

Trends & TudesSM

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Keeping you informed of current topics in youth and education research.

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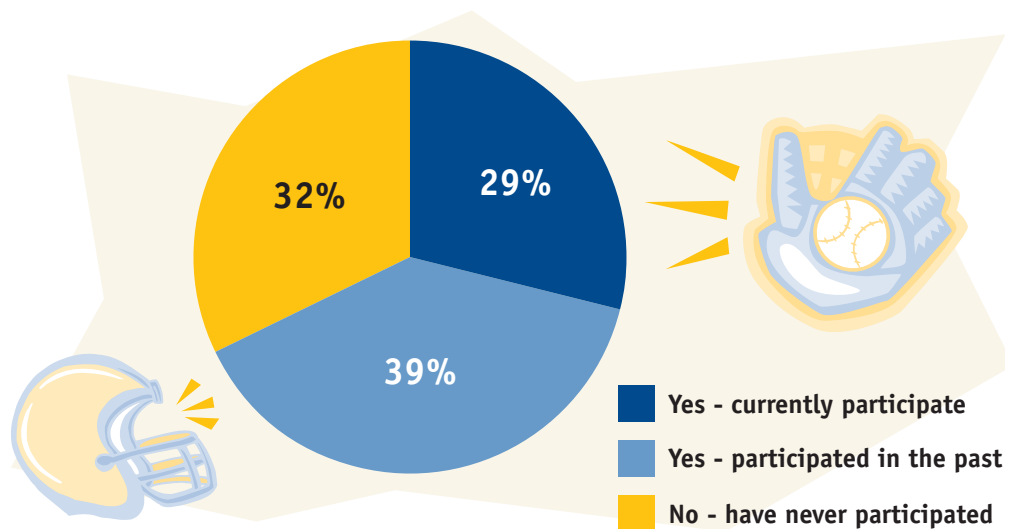
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Youth and Sports

The days are getting shorter, the air is turning cooler, and leaves will soon be tumbling down. It's time to go back to school again. As young people return to school, they also return to organized sports activities. Harris Interactive recently completed a survey among young people aged 8 to 18 regarding their attitudes about organized sports activities.

We found that most young people (68%) have participated in organized youth sports outside of school. One in three (29%) currently participate, while an additional four in ten (39%) say they have participated in these activities in the past. Three in ten young people (32%) have never participated in organized youth sports.

Have you ever participated in organized youth sports outside of school?



Harris Interactive YouthQuerySM, July 2004, n=1,228, 8- to 18-year-olds

Young people have had a wide range of positive experiences during their participation in organized youth sports outside of school. By participating in youth sports, young people say they got a lot of exercise (80%), learned athletic skills (72%), worked as a member of a team (67%), got to meet people they otherwise wouldn't have met (67%), felt good about themselves (62%), learned more about a sport and strategies for playing it (61%), developed close friendships (48%), developed discipline (42%), and even in some cases improved their concentration on their schoolwork (14%). Sports clearly play a central, positive role in the lives of many young people.

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YOUTH AND EDUCATION
The Harris Poll[®] PEOPLE

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Editorial: Our Take On It

by

Marc R. Scheer, Ph.D.

Research Manager

Youth and Education Research

Children are born with a love of play, and sports participation is an essential aspect of the development of many children. This study found that many young people leave organized youth sports prematurely. Others report negative experiences while participating in youth sports, such as witnessing verbal conflicts among adults, and not getting enough playing time. When it comes to organized sports, youngsters eventually stop having fun. How can we turn this around? How can we improve the youth sports experience so that young people enjoy the experience, and want to continue participating, even after they are 13 or 14 years old?

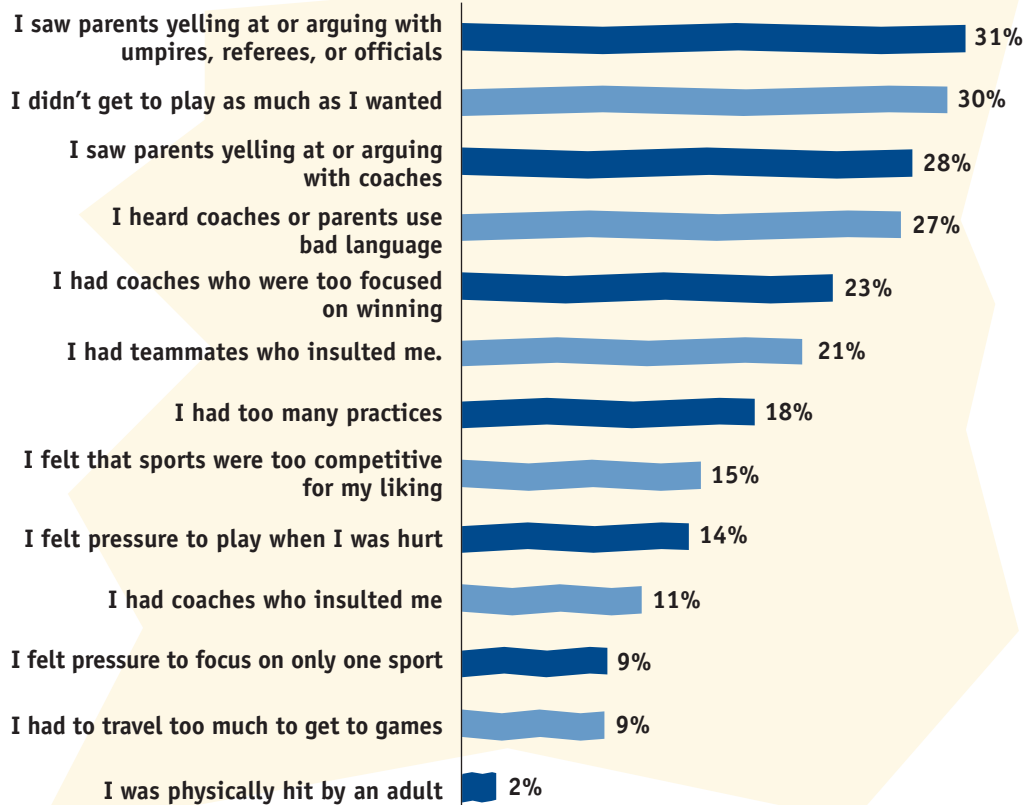
Organized youth sports can provide a useful life metaphor. When participating, many youngsters get exercise, learn athletic skills, function as a member of a team, develop close relationships, deal with setbacks, and foster feelings of self-esteem and competence. These are the experiences that young people need as they develop into adults and citizens. However, for many youngsters, the negative aspects of organized sports compel them to end their participation in these activities too soon.

In a Harris Interactive study from a few years ago, we showed that by the mid-teen years young people were spending more time watching televised sports than

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Despite an overall positive view of youth sports, young people also report some negative experiences. Respondents say that they saw parents yelling at officials (31%), didn't get to play as much as they wanted (30%), saw parents yelling at coaches (28%), heard coaches or parents using bad language (27%), had coaches who were too focused on winning (23%), had teammates who insulted them (21%), had too many practices (18%), felt sports were too competitive (15%), felt pressure to play when they were hurt (14%), had coaches who insulted them (11%), felt pressure to focus on only one sport (9%), had to travel too much to get to games/meets (9%); and even in a few cases were physically hit by an adult (2%).

Which of the following experiences have you had during your participation in youth sports?



Harris Interactive YouthQuerySM, July 2004, n=1,228, 8- to 18-year-olds

These pressures contribute to a decreasing participation rate in sports as children age. The study found that young people stop participating in organized sports at age 13 or 14. On average, those aged 8 to 12 say that they will stop participating at age 13, and those aged 13 to 18 say that they stopped participating at age 14.

Young people stop participating in organized sports for a number of different reasons. The most frequent reason they stop participating is that they simply stopped having fun (43%). Other common reasons for ending participation include not having enough time (31%), and not believing that they are good enough at the sport (27%). A number of young people also end their participation because: they don't get to play enough (15%); sports are too expensive (12%); coaches put too much pressure on them (10%); there was too much traveling time (6%); and their parents put too much pressure on them (5%).

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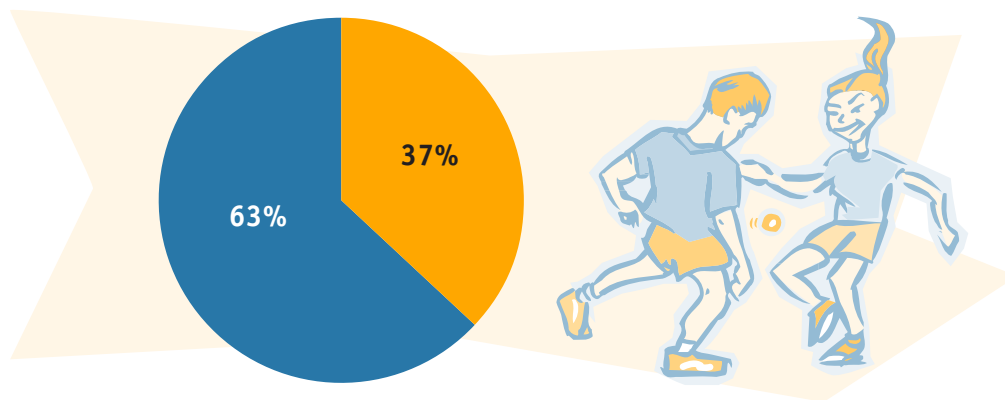
playing sports. It seems natural that the practices of professional sports gradually have influenced youth sports, and we believe that, in some ways, this negatively affects youth sports participation. Youth sports are supposed to promote having fun and learning. The practices of professional sports are decidedly different. Professional sports are a business and tend to support standards that are consistent with making money and winning. The media often highlights troublesome aspects of professional sports, such as conflict, violence and selfishness. These behaviors are not what we want to convey in youth sports.

As young people are exposed to negative sports images, in some ways they are also prevented from witnessing positive sports images. Although sports can offer negative influences such as inappropriate advertisements and behavior, sporting events also can offer lessons regarding positive attributes such as teamwork, discipline, good behavior, perseverance and physical fitness. However, many young people are not able to watch sporting events – whether in person or on TV. According to a recent Harris Interactive survey, young people say they are prevented from watching sports in person because the tickets are too expensive (52%), and that they are prevented from watching sports on TV because sports are on too late at night (40%), are on TV channels that youngsters don't receive (38%), or are "blacked out" or not shown in their area (24%). The business and financial aspects of professional

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Which of the following would you prefer?



Be on an organized sports team that wins a championship, but I don't get to play much.

Be on an organized sports team that loses most of its games, but I get to play most of the time.

Harris Interactive YouthQuerySM, July 2004, n=1,228, 8- to 18-year-olds

Enjoyment and playing time are crucial to young people and it is what makes sports fun. From the perspective of young people, these aspects of youth sports are much more important than winning. Most young people would rather be on an organized sports team that loses most of its games but allows them to play most of the time (63%) than be on a team that wins a championship but does not allow them much playing time (37%).

Many young people participate in and enjoy organized youth sports, clearly a benefit to them in their lives, both today and in the future. To maximize the benefit by extending participation past the ages of 13 and 14, organizers should focus on improving the negative experiences, as voiced by the participants themselves. One of the clearest messages from the study is the fact that most children would rather play more and win less than vice versa. Coupled with the fact that the majority of kids who stopped participating did so because of their simply no longer having fun, it appears that adults need to ensure that competition takes a back seat to participation.

Recent Research for Public Release

Parents Say Back-to-School Expenses Are On the Rise - MasterCard[®] Survey Shows One in Three to Spend More in 2004

Two Out of Three Parents Choosing Debit Cards to Pay for Clothes, Supplies and Books

On average, parents of U.S. students college age and younger expect to spend \$412 this year on back-to-school items, according to the results of the Back to School Spending Index survey sponsored by MasterCard[®] International and conducted by Harris Interactive. More than one-third (34 percent) of parents expect to spend more this year than last and one-sixth (17 percent) anticipate 2004 back-to-school costs for books, clothes, and supplies to exceed \$500.

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sports place limitations on the ability of young people to watch sporting events. These limitations prevent young people from witnessing the positive side of sports and experiencing the associated long-term benefits. Sports executives should fully explore their options to give young people more opportunities to watch sporting events.

Professional athletes can be positive or negative role models for young people and youth sports. According to a recent Harris Interactive survey, almost half of young people (45%) believe that athletes are role models. At the same time, young people are aware that many sports produce players whose actions can be viewed as unsavory. Many athletes who misbehave on or off the field receive publicity for their misbehavior. In addition, recent video games have been updated to include aspects of violence and inappropriate behavior. When misbehavior in sports gets publicized as newsworthy, the viewers may include some young people who are unable to discern the important differences between good and bad behavior – especially when athletes are popular. When negative role models get attention in the media, their behavior can adversely affect some young people and organized youth sports.

If implemented correctly, organized youth sports can be very beneficial to young people and can socialize them in ways that help them become healthy

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Retail industry analysts estimate \$40.5 billion will be spent on back-to-school items in 2004, ranking second only to the winter holidays in terms of cumulative sales. Reports also indicate that nearly every family with school-aged children intends to purchase clothes, shoes, and school supplies, with almost half planning to also buy electronics or computer-related equipment.

The MasterCard Back to School Spending Index survey shows that parents increasingly rely on debit cards to help manage school spending for themselves and their children.

- More than two out of three (70 percent) parents with children younger than college age said they plan to use their debit card for back-to-school purchases.
- Approximately one in five (21 percent) parents with children in college plan to give their child a debit card to help the student manage spending while at school.

“Parents have come to rely on the convenience and security debit cards provide when paying for their most important household purchases, during the hectic back-to-school season or any other time of the year,” said Richard G. Lyons, senior vice president, Deposit Access Group, North America, MasterCard International. “As the survey demonstrates, parents recognize that debit is especially useful for managing both their personal finances at home and their children’s expenses while at school.”

The MasterCard survey also found that households with children are more likely to have debit cards than those without (72 percent for those with children vs. 58 percent for those without children).

For more information, please visit:

http://home.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/index.jsp?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20040825005410&newsLang=en

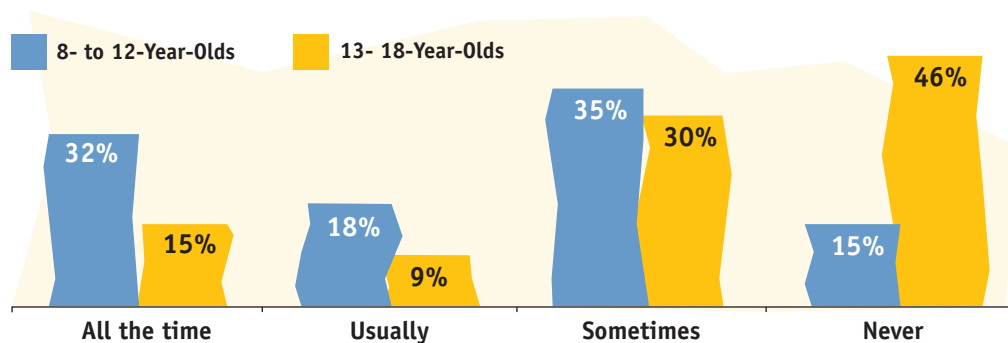
Ask a Question...

Have a burning question you would like to ask kids and teens? Here’s your chance to submit a free question for our upcoming YouthQuerySM youth omnibus. Just send us an email with your suggestion. We will pick one question each month and then publish the results in the next issue of the newsletter.

...Get an Answer

Debby Johnson from Ackerman-McQueen submitted the following question:

How often do your parents have to remind you to do your homework?



Source: August 2004 Harris Interactive YouthQuerySM, omnibus study of boys and girls 8- to 18-years-old.

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citizens. Young people tell us that, when it comes to sports, they would rather play and have fun than win. As parents and coaches, we should never lose sight of this. It seems that young people do not want organized youth sports to be dominated by the values of professional sports. If we want to raise the enjoyment and participation levels in organized youth sports, we may need to pay more attention to the value system that is currently being employed in these activities. A focus on winning may be beneficial for coaches' and parents' egos, but it may not be best for the kids. Putting the focus back on having fun will be challenging, but it may be necessary to keep organized youth sports thriving.

You're Invited

As an event sponsor of IIR's Annual market Research Event, October 26-29, 2004, Hotel Nikko, San Francisco, Harris Interactive Chief Operating Officer Gregory T. Novak will open the Pre-Conference Symposium's Online Research Track on Tuesday, October 26 at 8:45 AM. The title of his presentation is "New Ways to Solve Age-Old Business Issues Leveraging Online Research." To learn more about the event, visit www.iirusa.com/research and use **Priority Code SPOM1628HI** when you register to receive a 15% discount courtesy of Harris Interactive.

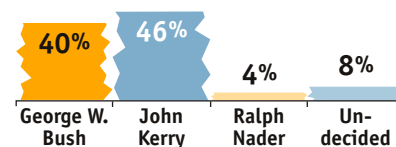
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Election Update

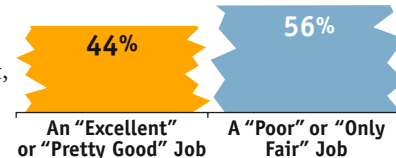
Until the Presidential election in November, Harris Interactive will report on our election poll we are conducting among 8- to 18-year-olds.

In August 2004, this study found that if the election were held today and these respondents could vote, 40% would vote for George W. Bush, 46% for John Kerry, 4% would vote for Ralph Nader and 8% would be undecided. Forty-four percent said that President Bush is doing an excellent or pretty good job as president, and 56% said that he is doing a poor or only fair job.

Presidential Candidate Preference Among 8- to 18-Year-Olds



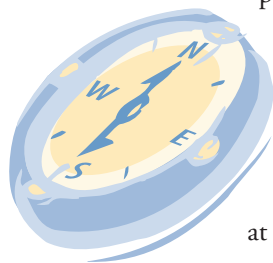
Satisfaction with President's Performance Among 8- to 18-Year-Olds



Now Available!

360 Youth College Explorer - Powered by Harris Interactive

You can now subscribe to 360 Youth College Explorer, the annual study of college students powered by Harris Interactive. This is the only study of its kind to provide marketers with insights about the entire college market of 18- to 30-year-olds, including: full- and part-time students, students at 2- and 4-year institutions, and undergraduate and graduate students. This year's topics cover income and spending, financial services, online behavior, technology and wireless, entertainment, food and dining, and much more. Contact us at 877.919.4765 or info@harrisinteractive.com for details.



The 2004 Wave Of YouthPulseSM

YouthPulse, Harris Interactive's lifestyle and attitude study of 8- to 21-year-olds, is now available on a subscription basis. YouthPulse provides important insights to youth marketers and can help connect your organization with the Millennial generation. Contact us at 877.919.4765 or info@harrisinteractive.com for details.

Trends & Tudes Poll Vault

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