

# Betwixt and Be “Tween”

The Divergence of Attitudes about Active Travel Among Preteen Girls and Boys

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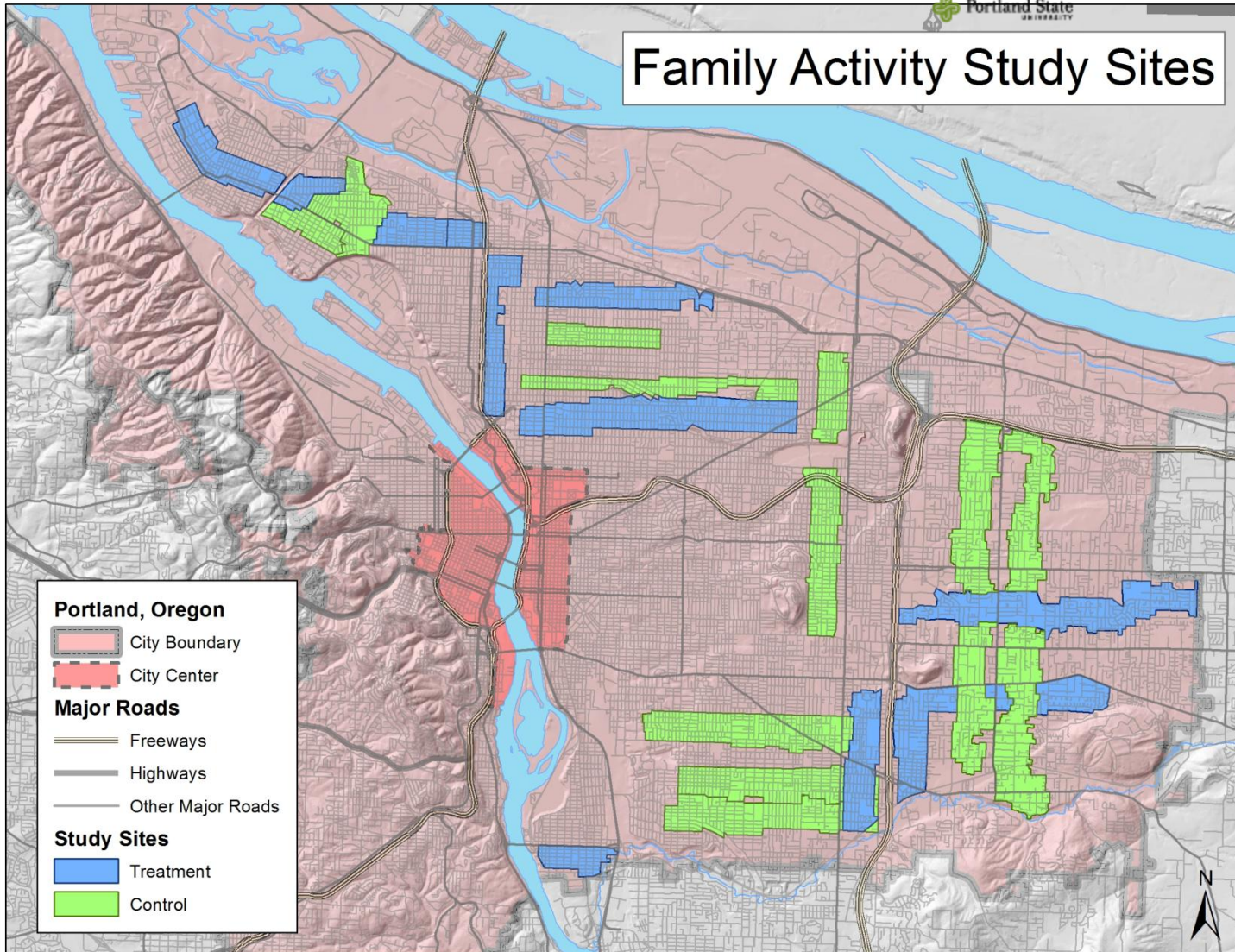


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# Acknowledgments

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  - Dr. Jennifer Dill (PI)
- Project:
  - Family Activity Study
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  - Active Living Research

# Family Activity Study



# Family Activity Study



# Family Activity Study

- Surveys

- 490 children from 323 households
- 175 adolescents
- Two surveys, kids aged 4-10 and 11-17
- Attitudes, Perceptions, and Behaviors
- Perceived Behavioral Control and Social Norms

# Research Questions

- Are kids' attitudes about exercise and active travel correlated?
- How do the kids' rate their abilities in the sense of self-efficacy, fear of embarrassment, and injury?
- How do kids' rate their sense of support (from family, siblings, and friends) to bike more?

\*How do these measures vary by gender and age?\*

# Previous Findings

- Self-efficacy mediates relationship between perceived environment and PA among adolescent girls (Motl et al. 2005)
- Self-efficacy moderates relationship between perceived social support and girls' PA (Dishman et al. 2009)
- Girls' drop in Physical Activity from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade most strongly predicted by physical self-perceptions (Knowles et al 2009)

# Survey Questions – Attitudes and Perceptions

- Attitudes about active travel
  - I like riding a bike
  - I don't like getting sweaty
  - I'm afraid to be seen by other kids
- Attitudes about exercise
  - I enjoy exercise
  - I will feel embarrassed if other people see me exercise
  - I will not know how to exercise the right way
  - I worry about hurting myself if I am physically active



# Survey Questions – Attitudes and Perceptions

- Perceptions of Support
  - My parents would help me bike more if I wanted to
  - My friends would help me bike more if I wanted to

# Gender Differences in Physical Self-Perception – 11-16 yr olds

	I will feel embarrassed if other people see me exercise			
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Boys	61.9%	25.0%	13.1%	0.0%
Girls	50.0%	22.7%	21.2%	6.1%

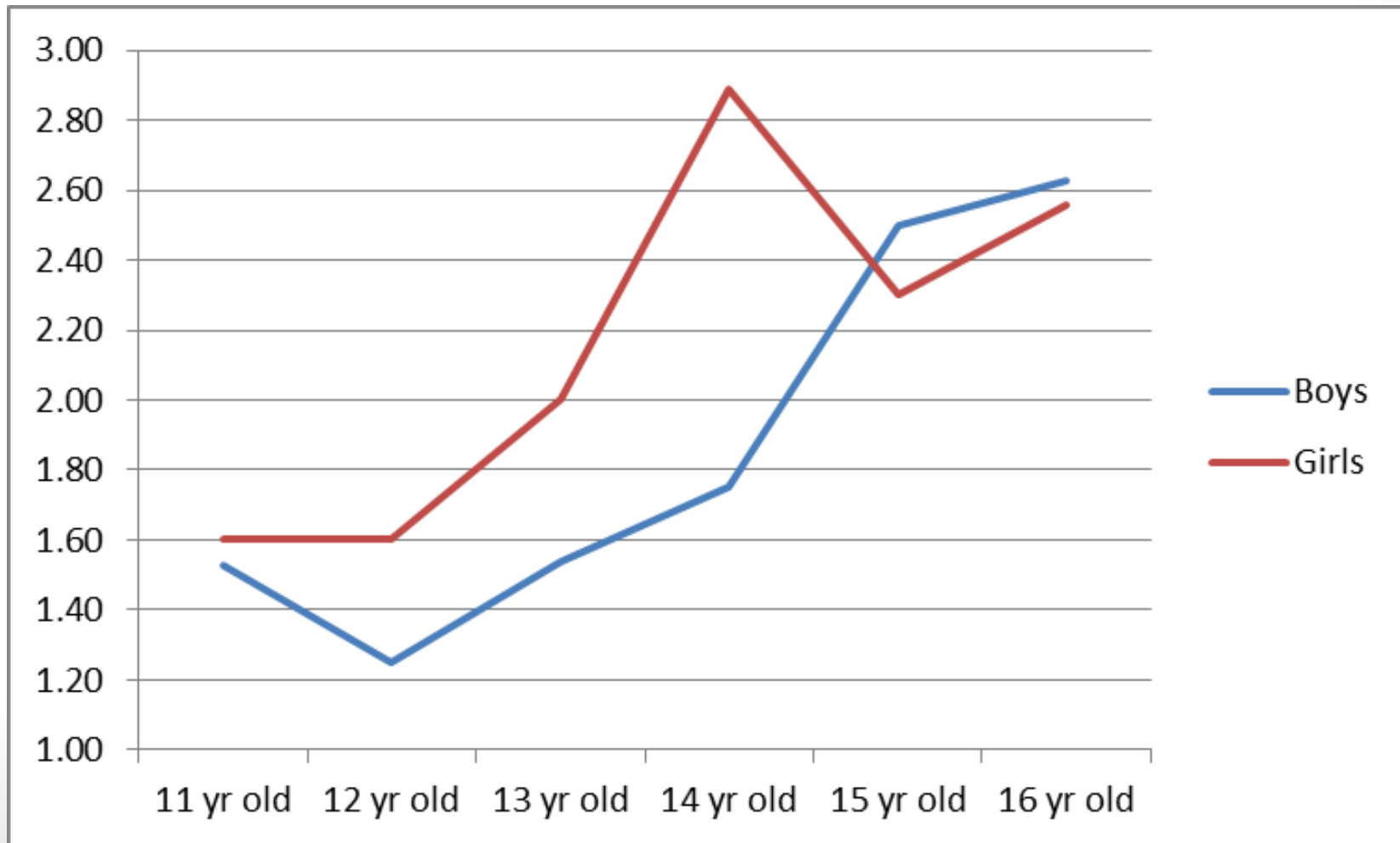
\*N = 150, Pearson Chi-Square <.06

	I worry about hurting myself if I am physically active			
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Boys	56.0%	29.8%	9.5%	4.8%
Girls	41.2%	27.9%	25.0%	5.9%

\*N = 152, Pearson Chi-Square <.06

# Gender Differences in Physical Self-Perception – 11-16 yr olds

“I will feel embarrassed if other people see me exercise”



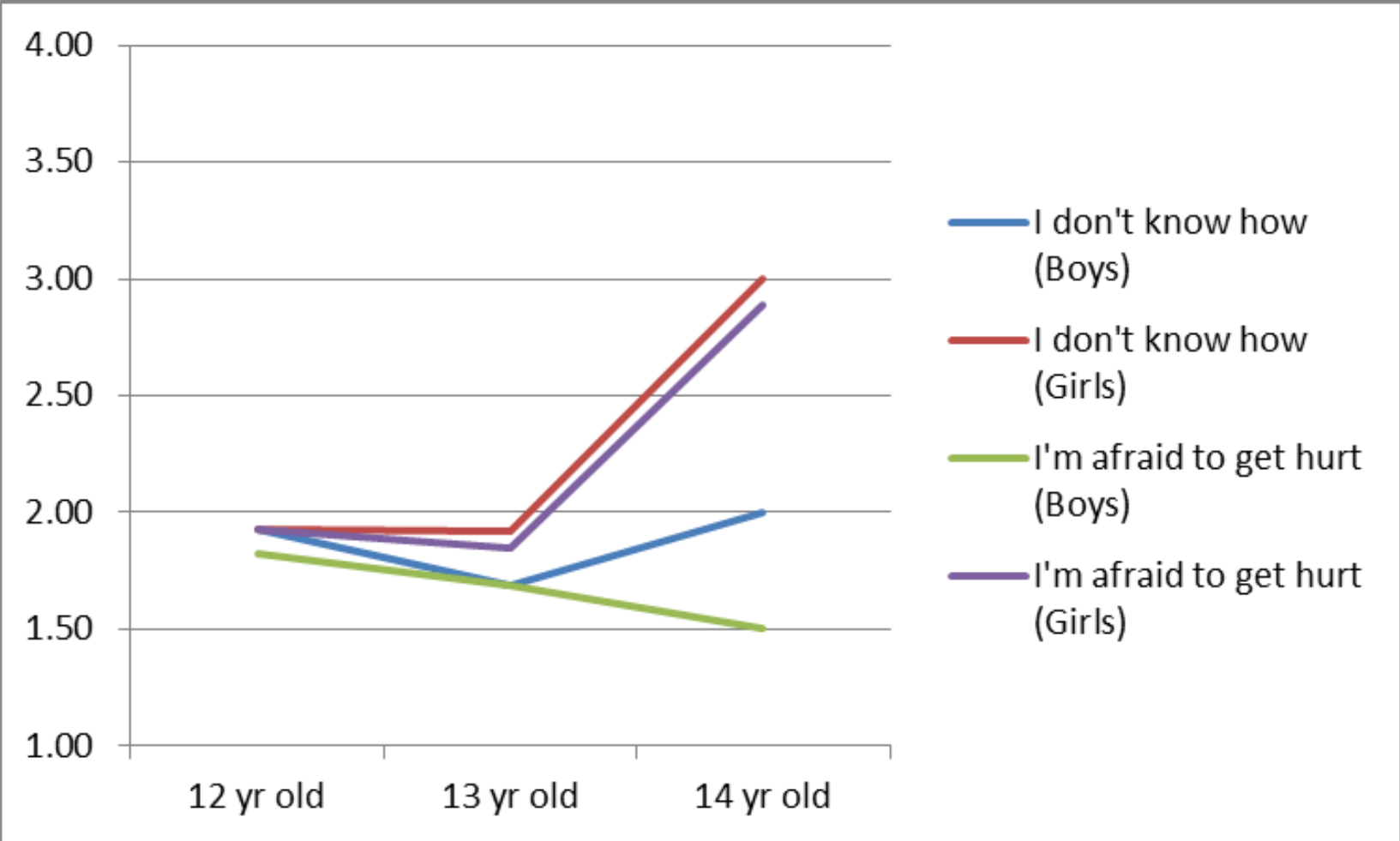
# The Relationship of Embarrassment and Bicycling

- Girls who are embarrassed to be seen exercising are less likely to report liking to bicycle (-.525,  $p=.000$ )
- There was no significant relationship for boys
- Are girls more conscious of bicycling as a non-trivial physical activity? Or do girls who like to bike have overall higher body confidence?

# Gender Differences in Ability - The “Tweens”

“I will not know how to exercise the right way”

“I worry about hurting myself if I am physically active”



# Gender Differences in Perceived Support – 11-16 yr olds

	My parents would help me bike more if I wanted to			
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Boys	14.7%	4.0%	26.7%	54.7%
Girls	4.7%	10.9%	17.2%	67.2%

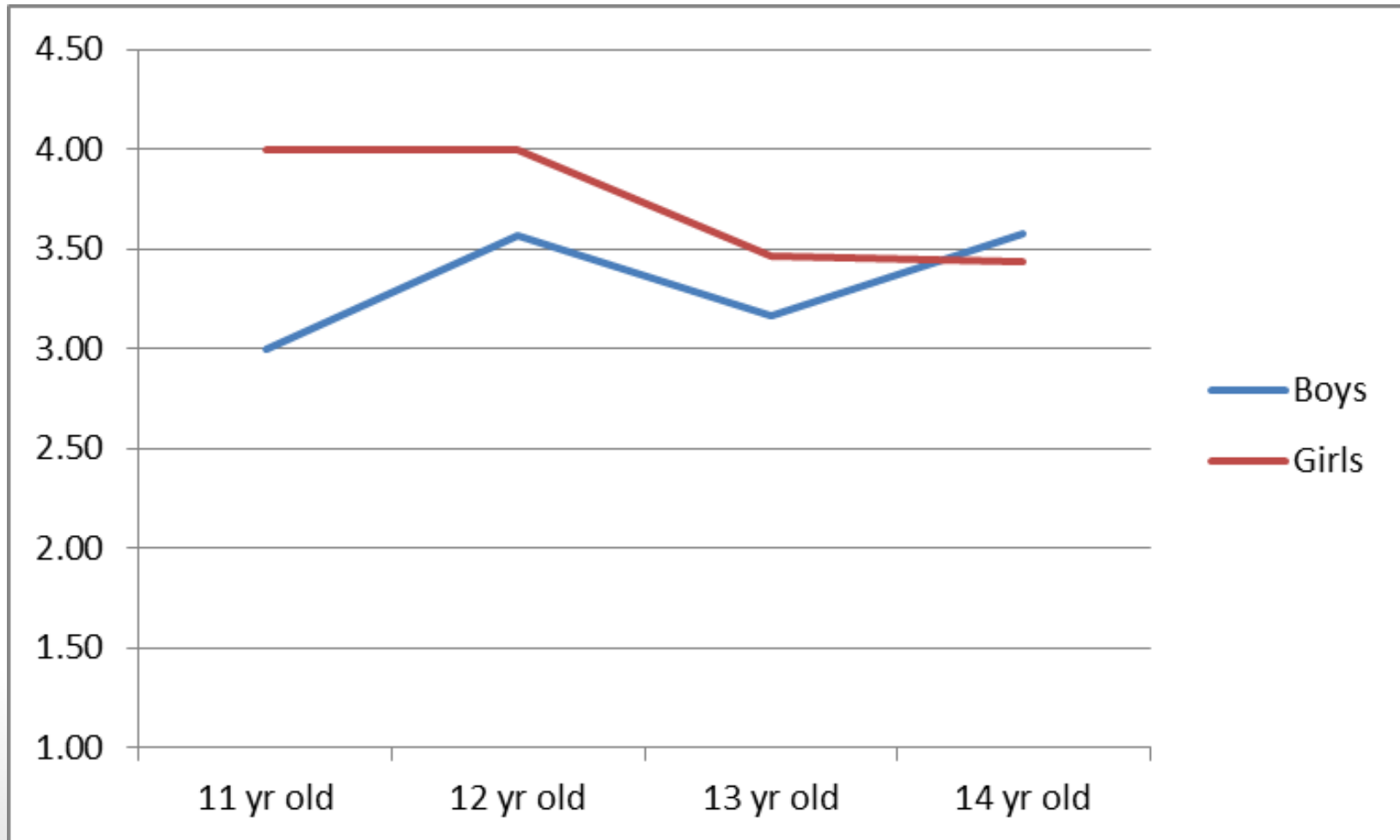
\*N = 139, Pearson Chi-Square <.05

	My friends would help me bike more if I wanted to			
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Boys	24.2%	21.0%	33.9%	21.0%
Girls	12.5%	12.5%	60.4%	14.6%

\*N = 110, Pearson Chi-Square <.05

# Gender Differences in Perceived Support - The Tween Shift

“My parents would help me bike more if I wanted to”



# Policy Implications

- Skills clinics for girls could combat fear of injury/lack of skill (directly) and fear of embarrassment (indirectly), especially for pre-teens
- Take advantage of sense of support among girls to increase bike/walk behaviors (organized groups?)
  - need to do early enough



# Next Steps

- How do these attitudes toward physical activity and active travel differ by age for these same individuals?
- Do these attitudes predict bicycling/walking behavior?
- Can facility type affect girls' bicycling/walking through affecting these attitudes?

# THANK YOU!

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- Family Activity Study
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