

A FOCUS ON YOUTH SPORTS

BY HILLARY CLOUD

With the hazy days of winter behind us, the warm sunshine of spring inspires us to get outside and be active. For many children, staying active is a year-round lifestyle—both inside and outside of school. Whether it's softball. volleyball, soccer, dance, or baseball, youth across America are participating in sports that require a great deal of dedication.

Participation Facts



45.7% of Texas children age 6-17 participate in after-school and/or weekend sports

Children ages 6-18 spend an average of

competing in competitive sports

Benefits

in practice

per week



Into Adulthood

Score 40% higher on tests

pressure













Earn 7-8%

more money



3% lower rate of heart disease







Club/Competitive Organizations



Locally, organizations such as Sticks Baseball, Northeast Texas Junior Volleyball Club, and Red Door Dance Academy travel throughout the year to put their skills to the test against kids from across the nation. Competitive select/club sports programs are different because they require additional commitment from both the athlete and the parents. So, why do it? Local parents reported they allowed their children this opportunity for two main reasons...

- 1. Love of the sport.
- 2. The opportunities the sport provides the child on a psychosocial level how to be a good teammate, responsibility, hard work, and delayed gratification.

While the pursuit of college athletics may be the goal for some, providing their athlete with a hobby that challenges them and encourages them to be better is the overall reasoning behind their "why?"

"Club sports can be a crucial part of a child's development that helps to prepare them for life outside of sport. The development of social skills, teamwork, problem solving, leadership, work ethic, and time management are just a few examples of what club sports offer players outside of the actual sport itself." Tim Grove, Masters in Coaching and Athletic Administration and Director of Coaching at Texarkana Soccer.

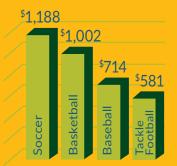


Many factors go into playing select sports beyond a child's ability to compete. Finances and time available may be determining factors in being able to participate. Aside from finances, some parents feel that it may be too early to hone n on one sport—these are the ages to allow them to try many things and figure out which one they love.

In 2022, those involved in youth sports spent an average of \$883 on one primary sport per season, per child.

- According to *State of Play*, parents in the wealthiest households spent 4x more on sports than the lowest-income families.
- Travel is now the most expensive part of youth sports (whether or not your team actually travels). Parents making at least \$150,000 spend 83% more on travel for their child's sport.

Average Cost Per Sport, Per Season



Local Costs

(Local poll to parents whose children play club sports)

Annual cost of "extras" such as hotel stays, equipment, additional training—on average families spend \$2,600 annually, ranging from \$250 per tournament to \$7,000 per year.

Local annual cost of sport or facility paid directly to the sports organization/club-\$3,000 on average, ranging from \$190 to \$5,000.

=★ Challenges ★



- As of 2019, the average child spends less than 3 years playing a sport, quitting by age 11
- One third of parents say it is a challenge to get their child to exercise.





- According to a Gallup poll, children ages 2-10 spend significantly less time in free play than on screens (18-21 hours/week).
- By age nine, physical activity rates begin to drop. This is the age when children develop a self-concept of whether or not they are an athlete.



• By age 15, moderate-to-vigorous physical activity declines 75%.

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