

## Go Out and Play: Are We There Yet? Gender Equity in Sports

*Go Out and Play: Youth Sports in America* is a comprehensive, 184-page research report, which covers a range of topics, including children's participation in organized sports, youth involvement with exercise, links between athletic participation and family life, gender and the frequency of physical education, associations between athletic participation and children's physical and emotional well-being, age of entry into sports and drop-out rates, how gender equity varies across communities (urban, suburban and rural), gender and interest in sports and physical activity, and sports involvement among understudied populations (children with disabilities, children in immigrant families).

Today more girls participate in sports than ever before in U.S. history. And yet, equitable access and opportunity in sports remains a goal rather than a reality. Section Seven of *Go Out and Play* reports parents' views on the extent of gender equity in youth sports. How many parents see an equal playing field with regard to gender and youth sports? Do parents believe that schools and communities provide similar athletic opportunities for their daughters and sons? To what extent do their views of gender equity vary by school location, family income, and race or ethnicity? Some key findings are listed below.

- Forty-two percent of mothers and 36% of fathers agreed that "My community offers more sports programs for boys than girls."
- More than one-third (39%) of mothers and fathers (37%) agreed that "The schools in my community care more about boys' sports programs than girls' sports programs."
- More parents in lower-income families indicated that girls were not getting similar support and resources in athletics as boys. Half of low-income parents agreed that their schools and communities were not meeting the needs of girls as much as those of boys, compared with about one-third of middle- and upper-income parents.

- About half (51%) of African-American parents and Hispanic parents (49%) felt agreed that their "community offers more sports programs for boys than for girls."
- Fifty-two percent of African-American parents agreed that "The schools in my community care more about boys' sports programs than girls' sports programs."
- More parents with children in urban and rural schools said that their schools and communities fall short of equal treatment for girls in sports.

**Conclusion:** For substantial numbers of parents across the United States, the proverbial "glass" of gender equity in school and community sports is half-empty rather than half-full. Similar numbers of mothers and fathers report gender inequities, more people of color are concerned about lack of opportunity for their daughters than whites, and parents in lower-income families see the greatest degree of unequal treatment between girls and boys. Finally, to the extent that these parental attitudes reflect the "realities on the ground" in school and community sports, it appears that urban and rural schools have the most work to do in order to more fully meet the athletic needs and interests of girls.

To access the full report, go to [www.WomensSportsFoundation.org/GoOutandPlay](http://www.WomensSportsFoundation.org/GoOutandPlay)

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