



2024 CALIFORNIA PLAY EQUITY REPORT

California Senate Education Committee Hearing
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THE CLEAR PATH | **Public Opinion Research**

THE 2024 CALIFORNIA PLAY EQUITY REPORT

INNOVATIVE ▪ DISTINCTIVE ▪ GROUNDBREAKING

A fresh, innovative assessment of play equity across the State

Detailing levels of youth participation in sports, play, and movement

- **Distinctive.** The **only statewide study** of California parents and youth on **issues of play equity.**
- **Innovative.** Uplifts the voices of **parents and youth in ways that are both representative (quantitative) and reflective (qualitative).** The **sample is diverse** and robust in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, income, geography, and area type.
- **Groundbreaking.** Creates a **new baseline** as the **first statewide study conducted post-COVID**, as levels of play and activity have returned to pre-COVID levels.



1,636 California
Parents of School
Aged-Children

FOCUS GROUP METHODOLOGY



Focus Groups		
From March 5-6, 2024, EVITARUS conducted four (4) focus groups among California youth and parents.		
Group	Participants	Number of Participants
1	Youth, ages 11-13	5
2	Youth, ages 14-15	7
3	Youth, ages 16-18	6
4	Parents	7
Total		25

YOUTH

I'm a Latino boy aged 14-15 living in Chino. I enjoy playing baseball through school, but I'm stressed about school.



I'm a Native American boy aged 12-13. I live in Eureka in foster care, and I love basketball. I got started through a community-center sponsored league.



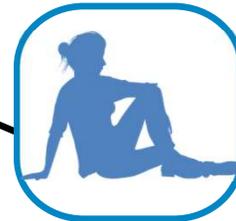
I'm an Asian American girl aged 16-17 living in Oakland, and I've been playing tennis competitively since I was young.



I'm an Asian American girl, aged 14-15, living in Los Angeles, and I prefer activities like show choir.



I'm a bi-racial girl aged 16-17, and I prefer not to play sports. I like relaxed exercise like yoga.



I'm a Latina mother from Fresno. The cost associated with sports is a barrier and it's not safe for my daughter to walk to play spaces, which made her quit sports.



I'm an African American father from Brentwood, and I introduced my son to every sport available. But I feel like there are many gatekeepers to "higher-end" sports like golf.

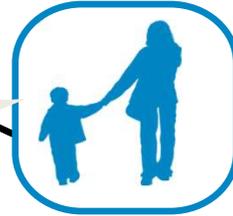


I'm an Asian American mother from Oakland, and I started my children in tennis at a young age. There are a lot of spaces in my community for them to play.



PARENTS

I'm a white single mother from Arcata, and there are not a lot of places for my children to play.



I'm an African American single mother of four from Bakersfield, and it can be difficult to balance my jobs with my children's sports activities.





SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Sample	1,636 California Parents of School Aged-Children → Total Number of Children Represented: 2,686
Fielding Dates	May 1–14, 2024
Margin of Error	± 2.42% For Parent Data
Data Collection Mode	Online, including text-to-web
Weighting and Rounding	Results have been weighted to match the distribution of California parents. All numbers are percentages; some may not sum precisely or to 100% due to rounding.

KEY FINDINGS

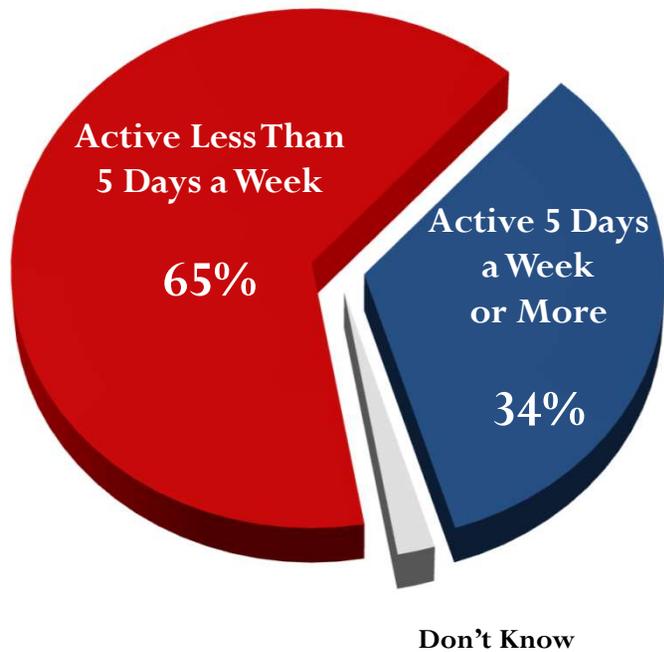


KEY FINDING #1

Daily activity levels for California youth fall below CDC recommended guidelines for youth ages 6 to 17.

3 IN 5 YOUTH ARE NOT ENGAGED IN AT LEAST 60 MINUTES OF DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY—THE CDC STANDARD

Q: How often does your child participate in sports or physical activity?



9%
Of CA Youth
“Never” Engage In Physical
Activity

66%
Of CA Youth
Do Not Have P.E. Every Day

KEY FINDING #2

Significant gaps in play equity exist, especially for:

- **Latina and Black females**
- **Latino youth, in general**
- **Youth with disabilities**
- **Those from low-income households**
- **Youth in the Inland Empire**



ONLY 1 IN 5 LATINA AND BLACK FEMALE YOUTH ARE ACTIVE AT LEAST 5 DAYS A WEEK

Least Active
% Active 5 Days a Week or More

Latina and Black Females 22%

Youth From Household With Income Less Than \$30K 22%

Youth With Disabilities 23%

Latino Youth 24%

Youth In The Inland Empire 28%

Most Active
% Active 5 Days a Week or More

White Males 55%

Youth From Household With Income More Than \$100K 50%

White Youth 48%

Youth In The Rural North 46%

Youth Without Disabilities 35%

KEY FINDING #3

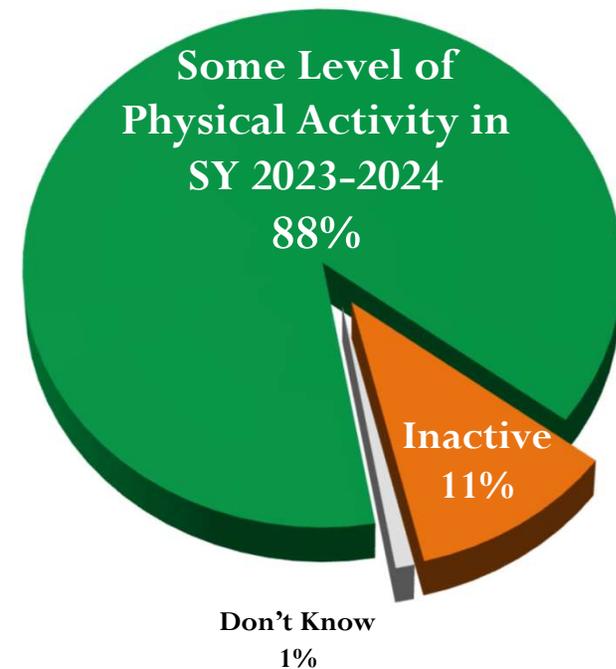
Exposure to a variety of sports and play activities is high – but 1 in 3 youth have stopped playing over the course of the last two years.



A BROAD MAJORITY HAD AT LEAST SOME EXPOSURE TO SPORTS, PLAY, OR MOVEMENT IN THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

Percentage Participating In At Least One Sport/Activity During 2023-2024 School Year

Which sports/physical activities did your child participate in during the current school year?*



*Question was asked in reference to each child in the household. List of individual sports provided with the option for open-ended responses.

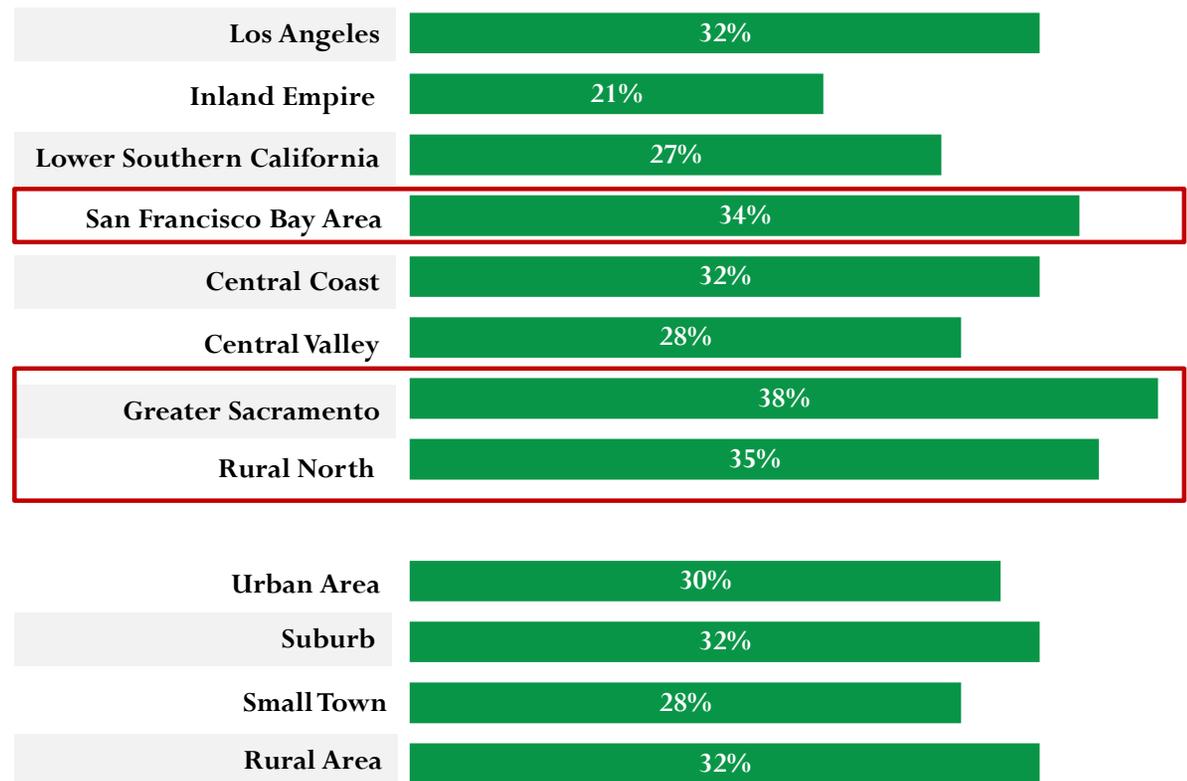
NEARLY 1 IN 3 PARENTS REPORT THAT THEIR CHILD HAS STOPPED PLAYING SPORTS IN THE PAST TWO YEARS

Q: In the past two years, has your child stopped playing a sport or participating in a physical activity?

30%

Of Parents report that their child stopped playing a sport or physical activity in the past two years.

Percent That Has Stopped Playing

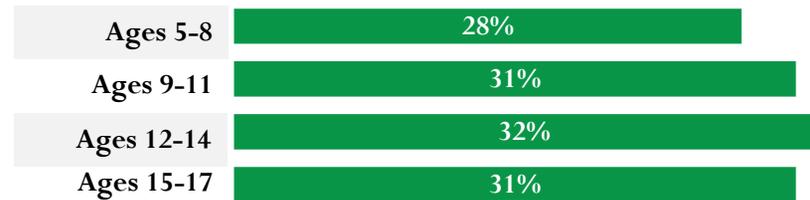


PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHOSE CHILD STOPPED PLAYING A SPORT OR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY—BY SUBGROUP

Percentage of Parents Whose Child Stopped Playing A Sport Or Physical Activity

“ I used to play a lot of sports. ... I was mostly in it to be with friends as well as to play. Then after a while, all the work caught up to me of going to swim meets, that I left it. ”

— AAPI Youth, Female, Ages 14-15



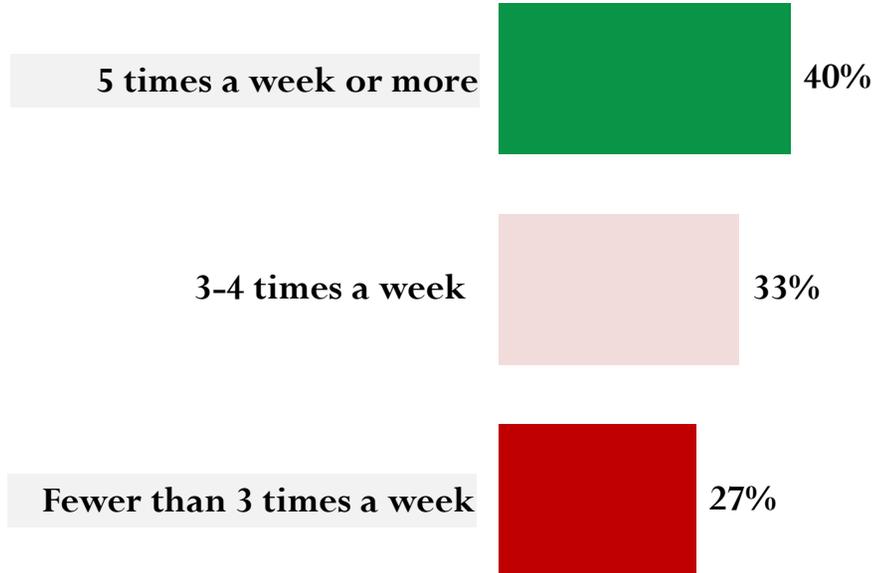


KEY FINDING #4

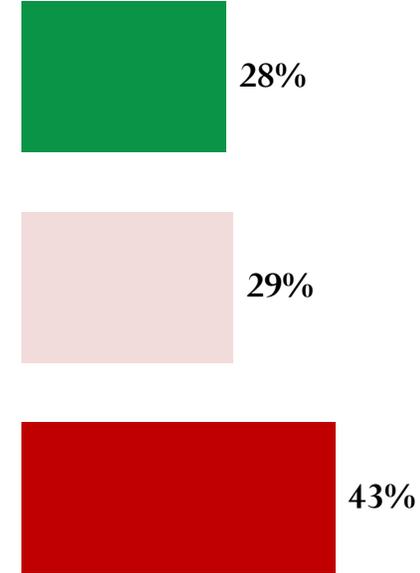
Structured play and parental activity are amplifiers that help children reach a high level of activity—five times a week or more.

YOUTH WHO PLAY ORGANIZED SPORTS TEND TO PLAY MORE FREQUENTLY

Results for Youth Engaged in Structured Play*



Results for Those Who Only Play Casually or Are Inactive

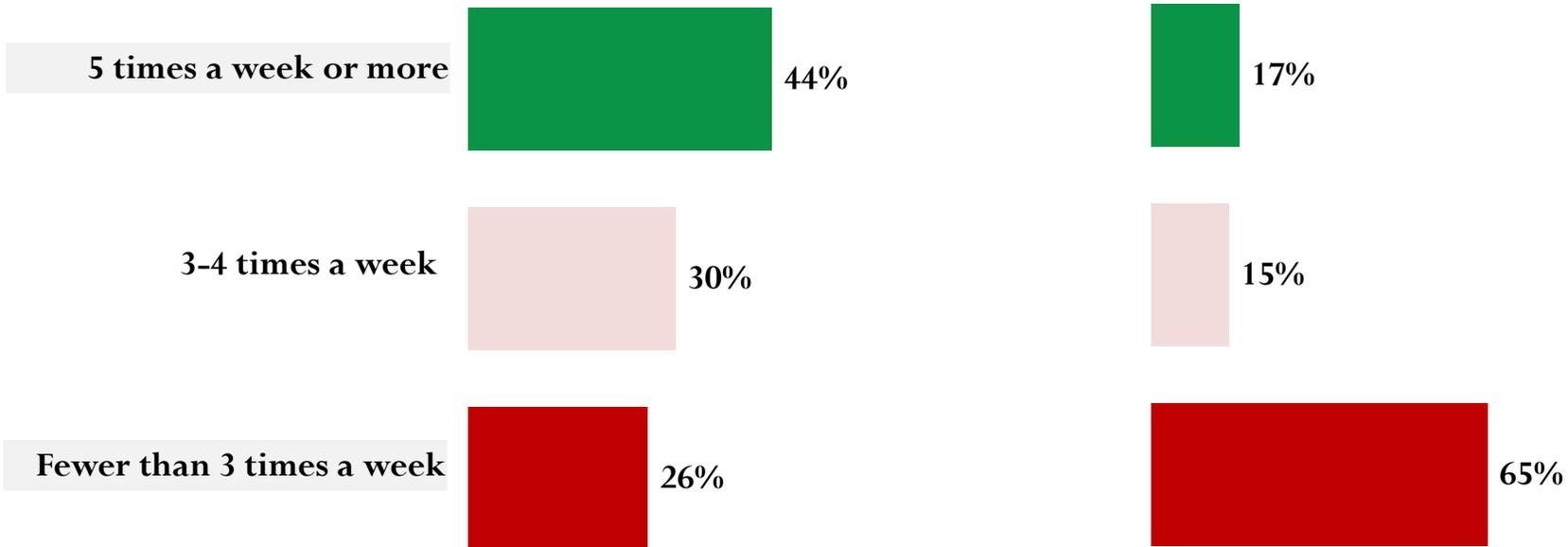


* Structured play is defined as activity that is organized by adults with intention to use physical activity and play to stimulate physical, mental, and social growth and overall well-being. Similarly, structured sport is organized by adults and involves defined sport training, coaching, and competition.

YOUTH WITH PARENTS WHO ARE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE TEND TO PLAY MORE FREQUENTLY

Results for Youth with Parents Who Report
Regular Physical Activity
(Physical activity at least once a week)

Results for Youth with Parents Who Report
“Never” Engaging In Physical Activity



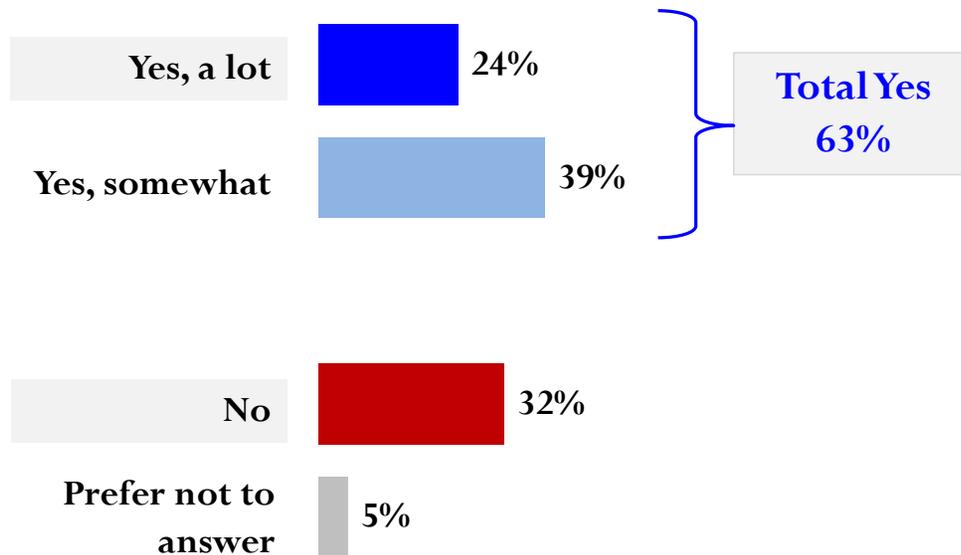


KEY FINDING #5

Parents identify cost as a key barrier to sports participation. A majority (63%) report struggling to afford the costs associated with their children's sports activities.

A SOLID MAJORITY OF PARENTS SAY THEY HAVE STRUGGLED TO AFFORD SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Q: Have you ever struggled to afford the costs associated with your child's/children's sports participation such as membership fees, equipment, uniforms, and travel costs, etc.?

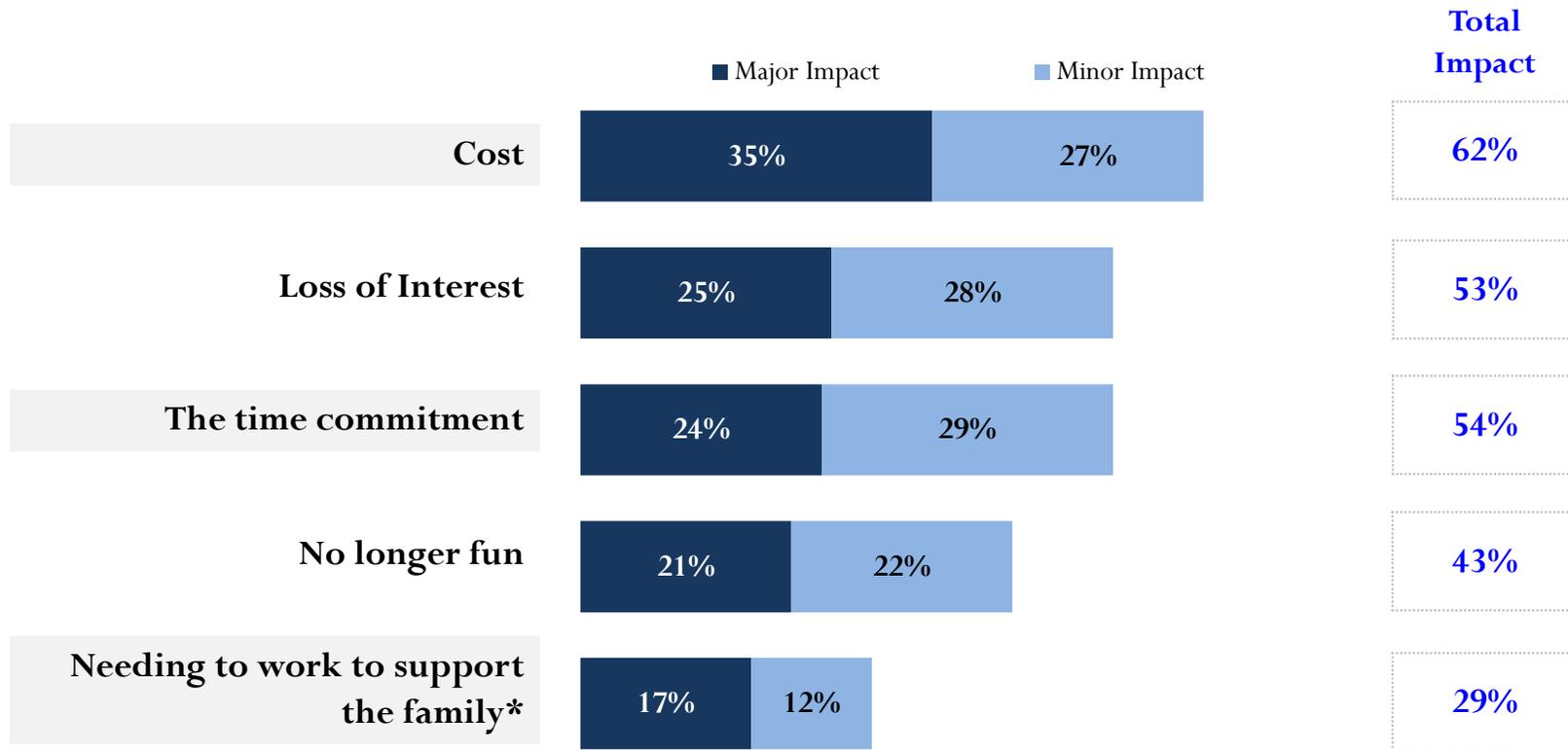


“It makes me curious how many star pro-athletes are out there but maybe will never get to have that opportunity because their family needs to buy groceries.”

– White Parent, Female, Rural North

COST, LOSS OF INTEREST, AND TIME COMMITMENT RANK AS THE BIGGEST FACTORS DRIVING DROP-OFF IN PARTICIPATION

Q: Which of the following had an impact on your child's decision to stop playing that sport? (Ranked by Major Impact)



* Split-sampled.

KEY FINDING #6

Parents express a **strong value for play equity**—with near **universal agreement that the State of California should provide full funding** for youth sports, structured play activities—and physical education.

NEARLY ALL PARENTS BELIEVE ALL YOUTH SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS

Q: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Ranked by Strongly Agree)*

■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Don't Know
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree
Total Agree

The opportunity to participate in sports and physical activity should be available to all young people regardless of income, gender, race/ethnicity, or ability level.



Opportunities to participate in sports should be available for all youth regardless of ability level.



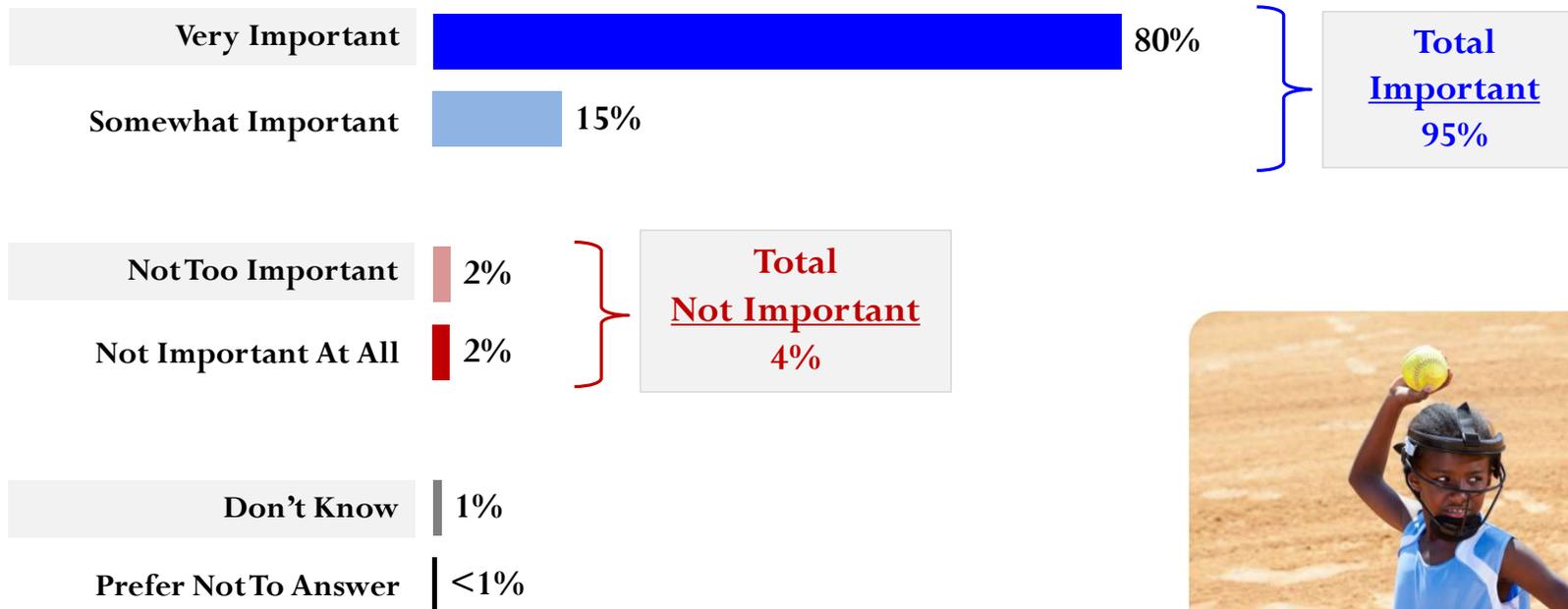
There should be more opportunities for students with disabilities and special needs to participate in sports and structured play activities.



* Percentages below 5% not displayed.

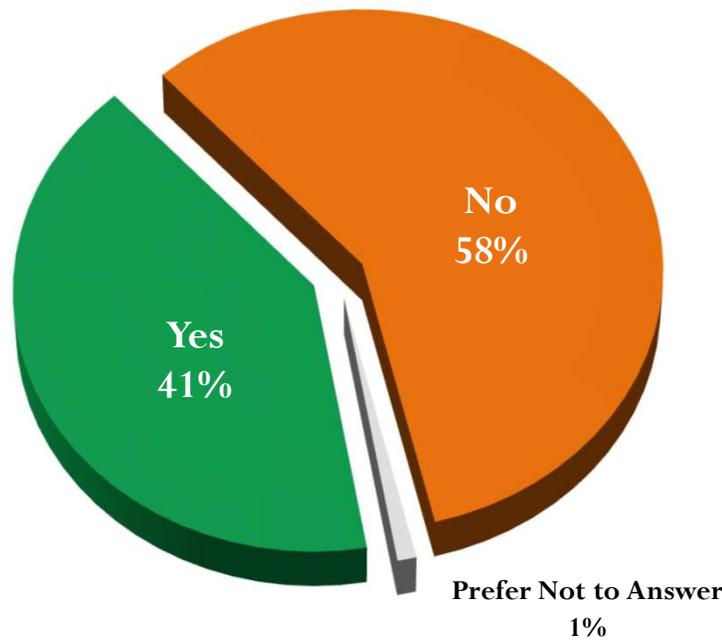
PARENTS BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE STATE TO FULLY FUND STRUCTURED PLAY

Q: How important do you believe it is for the State of California to provide full funding for youth sports, physical education, and structured play activities for school-aged children?



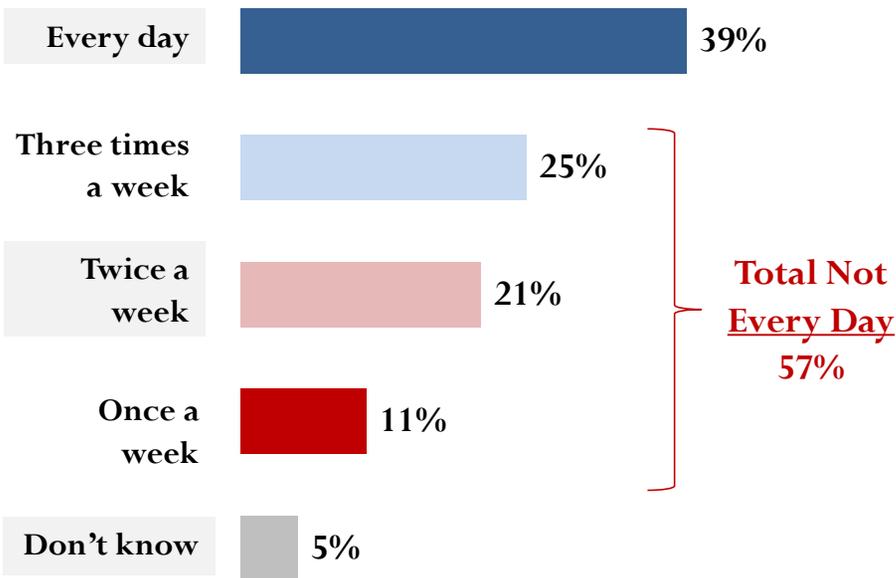
A MAJORITY OF PARENTS ARE UNAWARE OF GAPS IN FUNDING FOR P.E., YOUTH SPORTS, AND STRUCTURED PLAY

Q: Did you know that California does not provide full funding to support youth sports, physical education, and structured play activities for school-aged children?



AMONG YOUTH WHO ARE ENROLLED IN P.E. ONLY 2 IN 5 HAVE P.E. EVERY DAY

Q: How often does your child have P.E. classes?*



A number of subgroups are less likely to have P.E. everyday :

- 78% of children, aged 5-9
- 76% of children from the Greater Sacramento Area
- 74% of children who attend a Private or Parochial School
- 73% of children who attend a Public Charter School
- 68% San Diego, Orange County, and San Francisco Bay Area
- 66% of children whose parents are Asian American or Pacific Islander
- 64% of female youth

* Asked only among parents who reported that their child was enrolled in P.E. (76%)



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APPENDIX

SURVEY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

1,636

California Parents
participated in the study.

1,068	537	4
Mothers	Fathers	Non-Binary Parents

Gender of Children

1,257	1,383
Female	Male

Age Ranges of Children

- **763** – 5 to 8-year-olds
- **552** – 9 to 11-year-olds
- **605** – 12 to 14-year-olds
- **766** – 15 to 17-year-olds

Region

- **373** – Los Angeles
- **357** – San Francisco Bay Area
- **108** – San Diego/Orange County
- **401** – Central Valley
- **73** – Greater Sacramento
- **100** – Rural North

Education Level of Parents

- **737** – College +
- **876** – Some College or Less

Household

- **287** – Less than \$30K
- **224** – Between \$30K and \$50K
- **234** – Between \$50K and \$75K
- **187** – Between \$75K and \$100K
- **530** – \$100K or More

Ability Status of Child

- **1,049** – Has a disability
- **1,539** – Does not have a disability

**Prefer not to say and don't know responses not displayed. May not sum to total sample size. Subgroup analysis only provided for subgroups with at least 100 respondents. Subgroup sizes represent unweighted respondent counts. Percentage distributions detailed in the balance of the report represent weighted data. Weights have been applied to align the distribution of the data with the adult population of parents of school-aged children in California based on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the American Community Survey (ACS).*

SURVEY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

☐ *Nativity of Parents*

- **1,153** – Born in the U.S.
- **433** – Born outside the U.S.

☐ *Language of Response*

- **1,498** – English
- **138** – Spanish

☐ *Race/Ethnicity of Parent*

- **212** – Asian American
- **200** – Black/African American
- **530** – Latino
- **500** – White, Non-Hispanic
- **116** – Smaller Race/Ethnicity Groups

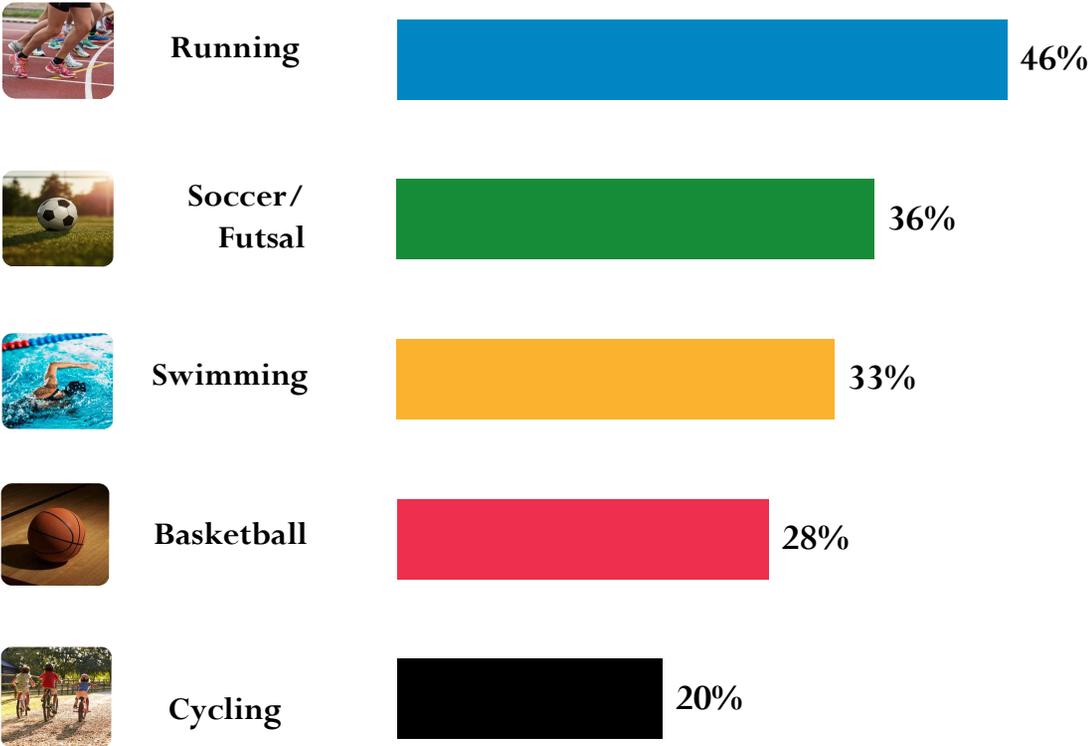
☐ *School Type*

- **2,063** – Traditional Public School
- **317** – Public Charter School
- **177** – Private/Parochial School
- **80** – Home School

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RUNNING EMERGES AS THE MOST COMMON ACTIVITY AMONG CALIFORNIA YOUTH

Which of the following sports/physical activities did your child participate in during the [2023-2024] school year?



83%
Play as a part of an organized activity through school or some other organization

- 48% play through a school-based activity
- 51% play outside of school
- 52% play casually

TYPES OF PLAY VARY BY GENDER

Boys		Girls	
<i>Running</i>	46%	<i>Running</i>	46%
Soccer	43%	Swimming	34%
Basketball	35%	Soccer	29%
Swimming	32%	Cheer/Dance/Drill Team	23%
Cycling	22%	Basketball	20%
Baseball	18%	Volleyball (Court)	18%
Track & Field	16%	Cycling	18%
Football (Flag)	15%	Gymnastics	18%