

# Healthy lifestyle behaviors and their association with self-regulation in Chilean children

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**Background:** Self-regulation comprises a series of important competencies, such as the ability to control inner states or responses toward thoughts, attention, emotions, or even performance. The relationship between self-regulation and different healthy lifestyle behaviors among children has not been examined in depth to date. The aim of this study was to explore the association between physical activity, screen time levels, and/or Mediterranean Diet adherence and self-regulation in Chilean children. **Methods:** A total of 1561 children aged 8-12 years from eight public schools with low socioeconomic status were included. Physical activity, screen time, Mediterranean Diet, and self-regulation were assessed with validated questionnaires. **Results:** Children who were classified as active or those who reported less than 2 h per day of screen time had higher self-regulation than those who were classified as inactive or counterparts with 2 h per day or more of screen time, respectively. Using joint categories, active children both with low and high screen time showed higher self-regulation compared to inactive/high screen time peers. Additionally, active groups with adherence or non-adherence to the Mediterranean Diet had higher self-regulation compared to inactive and non-adherence peers. **Conclusion:** Having a greater number of healthy habits, mainly regular physical activity, was associated with higher self-regulation, which might be one potential strategy to promote child social-emotional development. © 2020 by the authors.

Mediterranean Diet

Physical activity

Screen time

Social?emotional development

child health

health care

lifestyle

physical activity

public health

socioeconomic status

strategic approach

article

autoregulation

child

Chilean

controlled study

female

habit

healthy lifestyle

human

human experiment

major clinical study

male

Mediterranean diet

physical activity

questionnaire

school child

screen time

social status

Chile