

# **National Council of Youth Sports**

## **Report on Trends and Participation In Organized Youth Sports**



## **Market Research Report**

**NCYS Membership Survey - 2008 Edition**

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National Council of Youth Sports  
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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The National Council of Youth Sports represents the youth sports industry by advancing the values of participation, and educating and developing leaders.

## **VISION**

To enhance the youth sports experience in America.

## **NCYS MOTTO**

*“A Unified Voice for Youth Sports”*



## **SPECIAL THANKS**

A most sincere thank you to weplay.com,  
a new online network for youth sports,  
for their generous sponsorship  
of this important market research.

With the help of our corporate partners  
like weplay.com,  
we are a stronger, more productive  
and influential organization.

We appreciate you and your gracious support.



## **INTRODUCTION**

The National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS) is a multi-sport, nonprofit corporation established to strengthen the performance of youth sport leaders through education and to advocate the values and preserve the integrity of youth sports. The member organizations of NCYS who participated in this survey represent a wide range of local and national groups that conduct organized youth sports programs.

This 2008 study reveals a ten year comparison providing important data and trends in the marketplace. The 'NCYS Report on Trends and Participation in Organized Youth Sports' serves as a useful tool for effective future planning and forecasting. The results of this trends study will offer worthwhile benefits and services to our members and to all those interested in trends and participation in organized amateur youth sports.

NCYS is appreciative to its members for taking the time to participate in this study. We surveyed the NCYS membership in 1997 and again in 2000 to present a broad measure of the scope of youth sports in the United States. An astounding 98% of the members responded to the 1997 survey and 100% of the members responded to the 2000 survey.

From previous research, we learned the important role NCYS plays on behalf of the amateur youth sports industry. Technology practices, field & facility usage, and general trends in age & gender participation have provided invaluable insight into the youth sports industry. In addition, NCYS has utilized this information to further its advocacy work in the area of government relations & public policy issues such as: protecting the land for recreation facilities, child safety protection (PROTECT Act), and physical education, obesity & fitness issues.

While the surveys provide valuable insights; it is important readers understand:

- Those responding to the survey are the CEO's of major youth sports organizations. They are the gatekeepers of youth sports in America.
- There is great diversity among the various organizations in terms of organization structure, membership, registration measures, types of sports, and types of programs.
- Given the broad nature of many of these organizations that represent both multi-sport/community-based and single sport programs, some athletes may participate in more than one activity/sport. According to industry standards, there may be an estimated 27% duplication of participants.
- This is not a scientific study. Rather it is an examination into the youth sports industry to learn more about the trends and participation among the NCYS member organizations. This study will also serve as a resource for those interested in the youth sports industry.
- Between 1997 and 2008 there was an increase in NCYS membership. Therefore we have a dichotomy, each survey having its own qualities and attributes. These studies are conducted in an attempt to document the activity of our members providing invaluable information for a varied audience of interested parties.
- Due to sampling methodology we do not report actual numbers. The data is semi-empirical. Percentages more accurately represent the market trends.
- Better registration and reporting systems are now in place in most organizations. The numbers reported for 2008 are therefore more accurate than were available in the past.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS**

- ◆ In comparison to the NCYS 1997 study, girls are beginning participation in organized youth sports at a younger age.
- ◆ Although the total number of participants – both boys and girls – increased, the percentages of boys and girls involved in the programs showed little change at 66% boys and 34% girls.
- ◆ Girls participation increased significantly in the 16-18 age group since the 2000 study.
- ◆ Thanks to Title IX, we have gotten better introducing girls to sport as early as boys are introduced to sport.
- ◆ Boys participation remained about the same in every age group other than an increase in the 10-12 age group.
- ◆ There is greater gender equity within the younger age groups.
- ◆ Organized youth sports programs rely heavily on school and community owned facilities. There is an increase in privately-owned indoor facility use.
- ◆ It is imperative that the youth sports organizations have a strong alliance to parks and recreation and school systems for facility use.
- ◆ All organizations rely upon website technology for communicating with their constituents. Blast e-mails, e-newsletters, magazines, calling posts, webcasts, podcasts, RSS feeds, banner ads, list serves, direct mail and event marketing are the most popular methods of communication.

## **2008 FAST FACTS SURVEY RESULTS**

Youth Sports Organizations Participating:	63 provided complete breakdowns 112 organizations responded
Total Youth Participants/Registrants: Duplications exist	60,316,548 participants 44,031,080 actual boys/girls
Youth Participants/Registrants:	Boys 66%, Girls 34%
Average Length of Time in Program:	5 Years

## **2000 FAST FACTS SURVEY RESULTS**

Youth Sports Organizations Participating:	61
Total Youth Participants: Duplications exist	52,410,747 participants 38,259,845 actual boys/girls
Youth Participants/Registrants:	Boys 63%, Girls 37%
Average Length of Time in Program:	5 Years

## **1997 FAST FACTS SURVEY RESULTS**

Youth Sports Organizations Participating:	52
Total Youth Participants: Duplications exist	44,962,126 participants 32,822,352 actual boys/girls
Youth Participants/Registrants:	Boys 63%, Girls 37%
Average Length of Time in Program:	5 Years



## MARKET FLUCTUATION

Percentage of Organizations with Membership Increases, 1997-2008:

**58% Increase in Participation**  
 95% reported increase of 10% or more

Percentage of Organizations with Membership the Same, 1997-2008:

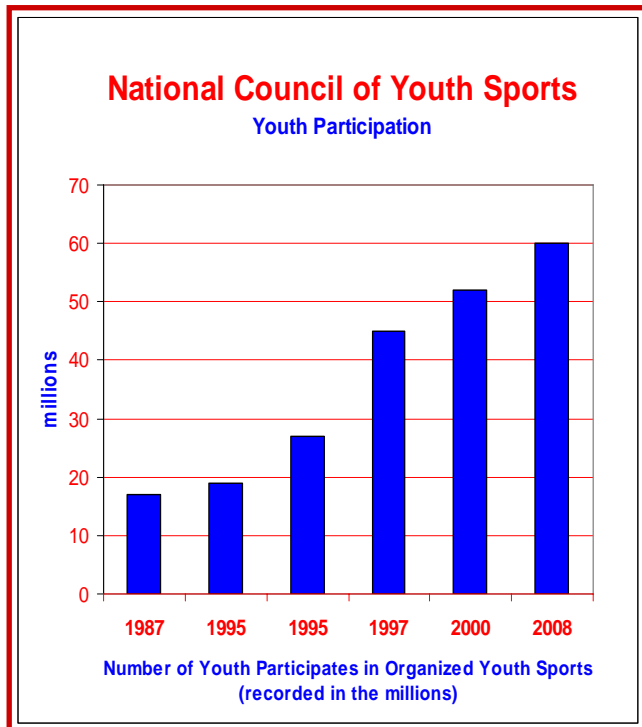
**8% Remained the Same**

Percentage of Organizations with Membership Decreases, 1997-2008:

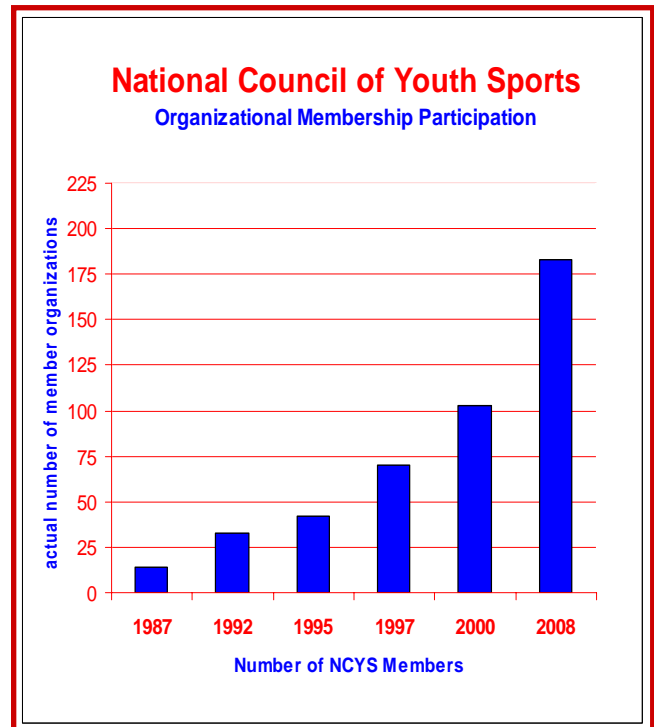
**34% Decrease in Participation**

## PARTICIPATION 1987-2008

**Youth Participation**



**Organization Participation**





## **DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS BY GENDER**

### **2008**

	<b>6 &amp; under</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<b>13-15</b>	<b>16-18</b>
<b>Boys</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Girls</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>39%</b>

### **2000**

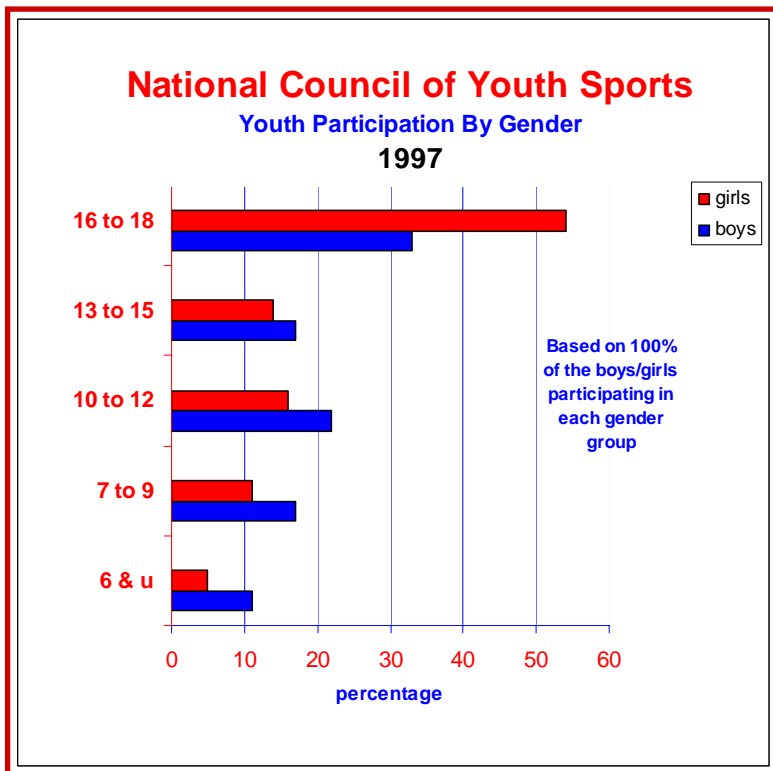
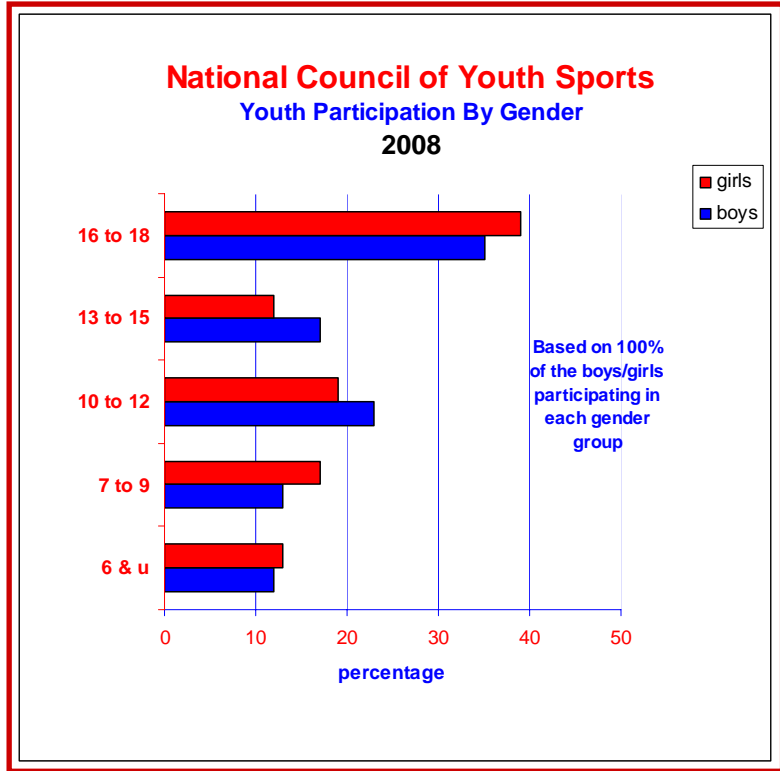
	<b>6 &amp; under</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<b>13-15</b>	<b>16-18</b>
<b>Boys</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Girls</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>30%</b>

### **1997**

	<b>6 &amp; under</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<b>13-15</b>	<b>16-18</b>
<b>Boys</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Girls</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>54%</b>



Youth Participation  
 By Gender  
 2008



Youth Participation  
 By Gender  
 1997

## **DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS BY AGE GROUP WITHIN GENDER**

### **2008**

	<b>6 &amp; under</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<b>13-15</b>	<b>16-18</b>
<b>Boys</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>Girls</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>37%</b>

### **2000**

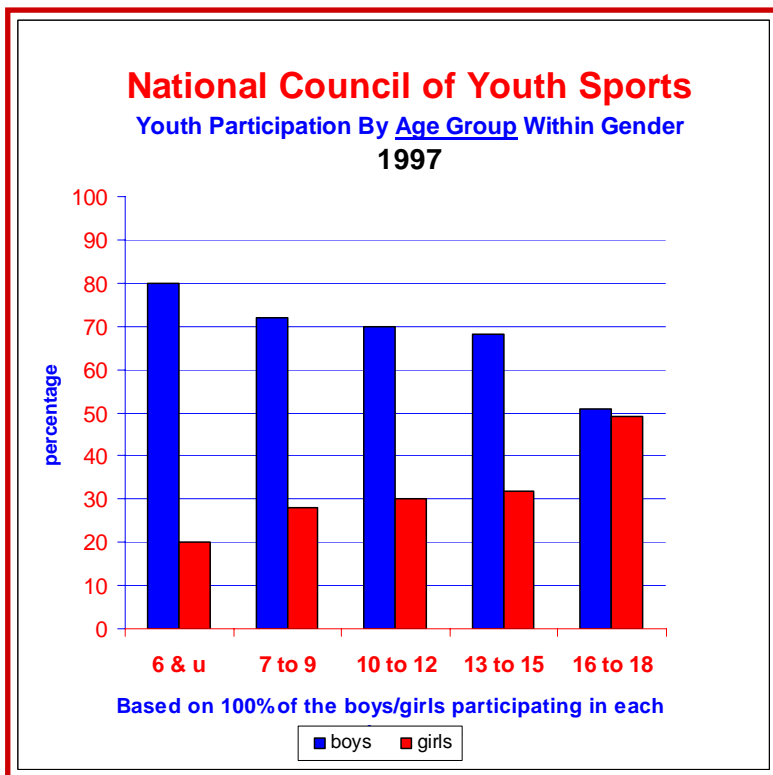
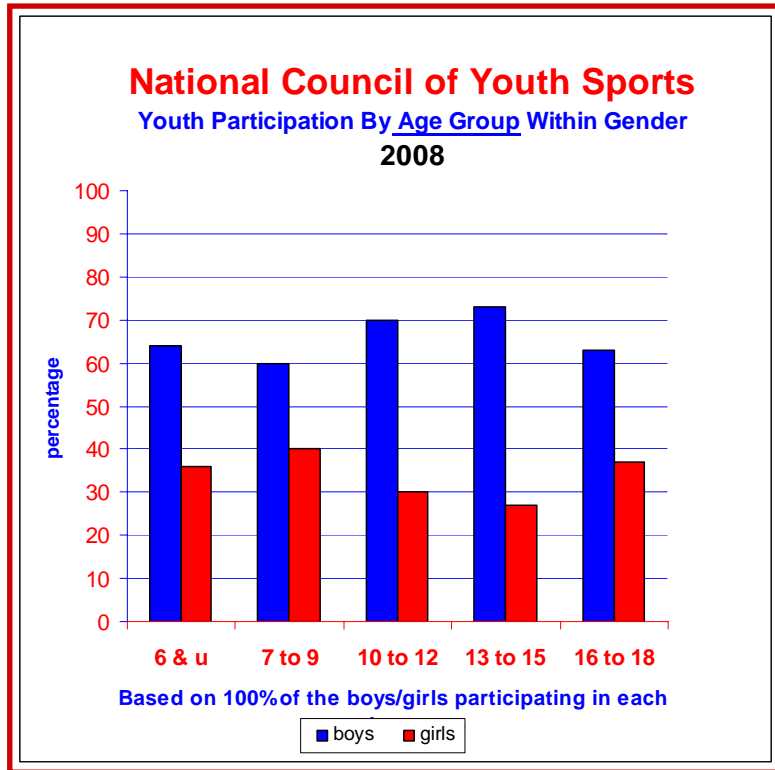
	<b>6 &amp; under</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<b>13-15</b>	<b>16-18</b>
<b>Boys</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>Girls</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>34%</b>

### **1997**

	<b>6 &amp; under</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<b>13-15</b>	<b>16-18</b>
<b>Boys</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Girls</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>49%</b>



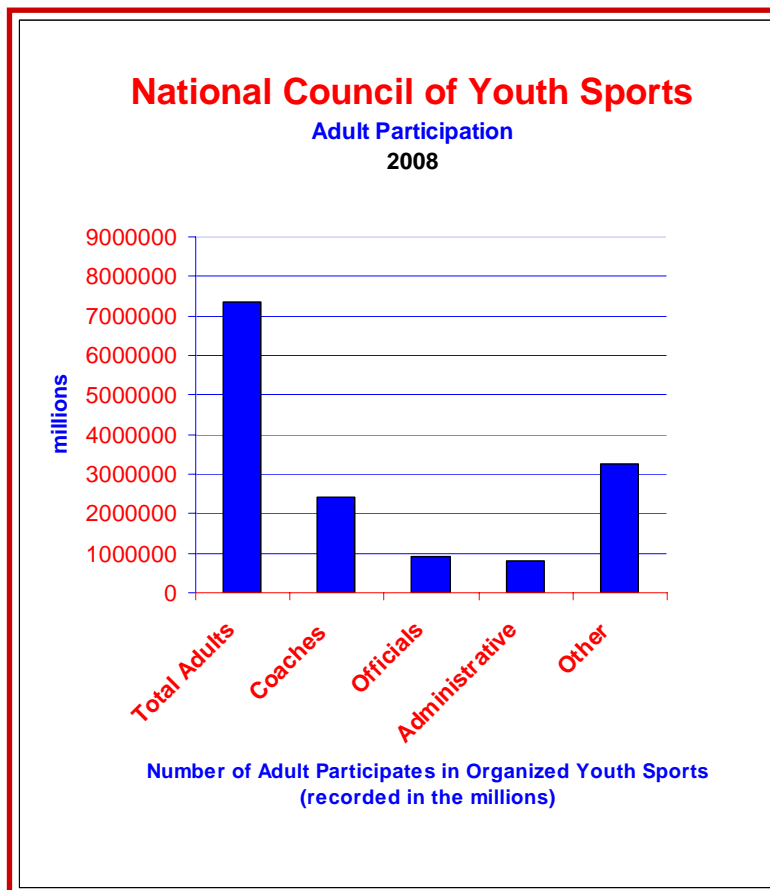
Youth Participation  
 By Age Group  
 2008



Youth Participation  
 By Age Group  
 1997

## ADULT PARTICIPATION

<b>Total Number of Adult Participants:</b>	<b>7,343,556</b>
<b>Coaches:</b>	<b>2,409,020</b>
<b>Officials:</b>	<b>909,333</b>
<b>Administrative:</b>	<b>786,752</b>
<b>Other:</b>	<b>3,238,451</b>

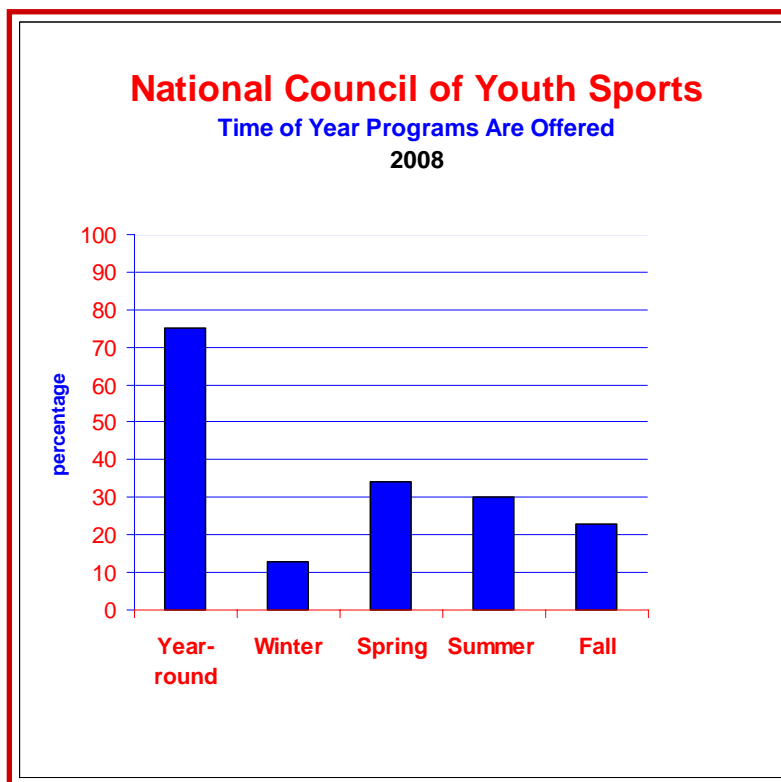


Adult  
Participation

## TIME OF YEAR PROGRAMS ARE OFFERED

Many youngsters participate in more than one activity and in multiple seasons.

Year-round	75%
Winter	13%
Spring	34%
Summer	30%
Fall	23%



Time of Year  
Programs  
Are Offered

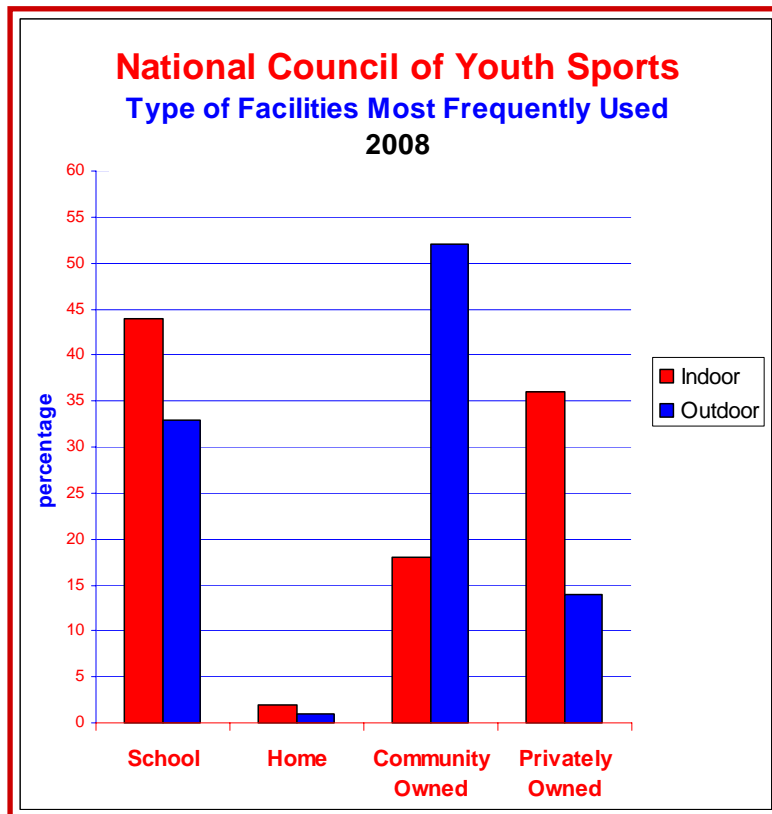
## FACILITY TYPE MOST OFTEN UTILIZED

### INDOOR

School	44%
Home	2%
Community-Owned	18%
Privately Owned	36%

### OUTDOOR

School	33%
Home	1%
Community-Owned	52%
Privately-Owned	14%



**Facilities  
 Most Frequently  
 Used**

## **MAINTAINING AN UP-TO-DATE DATABASE**

Participants:	Yes: 82%	No: 18%
Parents:	Yes: 41%	No: 59%
Volunteers:	Yes: 68%	No: 32%

## **ALUMNI PROGRAM**

Alumni Program:	Yes: 30%	No: 70%
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## **ORGANIZATION'S WEBSITE EFFECTIVENESS**

Website Effectiveness:	Excellent: 29%	Good: 71%
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## **TOOLS AND/OR SERVICES USED TO COMMUNICATE TO CONSTITUENTS**

Technology in various forms is the #1 tool used for organizations to communicate with their constituents. Every organization has a website and 71% believe their website is effective.

Blast e-mails, e-newsletters, calling posts, webcasts, podcasts, RSS feeds, banner ads, list serves, are the most popular methods of communication. Many organizations have on-line and print magazines and newsletters. Brochures, flyers, direct mail, advertorials, press releases, tournaments, special events, meetings and conventions are also popular tools and services used to communicate to constituents.

## **MOST EFFECTIVE METHODS USED TO SOLICIT NEW PARTICIPANTS**

Word of mouth is the #1 method of recruiting new participants. The organization's website is also a common method to increase participation.

Direct mail, event marketing, exhibit booths, flyers, banner, brochures, event advertising, print & web advertising, community newspaper, media exposure, presenters, coaches clinics, local newsletter announcements, e-mail alumni, and school recruitment—on site & backpack express, are all prevalent approaches to solicit new participants.

## **NCYS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**Sally S. Johnson, CSA**  
National Council of Youth Sports



**Our deepest appreciation to the NCYS member organizations for their passionate commitment to youth and amateur sports. This valuable study will serve as a resource and influential document to guide the youth sports industry and its marketplace.**



**A most sincere thank you to weplay.com, a new online network for youth sports, for their generous sponsorship of this important market research.**

## **National Council of Youth Sports**

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