

# Research-to-Results

Fact Sheet

Child TRENDS.

...information for practitioners, funders, policy makers, and the media on current levels of participation in out-of-school time programs

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## OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME IS CRITICAL FOR CHILDREN: WHO PARTICIPATES IN PROGRAMS?

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### BACKGROUND

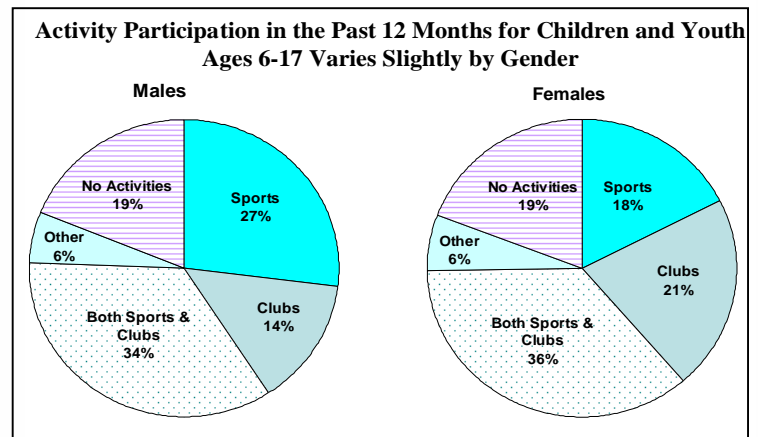
School-age children and adolescents in the United States have a lot of discretionary time (6.5 to 8 hours per day).<sup>1</sup> Participating in organized out-of-school time programs and activities is one constructive and safe way that children can spend their free time.<sup>2</sup> These activities can provide supervision, fun, and opportunities to develop new skills and relationships with others. Research has shown that consistent participation in organized, high-quality out-of-school time activities can have both educational and social/emotional benefits<sup>3,4</sup> and may have the most positive effects for youth who are most at risk.<sup>5</sup> Understanding who participates is an important question to answer in order for policy makers, funders, and practitioners to identify gaps and target resources.

### OVERALL FACTS

- § 4 in 5 children and youth participated in out-of-school activities in the past 12 months.
- § 1 in 3 children participated in both sports and clubs in the past 12 months.
- § 19 percent of children did not participate in any activities in the past 12 months.

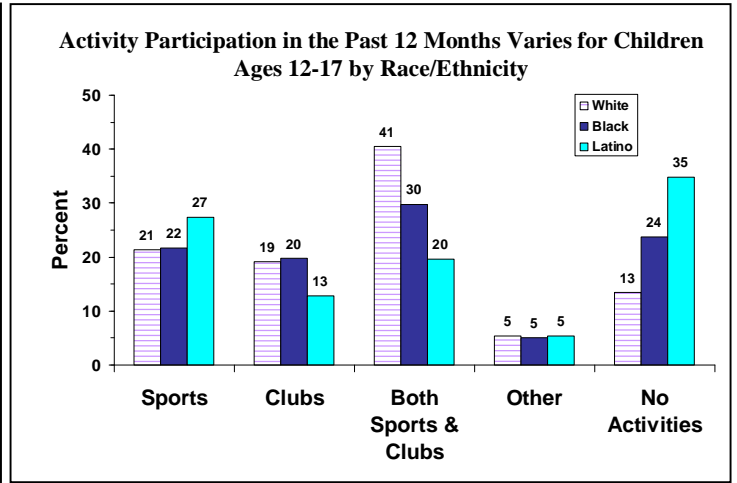
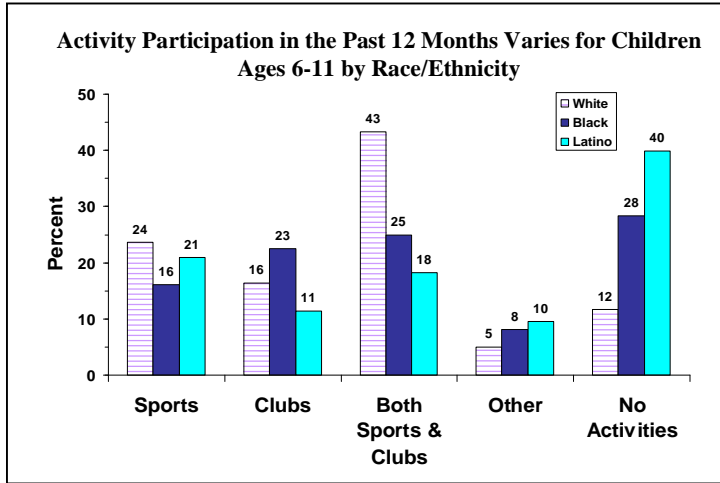
### GENDER FACTS

- § Boys are slightly more likely to participate in sports than are girls; 61 percent of boys play sports, compared with 54 percent of girls.
- § Girls are slightly more likely to participate in clubs; 57 percent of girls belong to clubs, compared with 48 percent of boys.



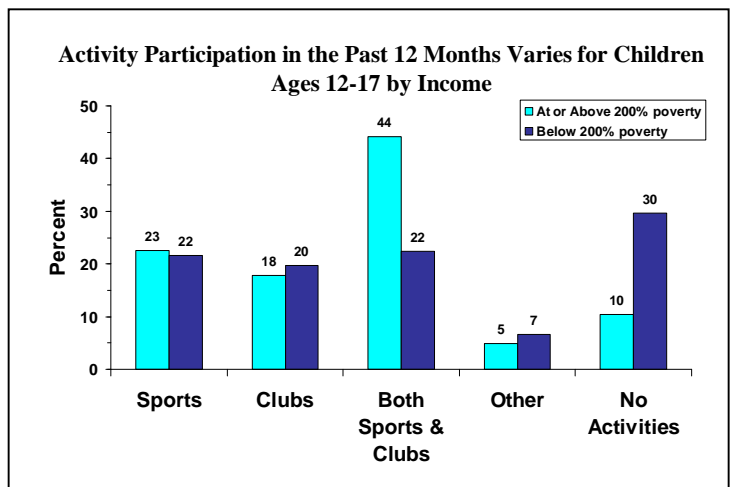
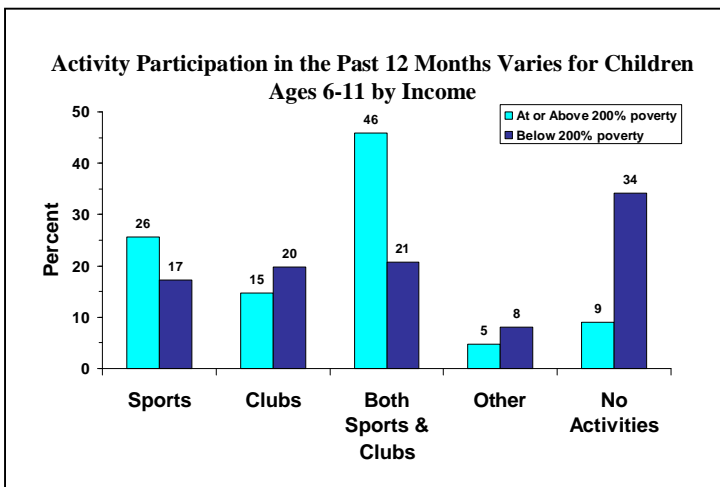
**RACE/ETHNICITY FACTS**

- § White children participated in at least one out-of-school time activity at very high rates in the past 12 months; 83 percent of white children ages 6-11 and 81 percent of white adolescents ages 12-17 participated.
- § Black children were less likely to participate than white children in the past 12 months; 65 percent of black children ages 6-11 and 72 percent of black adolescents ages 12-17 participated.
- § Latino children participated the least in the past 12 months; 50 percent of Latino children ages 6-11 and 60 percent of Latino adolescents ages 12-17 participated.
- § White children were more likely to participate in both clubs and sports.
- § Black and Latino children were more likely to be in no activities compared with white children.



**POVERTY FACTS**

- § Only 9 percent of children living in higher income families did not participate in any activities, compared with 34 percent of children whose families live below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.<sup>6</sup>
- § Among low-income children who participate in activities, roughly equal percentages play sports, join a club, or are involved in both activities; however for children living above 200 percent of the poverty line, most participated in both sports and clubs.

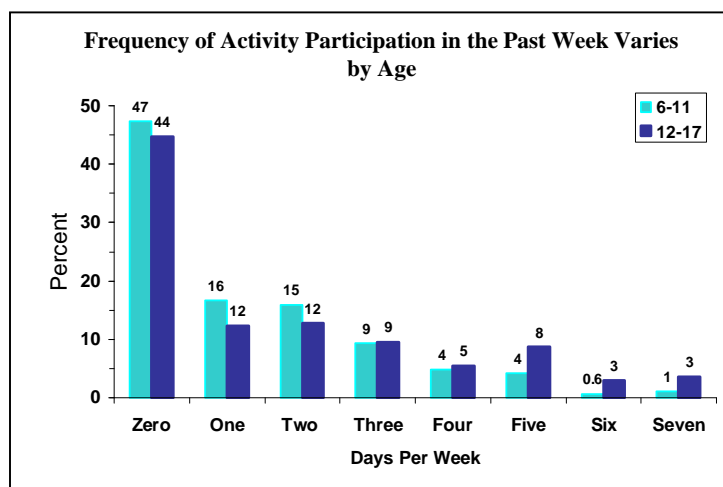


## HOW OFTEN DO CHILDREN AND YOUTH ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES?

Parents were asked to report how many days in the past week their child participated in sports, clubs, or other organizations after school.

§ No participation was the most common response, with 45 percent of children and youth not engaging in any activities in the past week.

§ Among all children who were engaged in activities, the typical period of involvement was one or two days per week.



*Note: All estimates are based on data from the National Survey of Children's Health, 2003, sponsored by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Department of Health and Human Services.*

<sup>1</sup> Larson, R.W. (2001). How U.S. Children and adolescents spend time: What it does (and doesn't) tell us about their development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10, 160-164.

<sup>2</sup> Programs may be in community-based organizations or in school buildings.

<sup>3</sup> Eccles, J., & Gootman, J.A (Eds.) (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

<sup>4</sup> Zaff, J.F., Moore, K.A., Papillo, A.R., & Williams, S. (2003). Implications of extracurricular activity participation during adolescence on positive outcomes. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 18(6), 599-630.

<sup>5</sup> Mahoney, J. (2000). School extracurricular activity participation as a moderator in the development of antisocial patterns *Child Development*, 71, 502-516.

<sup>6</sup> In 2003, an income of \$36,800 per year was 200% of the poverty line for a family of four. United States Census Bureau. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/03poverty.htm>