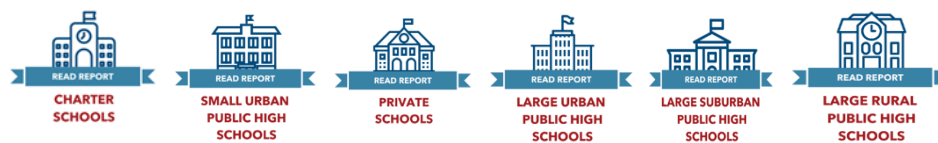


NORTH AMERICA REPORT – SUBMITTED BY JAYNE GREENBERG

Aspen institute – Project Play Reports Released in 2021



Launched by Project Play in 2020 with a focus on high schools, **Reimagining School Sports** recognizes the essential role that schools play in preparing young people for life – and the cognitive, educational and health benefits that flow to students who are physically active. The initiative aims to make quality sport and physical activities accessible to all students by identifying strategies that administrators and other leaders can adopt, aligned with the mission of schools and within the context of a comprehensive education.

The student participation rate in high school sports is only 39%, according to an Aspen Institute-commissioned analysis of 2017-18 Civil Rights Data Collection by Resonant Education. More rural students (42%) play high school sports than their suburban (41%) and urban (33%) peers. School decisions related to sports are made largely at the local and state levels and shaped by a school's size, mission and resources. So, rather than offer a one-size-fits-all solution, Project Play launched a national search to find the trailblazers in eight school types so schools can draw inspiration from their best peer fit.

A \$20,000 award will be given to one winner in each category. Reports on each school type are being released in 2021, followed by a final report in early 2022 that will make systems-level recommendations that can drive progress across all school types. Click on each school type icon to read the available report and collect ideas and inspiration.



KIDS NEED PLAY MORE THAN EVER

The state of play in 2021 is both improving and unstable. Families feel more comfortable to return. Many kids are back playing. But significant challenges remain, especially since so many more children became physically and mentally unhealthy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Twenty-two percent of children and teens have been classified as obese during the pandemic, an “alarming” increase from 19% before COVID-19, [according to a study by Centers Disease Control and Prevention](#). For severely obese kids, their expected annual weight gain increased from 8.8 pounds before the pandemic to 14.6 pounds in August 2020. Moderately obese kids went from 6.5 pounds to 12 pounds. Even children who had a healthy weight prior to the pandemic saw their annual weight gain increase from 3.4 pounds to 5.4 pounds.

Meanwhile, an overwhelming demand for mental health services is putting an unprecedented strain on pediatric facilities, primary care, schools, and community-based organizations that support kids’ well-being. Doctors warn that some children may have increased long term adverse consequences on their mental health due to the pandemic.

It’s fair to say play, in all forms, has never been more important.

Sports, when delivered appropriately, offer physical, social, emotional and academic benefits. That’s at risk if more children cannot safely return to sports and physical activity, or if they lose interest in playing sports, as data continue to suggest is happening.

Each year, the Aspen Institute’s Project Play produces this national State of Play report by analyzing youth sports participation data from the previous year provided by the Sports & Fitness Industry Association. During COVID-19, Project Play also has conducted surveys with Utah State University to understand parent and child sports experiences in real time.

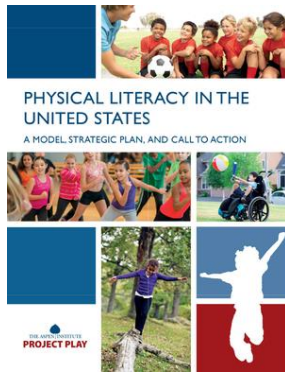
Some key findings:

- **Families have fewer options to play sports.** Some families who have returned to sports, or want to resume play, are coming back to diminished services. Thirteen percent of youth sports parents indicated their community-based sports provider closed due to COVID-19, and another 12% said it merged with another organization. In total, more than four of 10 families said their community-based sports provider has either closed, merged or returned with limited capacity. This could have a profound impact on the quality and accessibility of programs.

Travel sports parents report similar issues: 46% said their travel-based provider closed during COVID-19, merged with another league or club, or returned with limited capacity. More travel sports parents (15%) said their provider has closed than community-based sports, though it’s unclear how often closures are related to the pandemic as opposed to an extension of the pre-pandemic trend of program consolidation

in the club sports industry. School-based sports, which often benefit from local or state government support, are the most likely to have resumed at a normal level.

- **Kids are increasingly resuming sports at pre-pandemic levels:** In September 2021, 47% of youth sports parents said their child has resumed sports at the same level as before the pandemic; that's up from 40% five months earlier. Seventeen percent of children resumed playing at a higher level than before COVID-19.
- **Wealth still factors into who plays:** This was true before the pandemic and true today. In September 2021, 24% of parents in the highest-income bracket (\$100,000 or more) said their child had resumed sports at a higher level than before COVID-19. Only 13%-14% of kids from the two lower-income brackets returned to sports at a higher pre-pandemic level.
- **Parents are adjusting to COVID-19 fears:** There are still COVID-19 fears attached to youth sports. Half of all youth sports parents view their child getting sick as a barrier to resume play. Yet parent comfort levels with travel sports, community-based sports, and school sports are the highest they have been in the Aspen Institute's four surveys conducted during the pandemic.
- **Individual, outdoor, socially distanced sports benefitted in 2020:** Sports such as golf, tennis, surfing and skateboarding exploded in participation. Other than the three most popular sports (basketball, baseball and soccer), the top sports/physical activities kids tried for the first time during the pandemic were bicycling, swimming, walking, dance, badminton, flag football, and bowling. However, individual activities such as bicycling, tennis and skateboarding have seen declines from April 2021 to September 2021 as more organized team sports returned.
- **Many kids are still losing interest in organized sports:** When Project Play and Utah State conducted their first COVID-19 survey in June 2020, 19% of youth sports parents said their child was not interested in playing sports. By September 2021, that figure was 28%. The more money a family has, the *less* interest a child has in sports these days.



PHYSICAL LITERACY IN THE UNITED STATES: A MODEL, STRATEGIC PLAN, AND CALL TO ACTION

This report offers a deep dive into the central idea behind Project Play. This report builds on research showing that children with motor skills competence are more likely to stay physically active into adolescence and adulthood, identifies the populations in greatest need, and offers 150+ activation ideas. The report, released in June 2015, was supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and received guidance from a 15-member, cross-sector working group. Published alongside the report was a global environmental scan of physical literacy policies, featuring Canada, Wales, England, Australia, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Netherlands, Venezuela, and the United States.

[READ THE REPORT](#) • [READ THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY](#) •
[READ THE GLOBAL SCAN](#)



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ALLIANCE

Physical Activity Recommendations for Children and Adolescents: More Important Than Ever

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about many changes to society – including limiting the opportunities children and adolescents have to be physically educated and active in schools, at home, and in communities. We have yet to understand the full impact of COVID-19 related school closures, cancellations of youth sports and other after-school and community-based

physical activities on children and adolescents' health. Disparities and limited access to resources have also accentuated the existing inequities that leave youth with fewer opportunities to be active. However, the lessons learned from these experiences have better positioned stakeholders to adjust and better advocate for improvements to promote physical activity in children and youth.

The Physical Activity Alliance is proud to release a series of papers, "Physical Activity Recommendations for Children and Adolescents: More Important Than Ever", with recommendations specific to each developmental level – elementary, middle school, and high school as well as sports across all developmental levels. The purpose of this series of papers is to outline key considerations for influencers, decision makers, and the public overall from all societal sectors of our population to take action to change or enhance the landscape of physical activity promotion for the overall health of our children and youth.

Recommendations specific to each developmental level – elementary, middle school, and high school – are available at the following links:

- [Executive Summary/ Call to Action](#)
- [Physical Activity Recommendations for Elementary-age Children](#)
- [Physical Activity Recommendations for Middle School Youth](#)
- [Physical Activity Recommendations for High School Youth](#)
- [Recommendations for Sports Across All Development Levels K-12](#)

The 22nd of October we held an online interview/dialogue meeting with key persons from the Physical Activity Alliance. ISCA president and myself were joined by:

Laurie Whitzel, Ph.D. - the Vice President of Policy Research and Translation for the American Heart Association

Monte Ward - currently represents the American College of Sports Medicine as their Vice President of Government Relations.

Harold William (Bill) Kohl Professor of Epidemiology and Kinesiology at The University of Texas at Austin and the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston

The recording of this interview/dialogue meeting will be uploaded to ISCA Youtube Channel.



United States Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

The National Youth Sports Strategy



The National Youth Sports Strategy aims to unite U.S. youth sports culture around a shared vision: that one day, all youth will have the opportunity, motivation, and access to play sports.

The Strategy is based on research and best practices from the scientific community and successful youth sports programs across the United States. It offers actionable ideas for parents, coaches, organizations, communities, and policymakers to support youth sports participation for all.

Top 10 Things to Know About the National Youth Sports Strategy

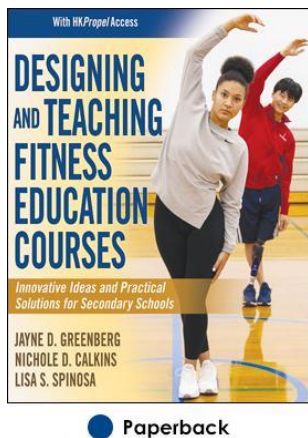
1. The National Youth Sports Strategy is the first federal roadmap with actionable strategies to increase participation in youth sports, increase awareness of the benefits of youth sports participation, monitor and evaluate youth sports participation, and recruit and engage volunteers in youth sports programming.
2. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) developed the National Youth Sports Strategy in response to Presidential Executive Order 13824, which called for a national strategy to increase youth sports participation.
3. According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, youth ages 6 to 17 need at least 60 minutes a day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. Playing sports is one way youth can get the physical activity they need. Sports also provide opportunities for youth to experience the connection between effort and success, and may enhance their academic, economic, social, and health prospects.
4. Regular physical activity has many benefits for youth. Youth sports participation provides benefits beyond those associated with physical activity, including benefits for psychosocial health and academic achievement. Benefits for youth include:
 - Higher levels of self-esteem and confidence in their abilities
 - Reduced risk of suicide and suicidal thoughts and tendencies
 - Improved life skills, such as goal setting, time management, and work ethic
 - Opportunities to develop social and interpersonal skills, such as teamwork, leadership, and relationship building
 - Improved concentration, memory, school attendance, and academic performance
5. Although there are some risks associated with youth sports, such as injury and stress, research shows that the benefits outweigh the risks. The National Youth Sports Strategy includes several strategies to help reduce risks and negative outcomes.
6. Not all youth have the same opportunity to participate in sports, which results in varying participation rates across demographic groups. This means that youth have unequal access to the health, psychosocial,

and academic benefits of youth sports participation. HHS developed the National Youth Sports Strategy to address these disparities and the related barriers in order to improve youth sports participation and access.

7. The National Youth Sports Strategy aims to unify U.S. sports culture around a shared vision: that one day all youth will have the opportunity, motivation, and access to play sports — regardless of their race, ethnicity, sex, ability, or ZIP code.
8. Everyone has a role to play in improving the youth sports culture in the United States.
 - Youth can try a variety of sports to find the ones they really enjoy.
 - Adults can promote learning over competition and create **safe, fun, inclusive** opportunities for youth to participate in sports.
 - Organizations can provide accessible and inclusive youth sports programming.
 - Communities can support collaborations that increase youth sports opportunities.
 - Public agencies can develop policies and provide funding for youth sports opportunities.
9. **HHS plans to help increase youth sports participation** by coordinating dialogue and collaboration between youth sports stakeholders, promoting youth sports messaging, measuring youth sports participation, and funding grants that support youth sports programs.
10. As part of the National Youth Sports Strategy, the **HHS Office of Minority Health and the Office on Women's Health have awarded over \$6.7 million in grants** to 18 communities to promote youth participation in organized sports.



Move Your Way is the **national campaign to promote the second edition of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans**. It aims to help people understand how much physical activity they need to be healthy and how to fit it into their daily lives.



Lead Author: Dr. Jayne Greenberg

BOOK

Fitness education is often overlooked for various reasons: no equipment, no weight room, large class size, or lack of professional development.

Designing and Teaching Fitness Education Courses provides real solutions for all these issues. This book offers secondary-level physical educators innovative ideas, practical answers, and guidance in implementing fitness education programming that will meet the needs of all students.

Designing and Teaching Fitness Education Courses is packed with highly useful tools and resources:

- 211 instructional photos showing exercises and stretches that require no equipment and are easily adapted for varying abilities
- 18 pacing guides that form a week-by-week blueprint for implementing a semester-long fitness education course
- A robust online resource with
 - all 18 pacing guides, as well as a blank template for developing your own;
 - 139 video demonstrations of all the book's exercises and stretches;
 - PowerPoint presentations to show in PE classes, including video demonstrations of the book's exercises and stretches; and
 - teacher aids and student handouts, including assignments, assessments, posters, and a 12-week personal fitness plan

Teachers can use the pacing guides to develop a semester-long fitness education course that can be implemented in either a traditional or block schedule. These guides offer objectives, class discussion topics, activities, assessments, and teaching strategies for each week of an 18-week semester. All topics in the guides are aligned with SHAPE America's National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes for K–12 Physical Education.

The authors guide teachers in addressing the following priorities within a fitness education course: social and emotional learning; behavior modification principles and adherence to fitness activities; social cognitive theory; classroom management; student safety; equity, diversity, and inclusion; and social justice.

Designing and Teaching Fitness Education Courses also includes a detailed chapter on nutrition education written by internationally recognized sport nutritionist Lisa Dorfman, who provides teachers a wealth of information to integrate into fitness courses.

Teachers will learn how to integrate a quality fitness education curriculum into any setting (rural, urban, or

suburban) and any learning model (remote, hybrid, or in-person learning).

Designing and Teaching Fitness Education Courses is organized into three sections:

- Part I presents both theoretical and practical knowledge of fitness education; its importance in a standards-based curriculum; pedagogical and content knowledge considerations; nutrition, wellness, and consumer issues; and the general components of fitness education.
- Part II focuses on various components of fitness education: flexibility, strength, and cardiorespiratory fitness. This part includes stretching and muscular strength and endurance workouts, illustrated with photos in the book and videos in the online resource.
- Part III guides readers in enabling students to participate in community fitness and activity events to support the development of lifelong fitness habits.

Through *Designing and Teaching Fitness Education Courses*, teachers will be able to provide appropriate fitness activities that will lead to the elevated health and wellness of students and a greater appreciation for participating in lifelong activities.

This book is also recommended as a University/College book for methods classes, and provides ready to implement lessons for Student Teachers.