



Harris On Demand The Harris Poll

Cost Of Sports Study

Prepared For:



GOOD SPORTS®

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INTRODUCTION

The aim in conducting the *Cost of Sports Study* was to understand the impact the cost of kids participating in sports has on the finances of American parents, as well as to gain insights into parents' perceptions around how kids benefit from participating in sports.

We are pleased to present the findings of the *Cost of Sports Study* commissioned by Good Sports and hope that it will serve as the basis for communications for your media outreach as well as for your internal use purposes.



KEY FINDINGS BY QUESTION

Q1: In general, how much do you believe children benefit from playing a sport? A sport includes activities including but not limited to football, volleyball, track & field, gymnastics, dance, tennis, golf, etc., played through school or a recreational league.

Nearly all parents of minors (95%) believe children benefit from playing a sport, with more than two thirds (69%) feeling they benefit a great deal.

- Parents of minors who have a children currently playing a sport are significantly more likely than those who do not to believe children benefit a great deal from playing a sport (74% vs. 43%)

Q2: Which of the following sports are your child(ren) currently playing? Please select all that apply.

More than 4 in 5 parents of minors (84%) say they have a children currently playing a sport, with the most common sports being basketball (37%), baseball/softball (31%), soccer (30%), and football (28%). Other sports parents of minors say their children are participating in include:

- Dance – 21%
 - Swimming – 15%
 - Gymnastics – 15%
 - Track & Field – 14%
 - Cheerleading – 13%
 - Volleyball – 13%
 - Tennis – 9%
 - Golf – 9%
 - Wrestling – 8%
 - Hockey – 6%
 - Cross Country – 6%
 - Field hockey 3%
 - Lacrosse 3%
 - Other 3%
- Parents of minors with an annual HHI of \$75k+ are more likely than those with an annual HHI of less than \$75k to say their children currently plays a sport (90% vs. 75%), and are more likely to say their children plays soccer (38% vs. 21%)



Q3: Which of the following are reasons why you have strongly considered pulling your child(ren) out of sports? Please select all that apply.

Over 9 in 10 parents of minors (92%) say their children have played sports at one point, either currently or in the past. Among them, three quarters (75%) say they have strongly considered pulling their children out of sports. And cost appears to be a stronger driver for this consideration than the time commitment or poor academic performance. More than 1 in 5 parents of minors whose children ever played sports (21%) cite the unsustainable cost of participating as a reason why they've considered removing them from a sport, compared to 19% who say the time commitment is too demanding and 17% who say negative impacts on school performance have caused this consideration. Additionally, many parents of minors whose children ever played sports say concern of injuries (27%), negative team environment (26%), lack of enjoyment from child (24%) and poor coaching (22%) are among the reasons they have considered pulling their children out of sports.

- Parents of minors with an annual HHI of \$75k+ are more likely than those with an annual HHI of less than \$75k to say their children has ever played a sport (95% vs. 87%)

Q4: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Paying for the sports equipment my child(ren) need to play their sports has become a financial stress for our family.

Nearly 3 in 5 parents of minors whose children are currently playing sports (58%) say paying for the sports equipment their children need to play their sports has become a financial stress for their family.

- Among parents of minors whose children are currently playing sports, those residing in the West are more likely than those residing in the Northeast and South to cite this financial stress (67% vs. 50% & 53%)

I am worried I will not be able to put my child(ren) in a sport next year due to rising costs of participating in sports.

More than half of parents of minors (56%) are worried they will not be able to put their children in a sport next year due to rising costs of participating in sports.

- Parents of minors with an annual HHI of less than \$75k are more likely than those with an annual HHI of \$75k+ to share this worry (61% vs. 52%)



I am concerned that my child(ren) are missing out on the benefits of being on a sports team.

Over half of parents of minors whose children do not currently play sports (56%) say they are concerned that their children are missing out on the benefits of being on a sports team.

My child(ren) spend more time using screens (e.g., TV, tablet, computer, smartphone) than participating in physical activities (e.g., playing sports, playing outside, riding a bike, hiking).

Nearly two thirds of parents of minors (63%) say their children spend more time using screens than participating in physical activities.

Among parents of minors:

- Those ages 18-44 are more likely than those ages 45+ to cite this disproportionate use of screens to physical activity (66% vs. 57%)
- This stat jumps to 71% among those who have children not currently playing sports

Playing sports has both positive physical and emotional benefits for children.

An overwhelming majority of parents of minors (89%) feel playing sports has both positive physical and emotional benefits for children.

- Parents of minors with an annual HHI of \$75k+ are more likely than those with an annual HHI of less than \$75k to share this belief (94% vs. 84%)
- Parents of minors that currently have children playing sports are more likely than those who do not have a children playing sports to share this belief (91% vs. 82%)

Q5: Which of the following statements about your child(ren) playing sports are true for you? Please select all that apply.

I would consider signing my child(ren) up for sports in the future if it was more affordable.

More than a third of parents of minors (36%) would consider signing their children up for sports in the future if it was more affordable.

- This jumps to nearly half (46%) among parents of minors whose children are not currently playing sports



I feel/felt financial strain as a result of my child(ren) participating in sports.

Roughly 1 in 4 parents of minors whose children have ever played a sport (24%) say they feel or have felt financial strain as a result of my children participating in sports.

I have taken on additional work (e.g., second job, side hustle) to afford to pay for my child(ren) to play sports.

Nearly 1 in 4 parents of minors whose children have ever played a sport (23%) say they have taken on additional work to afford to pay for their children to play sports.

- Among parents of minors whose children have ever played a sport, those ages 18-34 are more likely than those ages 35+ to have taken on additional work for this reason (30% vs. 20%)

I have taken on debt (e.g., used a credit card I couldn't pay off immediately, taken out a loan, used a line of credit) to afford to pay for my child(ren) to play sports.

Almost 1 in 5 parents of minors whose children have ever played a sport (18%) have taken on debt to afford to pay for their children to play sports.

- Among parents of minors whose children have ever played a sport, those ages 18-34 are more likely than those ages 35+ to have taken on debt for this reason (25% vs. 14%)

I have not signed my child(ren) up for a sports team because of the cost of equipment and related expenses.

About 1 in 7 parents of minors (14%) say they have not signed their children up for a sports team because of the cost of equipment and related expenses.

I have pulled my child(ren) from a sports team because of the cost of equipment and related expenses.

One in 10 parents of minors whose children have ever played a sport (10%) say they have pulled their children from a sports team because of the cost of equipment and related expenses.

- Among parents of minors whose children have ever played a sport, those ages 18-34 are more than twice as likely as those ages 35+ to have removed their children from a sport for this reason (17% vs. 7%)



FULL METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Good Sports from October 16-18, 2024 among 741 U.S. adults ages 18 and older who are parents of minors, and among whom 688 whose children have ever played a sport.

Data were weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income, and political party affiliation, to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents are selected among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. The sample data is accurate to within +/- 4.2 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

About The Harris Poll

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