

Access to youth sports: A toolkit

The @Work Toolkit is a collection of additional resources and tips that might be useful when discussing the topic with your team.



Did You Know

According to a 2020 report [by the Aspen Institute's Project Play initiative](#), 87.1% of parents surveyed said that they felt their kids playing sports led to desired outcomes related to mental health, physical health, fun, social skills and peer relationships.

Source: Aspen Institute's Project Play

Further Insights

Youth ages 6 to 18 from low-income households quit sports due to financial costs six times the rate than children from high-income households, according to a [2020 survey](#) by the Aspen Institute's Project Play initiative and Utah State University's Families in Sport Lab. One of the main reasons parents from low-income homes cited were time constraints. This is often related to family responsibilities, such as looking after siblings or having a job, as well as transportation logistics in order to attend practice and games.

In addition, household income also had a correlation with the type of sports children played. Youth from high-income homes were twice as likely to play the following sports: field hockey, lacrosse and tennis, or engage in skiing or snowboarding. Whereas children from low-income families were more likely to play tackle football and basketball. Children from all households, regardless of income, played gymnastics, skateboarding, swimming, track and field and wrestling at similar rates.

According to Travis Dorsch, the lead investigator on the Aspen study, “While most sports remain relatively accessible, it is evident that certain sports are easier for low-income youth to engage in while others are more aligned with high-income families.”

Tip: How to talk about access and privilege

Boost self-efficacy and hope. Bolster agency by offering choices in how to interact. Allow people in a room to step in and out of a discussion. They should feel free to take breaks as needed. Conclude any sessions with plenty of time for sharing a positive reflection or area for growth. Encourage everyone to say something positive that they learned from another person. Include closure statements or exit cards like, “Something I learned today...” or “I really like what [insert name] had to say today...”