations at the start of school, and it shows that 11% in Nuuk are overweight when starting school, while the figure is 29% outside Nuuk.



Indicator No. 1: Government

Description of the indicator:

Legislation, policies and strategies, funds and resources aimed at promoting physical activity for children and adolescents.

Grades: B (compliance rate 60-79%)

Reasoning:

Three main acts help promote physical activity among children and adolescents. These are:

1. Parliament of Greenland Act No. 15 of 6 June 2016 on Sport and Exercise aims to promote sport and exercise in all parts of society.¹ The Act obliges the Government of Greenland to provide grants to the Sports Confederation of Greenland (GIF) and Elite Sport Greenland (ESG). Funds for this have been set aside in the Finance Bill.² Under the Act, the Government of Greenland enters a 4-year performance contract with GIF and ESG, which sets out the parties' expectations for activities. Furthermore, the act obliges municipalities to offer a wide range of sports and exercise opportunities.
2. Parliament of Greenland Act No. 5 of 6 June 2016 on cultural and leisure activities obliges municipalities to ensure that citizens can develop, practice, and use a variety of cultural offerings.³
3. Parliament of Greenland Act No. 15 of 3 December 2012 on state school education describes compulsory teaching of Local Choice in state schools. Local Choice covers four areas, one of which is sport and outdoor life, and hours for the subject are not specified in the Act.⁴

In addition to the Finance Bill's grants to GIF and ESG, funds are allocated to health promotion and prevention, including promoting a healthy and active childhood. Furthermore, funds are allocated for developing culture and sport, as well as the Arctic Winter Games and the Island Games.

The national strategy, *Innunneritta III - the Government of Greenland's strategy for collaboration on a good childhood 2020-2030*, aims to promote physical activity among children and adolescents. The strategy focuses on, among other things, promoting healthy and active childhoods through healthy, active, and inclusive communities.⁵

Furthermore, GIF has a vision and strategy for Greenland to be the world's most physically active country by 2030.⁶



The Government of Greenland's Education Plan describes, among other things, health-promoting schools as a possible focus area.⁷

For all municipalities, it is free for children and young people under the age of 20 to participate in the municipality's leisure teaching.⁸ Sports associations can apply to municipalities for grants for travel activities, trainers' fees and hall hire.⁹ Moreover, it is up to each municipality to decide which policies, strategies, and initiatives they consider most relevant in promoting physical activity among children and adolescents. Below is a brief outline of each municipality's strategy:

Avannaata Municipality has a planning strategy for 2020, in which it is stated that the municipality wants to support the voluntary sector and evening school offers, as well as to work for better sports facilities in the municipality.¹⁰

Qeqqata Municipality has a health and prevention policy to ensure health throughout life and a healthy and active leisure life. The municipality works with the Qeqqata Model, which aims to promote health and well-being among children and adolescents. As part of this work, the municipal council has approved further work on a project to bridge the gap between school and leisure and to enable children in the municipality to participate in healthy and inclusive communities. The municipality has also introduced free membership of sports clubs for children and adolescents.¹¹

Sermersooq Municipality has a sports policy to ensure that all children and adolescents experience the joy of an active leisure life. The municipality has introduced a leisure pass, which allows children and adolescents to receive a grant for leisure activities if they cannot participate in sports and exercise for financial reasons. The municipality is also developing a health strategy and a project on health-promoting institutions.¹²

Kujalleq Municipality has a planning strategy for 2019-2023, which states that the municipality wants to promote health among children, adolescents, and adults through collaboration with the voluntary sector. The municipality's forthcoming Health and Prevention Policy 2021-2031 will expand opportunities for exercise and leisure in the municipality, strengthen volunteering, provide opportunities for physical activity in the workplace and establish playgrounds for physical activity.¹³

Qeqertalik Municipality *It has not been possible to obtain information from the municipality.*



Indicator No. 2: School

Description of the indicator:

The indicator evaluates physical activity and exercise as part of everyday life in primary schools. The indicator focuses on, among other things, the subject of physical education and the physical and structural environment regarding policies and action plans in the field and access to facilities supporting physical activity and exercise.

Grades: INC

Reasoning:

Finding consistent and adequate data on physical activity in schools has not been possible. However, data suggest that daily physical activity is not integral to schools and their legislation.

In the legislation for state schools, Sermersooq's school policy, Qeqertalik's school statute and Qeqqata's planning strategy and focus areas for state schools, there are no school policies that address physical activity.

By law, Local Choice is a compulsory subject that pupils must have in their 10 years of schooling. Local Choice includes sports and outdoor activities. The legislation does not allocate a fixed number of hours to physical education and outdoor activities, so it is up to each school/municipality to decide how to allocate the hours. A breakdown of teaching hours from the Board of Education showed that the five municipalities would, on average, allocated 2 hours per week to physical education and outdoor activities in the 2020-2021 school year.

There are no figures on how many pupils are taught by a trained physical education teacher.

In the *Greenlandic Sport in Motion study: Analysis of Greenlandic Sporting Habits 2019*, 48% of children responded that they are physically active at least once a week during the school day.¹⁴

When contacting the country's municipalities about school facilities and physical activity in schools, four out of five municipalities returned questions: Sermersooq, Kujalleq, Qeqertalik and Qeqqata. It has provided an insight into 38 schools' facilities and offerings from the municipalities.

All schools have various types of play facilities, such as outdoor playgrounds, football pitches, kayaks, and cross-country skiing equipment. There is no overview of the actual facilities, condition, age and target groups for towns or settlements.



Indicator No. 3: Organised sports

Description of the indicator:

The indicator assesses the proportion of children participating in organised sports, which is activities that are fixed and structured.

Grades: D (compliance rate 27-33%)

Reasoning:

In Greenland, organised sports take place primarily in sports clubs, which are found in almost every town and settlement. The majority are members of the Sports Confederation of Greenland, which is an organisation with nine national sports federationsⁱ. Every year, all clubs report their membership figures to the Sports Confederation of Greenland. Due to missing reports and updates, the count may be subject to uncertainties.

In 2021, approximately 28% of children and adolescents in Greenland were members of a sports club. The Greenlandic Sport in Motion study supports this: *Analysis of Greenlandic sporting habits 2019*, which shows that approximately 25% of children in Greenland aged 9-15 are members of a sports club.¹⁴

49% of children active in sport join a sports club. Furthermore, 9% of those active in sport are active in a private centre, and 14% are active in after-school centres. Finally, 59% of sport-active children are active on their own initiativeⁱⁱ. In addition to the form of the organisation itself, the frequency of sport/exercise participation by children active in sport was studied. The survey shows that 15% of sport-active children participate in sport/exercise five times a week or more, and 73% of sport-active children participate in sport/exercise at least once a week.

According to *Greenlandic Sport in Motion: Analysis of Greenlandic sporting habits 2019*, boys generally train more frequently than girlsⁱⁱⁱ. Here it appears that sport-active boys are more likely than girls to participate in sport/exercise five times a week or more^{iv}. Furthermore, more girls than boys say they rarely do sport/exercise (31% and 23% respectively).¹⁴

ⁱ The 9 national sports federations are: Football, table tennis, Arctic Sports Greenland, Taekwondo, skiing, kayaking, volleyball, handball, badminton. <https://www.gif.gl/forbundet/specialforbund/>

ⁱⁱ Children were able to give more than one answer, and therefore percentages do not add up to 100.

ⁱⁱⁱ 45% of boys train more than 3 times a week, compared to 34% of girls.

^{iv} 19% of sport-active boys are likely to do so, compared to 10% of girls.



Indicator No. 4: Community and environment

Description of the indicator:

The indicator describes the importance of the environment concerning opportunities for children and adolescents to be physically active in their neighbourhoods.

Grades: D+ (34-39%)

Reasoning:

In the *Greenlandic Sport in Motion study: Analysis of Greenlandic sporting habits 2019*, 38% of the children surveyed answered that the opportunities in the town/settlement met their needs. One in five children (20%) asked for opportunities to do other a specific sport/exercise. There is also some demand for the opportunity to do indoor sports/exercise (18%), weight training/fitness (14%), outdoor football (14%) or other outdoor activities (12%).¹⁴

35% of children said they were satisfied with the sports facilities in their area. One in five said they were not satisfied. 39% of children surveyed said they have no opinion about sports facilities. 35% of children who are active in sport answered, 'don't know'. Among those that are not sport-active, 62% answered 'don't know'. 60% of adults surveyed said they are satisfied with the sports facilities in their area¹⁴

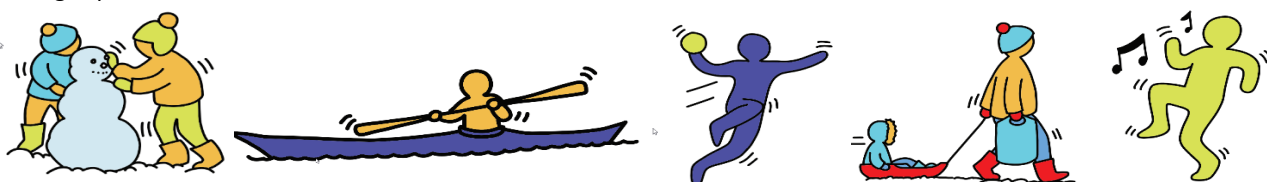
In the 2015 Sport in Greenland survey, 46% of children and adolescents active in sport said they were active in large sports halls^v. The second most used facility among children and adolescents surveyed is small sports halls/gymnasiums, where almost a third (32%) do sports/exercise. Thus, indoor facilities are the preferred physical environment for children's and adolescents' sports. One advantage of the indoor facilities is that children can be active all year round.¹⁵

There is a relatively even split between girls (45%) and boys (49%), children (aged 9-13 44%) and adolescents (aged 14-16 49%) and their use of the large sports halls.

Twice as many girls (42%) as boys (21%) play sport/exercise in or around the home, which makes it one of the few facilities that are more popular with girls than boys.

Among the girls surveyed, sports/exercise in or around the home is the second most popular facility; it is number six among the boys.

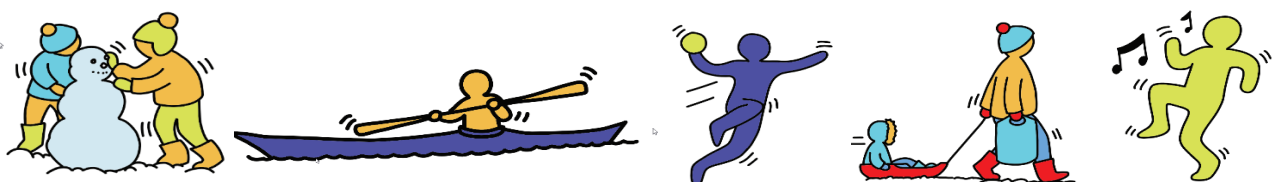
^v Large sports halls are defined as halls that can accommodate a handball court.



Concerning the condition and quality of sports halls, a record of (some of) the physical state of sports facilities in Greenland was carried out in 2018 under the auspices of the Government of Greenland, which is to initiate a renovation of the facilities. The 2018 report, The Economy of Sport in Greenland, estimates a total renovation need of DKK 67.7 million for 23 halls. The estimate does not cover all sports facilities¹⁶

The Government of Greenland has allocated DKK 25 million for 5 years, during which municipalities can apply for co-financing for the renovation.

There is insufficient research on whether children experience their neighbourhood as safe. The Centre for Public Health in Greenland, the Sports Confederation of Greenland and Paarisa expect to investigate this in 2022.



Indicator No. 5: Active play

Description of the indicator:

Active play is physical activity without a solid formal organisation or framework. The activities can be very diverse and are often spontaneous without following a fixed pattern. Active play can be, for example, playing catch in the school playground, playing in the mountains or on the road, or skateboarding or rollerblading.

Grades: INC

Reasoning:

Many studies point to the importance of active play in promoting health and well-being, which includes increasing physical activity and developing children's awareness of their own limits and courage to try something new.^{17 18}

There is insufficient knowledge about the extent and quality of active play by Greenlandic children and adolescents.

The most relevant study is Greenlandic Sport in Motion: Analysis of Greenlandic sporting habits 2019. It shows that four out of ten children feel that they are physically active at least once a week when they *play* in their free time. Either at the playground or other outdoor places (43%) or when *playing* indoors at the club/after-school centre, at home or other indoor places (39%).¹⁴

The figures cannot be sufficiently used to assess the amount of time children and adolescents spend in active play. Furthermore, the figures do not indicate the intensity or type of activity associated with active play.



Indicator No. 6: Physical activity and sedentary behaviour

Description of the indicator:

Physical activity is any form of movement that increases energy metabolism. This can be unstructured play, everyday routines such as repairs and cleaning, or more deliberate, targeted and/or regular exercise in a sports club or gym.

Sedentary behaviour is defined as being awake in a sitting or lying position, where the body's energy expenditure is low^{vi}.

Grades: D- (34-39%)

Reasoning:

The HBSC survey shows that 21% of the children surveyed met the international recommendation of 60 minutes of daily physical activity. The proportion decreased with age, with 29% of 11-12-year-olds meeting the recommendations, 17% of 13-14-year-olds and 15% of 15-17-year-olds.¹⁹

There is a gender difference, with more boys meeting the recommendations than girls. Moreover, there are geographical differences, with children in the towns and settlements outside Nuuk being the most active.

Children were also asked how often they engaged in strenuous physical activity, such as sports or exercise, which made them breathless or sweat. On this question, there is a difference between the sexes - 32% of boys and 24% of girls engaged in daily vigorous physical activity. Furthermore, the proportion of children who engaged in vigorous physical activity decreased with age.

The HBSC survey does not ask directly about sedentary activity. However, it appears that 18% of boys and 20% of girls only engaged in vigorous physical activity *once a month or less*. A difference between age groups can be seen here, with the oldest being the most inactive. 15% of 11-12-year-olds exercised once a month or less. Among 15-17-year-olds, 25% responded that they engaged in vigorous physical activity *once a month or less*.¹⁹

^{vi} Source: The Knowledge Council for Prevention, <http://www.vidensraad.dk/content/stillesiddende>



Indicator No. 7: Family and Peers

Description of the indicator:

The indicator refers to the proportion of parents and/or other key adults who encourage children to be physically active and whom themselves follow physical activity guidelines. The indicator also refers to the proportion of children and adolescents who are encouraged and supported to be physically active by their friends.

Grades: INC

Reasoning:

There is insufficient data examining the proportion of key adults and friends who encourage children to be physically active.

However, the 2018 Population Survey provides an insight into the level of leisure-time physical activity in households with children under 18. The survey does not say whether the activities below are carried out together with the children.²⁰

The data show that activity levels vary according to the season. Adults with children in the household report the following activity levels during the summer period: 18% participated in sports or other physically demanding activities for at least 4 hours a week. 51% of respondents said they got light exercise at least 4 hours a week. 13% were sedentary in their free time.²⁰

During the winter, 10% participated in sports or other physically demanding activities for at least 4 hours a week. 47% did light exercise at least 4 hours a week. 24% reported their activity level as sedentary.

The proportion of adults volunteering to promote physical activity for children and adolescents is generally very low. For example, figures from the *Greenlandic Sport in Motion* study show: *Analysis of Greenlandic sporting habits 2019* shows that only 4% of the adults surveyed are permanently involved as volunteers in efforts to promote physical activity for children and adolescents.¹⁴

HBSC Greenland launched a survey in 2022, adding questions about children's activities with parents. The survey results may help to describe this indicator more fully in the future.



Indicator No. 8: Active transportation

Description of the indicator:

The indicator describes the proportion of children and adolescents using active transport, for example, cycling or walking to and from school, for leisure activities or to visit friends and family.

Grades: INC

Reasoning:

There are no studies that adequately investigate the use of active transport by children and adolescents for travel to and from school or for leisure activities or visits to friends and family.

In the *Greenlandic Sport in Motion* study: *Analysis of Greenlandic sporting habits 2019*, 44% of children and adolescents said they walked as active transport at least 5 times a week. 20% said they used their bicycle as a means of transport.¹⁴

Indicator No. 9: Physical fitness

Description of the indicator:

The indicator is about physical fitness. Physical fitness is a common term that expresses the body's ability to perform in a number of areas such as fitness, strength, balance, coordination and flexibility. Physical fitness depends on age, gender and genetics and can be modified through physical activity and training.²¹

Grades: INC

Brief reasoning:

We do not have sufficient data examining the physical fitness of children and adolescents. Based on results from the preschool surveys, we can say something about BMI when starting school. Here we know that 11% in Nuuk are overweight when starting school, while the figure is 29% outside Nuuk.²²



References

¹ Parliament of Greenland Act No. 15 of 6 June 2016 on sport and exercise:

<http://lovgivning.gl/lov?rid={96DE056F-619E-4865-A341-41D5A80E5556}>

² The 2022 Finance Bill can be found here:

<https://naalakkersuisut.gl/da/Naalakkersuisut/Departementer/Finans/Finanslov>

³ Parliament of Greenland Act No. 5 of 6 June 2016 on cultural and leisure activities

<http://lovgivning.gl/lov?rid={593D1B1B-1E76-4E83-B920-D0087B90F1BD}>

⁴ Parliament of Greenland Act No. 15 of 3 December 2012 on state school education:

<http://lovgivning.gl/lov?rid={A9CD7C8F-DC91-4860-A7F0-B88BA752ED35}>

⁵ Innunneritta III:

<https://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Publications/Familie/DK/Inuuneritta%20III%20SEP%20n aal%20DA%20web%20FINAL.pdf>

⁶The Sports Confederation of Greenland's vision and strategy:

https://www.gif.gl/aalasa_dk and https://www.gif.gl/aalasa_dk/strategi2023/

⁷ The Government of Greenland's Education Plan:

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⁸ Free leisure teaching or children and young people under 20:

https://www.sullissivik.gl/Emner/Kultur_og_Fritid/Fritidsundervisning?mupid=Qeqertalik&sc_lang=da-DK

⁹ Grant application:

https://www.sullissivik.gl/Emner/Kultur_og_Fritid/Motion-og-idraet/Kopi-af-Idraetstilskud_Generelt_om?mupid=Qeqertalik&sc_lang=da-DK

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¹⁰Avannaata Municipality:

Avannaata Municipality Planning Strategy 2021-2033:

file:///C:/Users/chmr/Downloads/Planstrategi%202020_DK_WEB.pdf

¹¹ Qeqqata Municipality:

Health and Prevention Policy:

[file:///C:/Users/chmr/Downloads/Health%20and%20Prevention_Policy_en_final%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/chmr/Downloads/Health%20and%20Prevention_Policy_en_final%20(2).pdf)

The Qeqqata Model: https://www.qeqqata.gl/emner/borger/kommunale-projekter/qeqqata-modellen?sc_lang=da



Inuunerissaarnek - The Good Life: https://www.qeqqata.gl/emner/borger/kommunale-projekter/det-gode-liv?sc_lang=da

¹² Sermersooq Municipality:

Leisure pass: <https://sermersooq.gl/da/fritidspas/>

Sports policy: <https://sermersooq.gl/da/idraetspolitik/>

¹³ Kujalleq Municipality:

Planning Strategy 2019-2023: https://www.kujalleq.gl/nyheder/2020/05/planstrategi?sc_lang=da

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¹⁴ Eske, M, Forsberg, P, Storm, R (2020): Greenlandic Sport in Motion - Analysis of Greenlandic sporting habits 2020.

¹⁵ Asserhoej, T, Forsberg, P (2015): Sport in Greenland - status, challenges and development potential, The Danish Institute for Sports Studies

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²² Anders Egede Sandager Budtz, Anna Rask Lyng, Cathrine Sandager Budtz & Michael Lyng Pedersen (2019) Weight among children born 2005-2011 in Nuuk at the time of school entry, International Journal of Circumpolar Health

