



2022

NATIONAL OUTCOMES REPORT

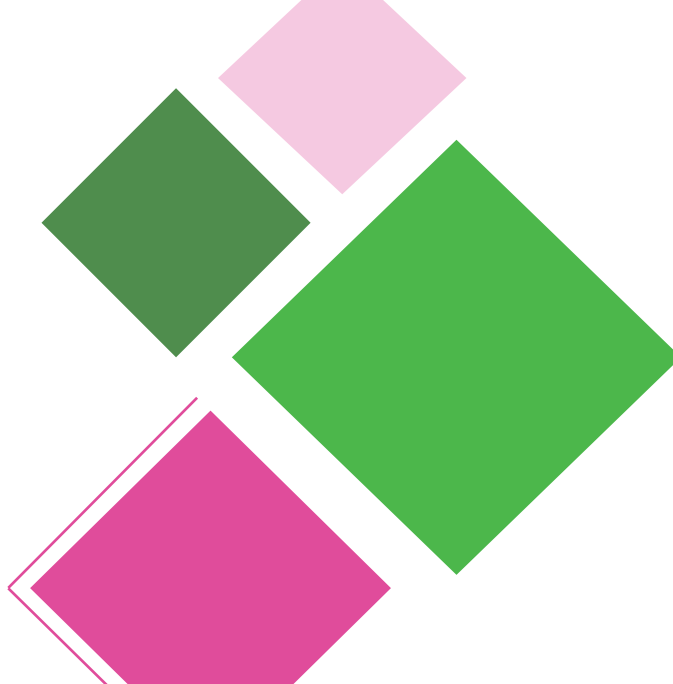
Measuring the Impact of Boys & Girls Clubs



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

NYOI
National Youth Outcomes Initiative

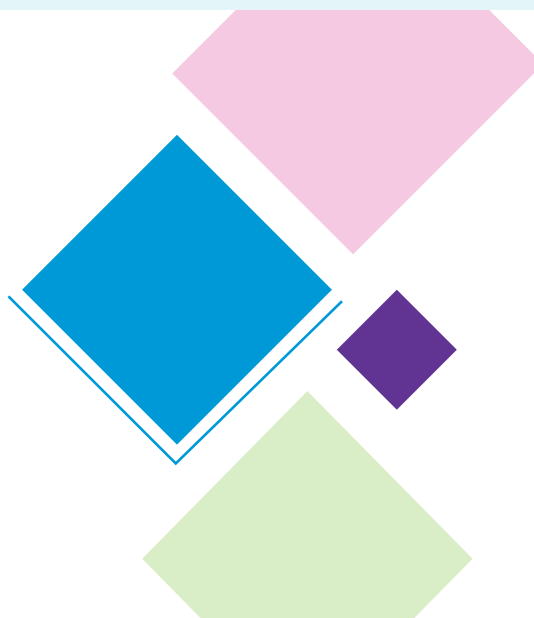
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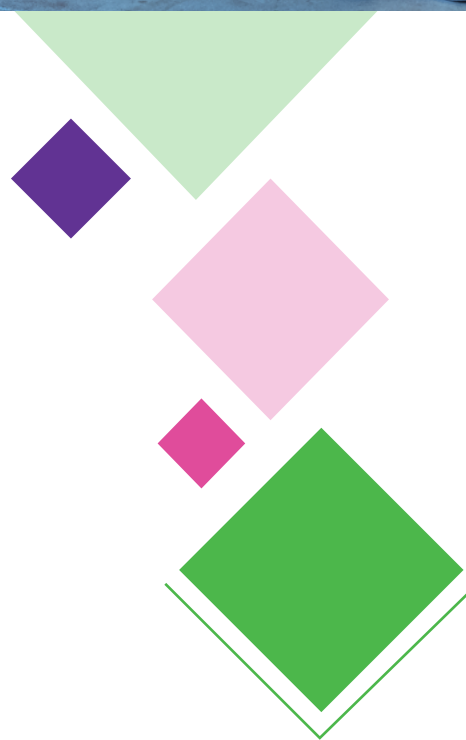
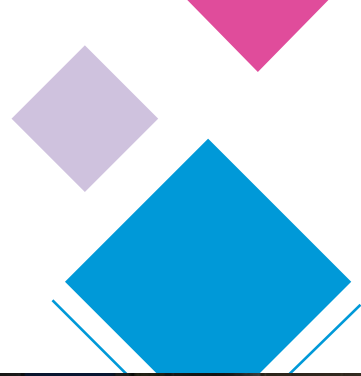


2022 NATIONAL OUTCOMES REPORT

Measuring the Impact of Boys & Girls Clubs

Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) is committed to measuring how much our young people are achieving and how effectively our Club Experience is implemented. Our outcome measurement strategies are designed to support Boys & Girls Clubs in delivering high-quality programming and services, implementing continuous quality improvement processes and demonstrating their positive impact to stakeholders. BGCA is proud to present this report summarizing our 2022 national youth outcomes findings.





Introduction

The Club Approach to Positive Youth Development

Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), made up of local Boys & Girls Clubs and Youth Centers on U.S. military installations worldwide, believe that all young people deserve to thrive. Thriving begins with physical, mental and emotional well-being. But it also involves youth being grounded in a sense of identity, meaning and purpose. In addition, thriving means having agency, competencies, beliefs and habits of mind that enable youth to meet life's demands and challenges. Young people thrive when they experience growth and success, when they feel and are seen as competent in many areas of their lives.¹

BGCA imagines a world where the fundamentals needed to thrive are fully accessible to every young person in America. BGCA's approach to positive youth development reflects the knowledge, anchored in extensive research, that a quality out-of-school-time environment not only supports the social, emotional, physical and cognitive² needs of young people but also enables them to thrive. Whether through a virtual or in-person Club setting, youth are able to learn, grow and become ready for life and work.



The National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI)

BGCA works with Club organizations to build their capacity to collect and use data to measure youth outcomes, demonstrate their impact to stakeholders and continuously improve their programming and practices. Through NYOI, Clubs collect data about their members' demographics, attendance and participation. Local systems feed data into the national system, allowing BGCA to compile data on the overall Club population.

NYOI's principal tool for gathering youth outcomes data is a survey administered to members each spring, which asks about their perceptions of the Club. Responses allow BGCA to assess how well Clubs deliver a high-quality Club Experience that promotes positive youth development. The survey also measures indicators of youth achievement in academic success, character and leadership, and healthy lifestyles.

During the spring of 2019, over 200,000 Club members completed the survey in more than 3,300 sites. Although the COVID-19 pandemic forced nearly all Clubs to close in 2020 and 2021, significantly disrupting survey administration, the most recent survey signaled a positive sign of recovery. In 2022, more than 100,000 youth responded to the survey, moving closer to pre-pandemic levels of participation and overall representation of the national network of Clubs and the youth and communities they serve.

BGCA augments NYOI data with other surveys – such as the annual National Teen Survey – to assess Club and community needs, inform decision making and measure the impact of Clubs on youth. A Club alumni study conducted in 2021 also measured the long-term impact of the Club Experience on young people in their adulthood.

Foundation of a High-Quality Club Experience

National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI) data on members' Club experience consistently shows that high quality in programming and practices drives stronger, more positive long-term outcomes in youth. The data also demonstrates the significant impact BGCA's three vehicles for youth development – positive environments, relationships and experiences – continue to have on Club members.

- ◆ **Environments.** Clubs provide settings that are safe and inclusive, where Club members overwhelmingly report feeling safe from harm and safe being themselves.

94% feel safe from harm

91% feel safe being themselves

- ◆ **Relationships.** Youth have the chance to forge supportive connections with adults. Club members report positive relationships, and are secure that there are staff members who care about them and believe they will be a success.

95% say adults care about them

94% say adults believe they will be a success

- ◆ **Experiences.** Young people have ample opportunities to engage in meaningful and motivating learning experiences. The majority of members report having opportunities at the Club to explore new things and feel like their ideas count at the Club.

87% get to explore new things

83% feel like their ideas count at the Club

A Focus on Developing Social-Emotional and Other Skills

When a high-quality Club Experience offers a safe environment, supportive relationships and enriching experiences, exploration and learning are bound to happen. Because learning is social and emotional,³ Clubs foster social-emotional development in young people throughout all their Club experiences, offering many moments to practice skills such as teamwork, communication and perseverance. By practicing social-emotional skills over time with nurturing adults, youth become better able to use those skills to build other important knowledge and abilities, such as inquiry, analysis and investigation, through specific programs and experiences. Skill development happens as youth participate in meaningful and engaging programs that develop targeted skills such as workforce readiness, leadership or advocacy.

“When a high-quality Club Experience offers a safe environment, supportive relationships and enriching experiences, exploration and learning are bound to happen.”

BGCA can gauge the effects of the Club Experience on youth's social-emotional growth by using NYOI data to compare Club members who report an optimal Club Experience to Club members who report a Club Experience that needs improvement.⁴ For example, on average, members who report an optimal Club Experience are almost twice as likely to report that they think about what might happen before making a decision and continue working at something, even if it's really hard, when compared to their peers who report that their Club Experience needs improvement.

A High-Quality Club Experience Drives More Positive Outcomes

BGCA also finds that when members report having an optimal Club Experience, they are more likely to achieve positive outcomes in the priority areas of academic success, character and leadership, and healthy lifestyles. Continued exposure to a high-quality Club Experience fosters a love of learning, enabling young people to grow into effective, engaged and adaptive learners. It builds young people's confidence and competence to motivate, collaborate and lead. And it equips young people with the ability to live as positive, healthy decision makers.

NYOI data shows that as youth develop various social-emotional and targeted skills, those, too, help drive and reinforce these longer-term outcomes:



Academic Success

2x more likely to enjoy learning new things



Character and Leadership

77% more likely to stand up for what they think is right, even if their friends disagree



Healthy Lifestyles

40% less likely to consume tobacco (teens)

When Clubs have positive environments, relationships and experiences in place consistently, and add in social-emotional development and targeted programming, they have a formula that leads to positive outcomes and lasting impact for youth. In other words, a high-quality Club Experience drives stronger, more long-term youth outcomes.



Elevating and Enhancing Our Work

In the past few years, several dynamics have compromised youth's healthy development and have profoundly impacted their ability to thrive. The COVID-19 pandemic has had serious repercussions for young people, including the loss of family members and caregivers, disruption of learning and social-emotional development, and a profound sense of economic insecurity.⁵ At the same time, youth also have been increasingly exposed to disturbing social challenges – racial injustice, systemic inequities and gun violence. These conditions have led to a further erosion of safety nets for youth, a sense of social isolation, a loss

of important connections and increased mental-health challenges, highlighting the need to ensure that youth have support for their most pressing needs and can continue to experience positive outcomes.

Positive environments, relationships and experiences remain the anchor of BGCA's positive youth development approach. In order to meet young people's needs in these challenging times, Clubs are working to deepen their collective impact on them, striving for higher quality in programming, taking practices to new levels and building staff capacity.

From this:

Positive environments

Clubs provide settings where Club members feel safe from harm and safe being themselves.

To this:

Environments that are safe, inclusive and nurturing

Club environments are most effective when they are safe, inclusive and emotionally nurturing, with small-group interactions that allow youth to feel known and heard and allow them to experience a sense of belonging and mattering. The ideal Club setting allows choices for youth and supports their autonomy, voice and agency.

From this:

Positive relationships

Club youth have opportunities to form positive relationships with adults who care about them.

To this:

Relationships that are supportive, empathetic and validating

Relationships at the Club can go beyond merely being supportive. When they are intentionally empathetic, validating and consistent, youth can build authentic connections with adults and peers that are developmental and healing.

From this:

Positive experiences

Club members engage in a variety of fun and motivating learning experiences.

To this:

Experiences that are meaningful, engaging and purposeful

Meaningful experiences for young people are the foundation of Club life, but they should also be fun, engaging and cater to youth interests. Clubs can offer experiences and programming designed to foster skills and challenge youth, allowing them to build on their strengths, feel a strong sense of purpose and take chances to lead and be heard. The most meaningful experiences also promote identity development, encouraging youth to understand who they are and their place in the world.

BGCA Builds Capacity through Key Initiatives

In order to ensure positive youth development for members across all age groups, Clubs must build organizational and staff capacity. BGCA supports Clubs to build this capacity through key initiatives focused on improving practices and programming.

- ◆ **Continuous quality improvement.** BGCA's CQI process equips Clubs to use an intentional, data-driven and iterative process of assessing, planning and improving to strengthen programs and practices.
- ◆ **Staff training capacity.** Clubs have equitable access to staff training through Spillett Leadership University (SLU), an online learning management system. With SLU, Club staff at any level can take part in learning opportunities in varied formats to develop the skills they need to advance their careers. Through the National Trainers Initiative, Clubs can build internal training capacity, certifying local staff to serve as trainers when needed.
- ◆ **Trauma-informed approach.** Clubs increasingly use a trauma-informed (TI) approach in policies, practices and programming to promote social, emotional and mental health for all youth and foster healing for those affected by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) or trauma. Every young person can benefit from TI practices designed to reduce triggers, identify and address young people's behavioral health needs and support the regulation and development of their coping skills.⁶
- ◆ **Digital platforms to extend reach.** Through BGCA's National Virtual Club, members who can't attend a Club in person can access live or recorded Club experiences online. MyFuture, BGCA's mobile-friendly platform, allows youth to learn, play and socialize through self-directed activities in areas such as STEM, leadership and the arts. These platforms ensure greater equity, making Club experiences available to youth who might not otherwise have access. Similarly, online platforms like Club Programs give all staff members easy access to program materials.





Developing Globally Competitive Graduates

When youth are supported to do well academically, they are more likely to graduate high school on time, identify a path for postsecondary education and make a career plan that aligns with their interests. Many factors affect school performance: physical health and safety, a sense of belonging and connectedness, academic challenge and engagement, and social-emotional well-being.⁷

Promoting Academic Success and Achievement

THE NEED: FACTORS INFLUENCING ON-TIME HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

High school graduation provides the credentials needed for many jobs and for college; it also can lead to more opportunities, a higher income, better living conditions and a healthier life.⁸ Although graduation rates have been rising over the past 15 years – in 2019, 86% of youth graduated from high school⁹ – in the last two years, the pandemic disrupted nearly all aspects of education, prompting concerns that graduation rates will start to trend downward.¹⁰

Learning Disruptions Caused by the Pandemic

Educators have identified predictors of high school graduation – reading and math proficiency, regular school attendance, student engagement and being on track by the ninth grade.¹¹ When schools closed during the pandemic, many youth struggled with online learning, lacking internet access, skills to engage in a virtual classroom or a place to work free of distractions.¹² As a result, many of the benchmarks leading to high school graduation were affected.¹³ For one, early proficiency in reading and math, important predictors of later academic success,¹⁴ showed significant declines. Only about one in three students nationally (33% of fourth graders; 31% of eighth graders) demonstrated reading proficiency in 2022, continuing a decline that started before the pandemic. Math achievement also showed the steepest decline ever, with only 36% of fourth graders and 26% of eighth graders demonstrating math proficiency.¹⁵

Another important predictor of high school graduation is regular attendance; when youth attend school regularly, they achieve at higher levels than those absent more often.¹⁶ In 2021-22, more than a third of schools (39%) reported greater absenteeism than in the previous year,¹⁷ putting youth at greater risk of falling behind or dropping out of school.¹⁸

Closely related to regular attendance is student engagement; when youth are curious and engaged in learning, they are more likely to do well in school, feel connected and have a sense of social-emotional well-being.¹⁹ In the 2020-2021 school year, however, 72% of teachers in grades three to eight and 82% of teachers in grades nine to 12 reported more students who were disengaged than in a typical year.²⁰ As a result of these factors, many students started the past few school years below grade level.²¹ In the ninth grade especially, enrollment increased at a higher rate and created a “ninth-grade bulge” as students were unable to earn enough credits to progress.²²

An additional element critical to success in school is social-emotional development. During the pandemic, youth were unable to build social-emotional skills such as collaborating with peers and managing stress. In fact, more than three-fourths of public schools (87%) nationwide say the pandemic negatively affected the social-emotional development of youth.²³



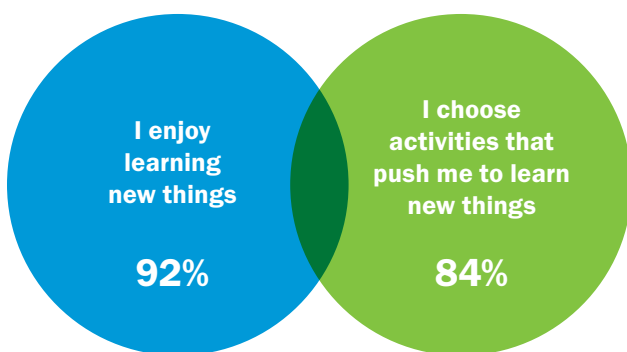
CLUB RESPONSE: ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT AND SUPPORT

“ Club youth overwhelmingly enjoy learning and trying new things.

Enriching Learning through Curiosity

One of the most important ways Clubs and Youth Centers provide academic enrichment is to foster young people’s natural curiosity and love of learning. Early in their academic journey, children need chances to explore the world in ways that build curiosity and creativity. Clubs offer hands-on enrichment experiences at this stage to engage and motivate youth; for example, kids may fall in love with learning by creating a robot, visiting a museum or engaging in a photography project. Programs like Project Learn allow Club staff to embed learning opportunities in all Club experiences – games, art projects, science experiments, book clubs, physical play and sports – so youth become motivated, curious and engaged learners. Club youth overwhelmingly enjoy learning and trying new things, according to the 2022 National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI) findings.

Most Club members enjoy learning and push themselves to learn new things.

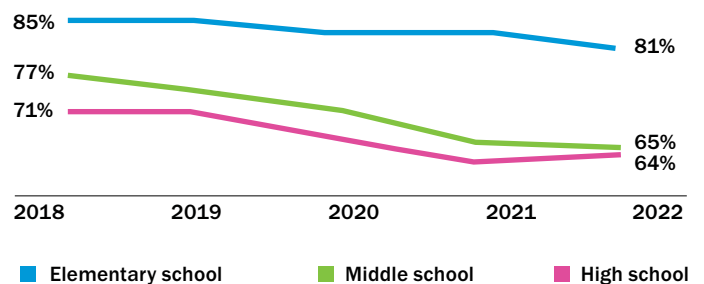


Building Skills through Learning Support

Clubs also provide a variety of academic supports to reinforce what youth are learning during the school day. Power Hour: Making Minutes Count offers homework help, tutoring and learning activities to support youth in their daily schoolwork while encouraging them to become

self-directed and motivated students. Summer Brain Gain, which addresses the learning disruption that occurs during summer, engages youth in learning through discovery, creative expression and group projects while helping them stay on track for the school year. The results are reflected in the 2022 NYOI survey findings; nearly three-fourths (73%) of Club members believe what they are learning in school is important for later in life. How Club members rate this importance has been steadily decreasing over the past few years; BGCA will continue to monitor this trend to identify potential ways to help address it.

How Club members rate the importance of what they are learning in school for later in life has been steadily decreasing since 2018.



Because tutoring plays a key role in addressing the learning disruption caused by the pandemic,²⁴ Clubs offer tutor training. Staff and volunteers can learn strategies for tutoring youth through Saga Coach, an online, self-paced training program. Clubs in Tennessee participate in the Tennessee Tutoring Corps (TTC), a statewide alliance that trains college students to tutor K-6 youth in math and reading. School partnerships, like the one at Boys & Girls Club of Springfield in Missouri, allow Clubs to tailor tutoring by aligning their programming with school-day programs and goals; eight school-based sites operated by the Springfield Club help bridge gaps in reading, science and math while removing barriers for youth who would not normally have access to the Club Experience.

Clubs address literacy through Summer Brain Gain Read, which enables youth to read a variety of developmentally appropriate texts, craft their own stories and discuss ideas and themes – all important literacy strategies.²⁵ Especially since the pandemic, Clubs like Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands in Omaha, Nebraska, are stepping up their literacy support; a Reading Buddy program pairs older members with youth who have low reading scores, and partnerships with community sponsors enable the Club to give each member a kit with reading materials and activities.

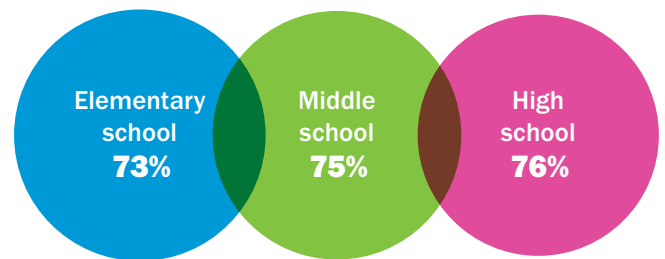
Keeping Youth on Track for High School Graduation

Clubs place a high priority on ensuring Club members are on track to graduate from high school on time. Based on existing research and key predictors of graduation, BGCA developed an on-track-to-graduate indicator made up of several NYOI measures. Youth are considered to be on track to graduate on time when they: 1) report grades of mostly As and Bs; 2) do not skip school; 3) expect to graduate from high school; and 4) progress to the next grade level within at least a year of the expected timing.



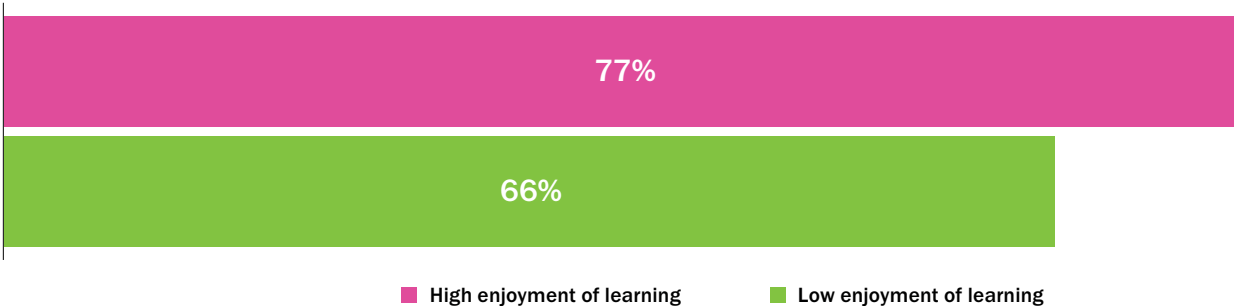
NYOI data shows that three-quarters of Club members are on track to graduate from high school on time: 73% of elementary school youth; 75% of middle school youth; and 76% of high school youth. The on-track-to-graduate indicator makes it possible to estimate to what degree members may be at risk for falling off track. For example, in 2022, regularly attending Club members in grades five through 12 met these criteria: among elementary school members, 53% were on track for on-time high school graduation with low risk. An additional 19% were on track with some risk (such as having poor grades or occasionally skipping school). Among middle school youth, 55% were on track with low risk and 20% were on track with some risk. Among high school members, 54% were on track with low risk and 22% were on track with some risk. Given national predictions of declining graduation rates as a result of the pandemic, Clubs will focus in the coming years on helping youth remain on track.

Three-quarters of Club members are on track to graduate from high school on time.



Studies confirm that when youth are motivated and enjoy learning, they are more likely to succeed academically and graduate on time²⁶; this is reflected in Clubs' youth outcome data.

Club members who highly enjoy learning are more likely to be on track to graduate on time.



Fostering Life and Work Readiness

THE NEED: READINESS FOR EDUCATION AND CAREER PATHWAYS

All youth need guidance in planning for their futures. This involves helping them identify their interests, strengths and values; exploring available career options; and identifying the type of education or training they will eventually need. It also means giving youth chances to develop the skills employers seek and gain relevant experience for the workplace.

Early Exploration of Education and Careers

Experts agree that career exploration is a process that should begin early. Young children are naturally drawn to imagining, exploring and role-playing scenarios; when they become aware of careers, they begin to think about how their futures might look. Middle schoolers need a chance to explore different occupations so they can develop a positive attitude toward work and a work “identity,” an idea of what careers they might like or expect to have.²⁷ Older teens need chances to actively explore different career paths through their interests, classes and actual work experience and to consider education that might help them qualify for the field they want to pursue.²⁸ Ongoing career awareness and exploration help youth understand why school is important and how their learning relates to careers.²⁹

Importance of Postsecondary Education

Education after high school matters more than ever; 65% of jobs today require skills and knowledge attained through postsecondary programs,³⁰ and careers that require more education will grow faster than average by the year 2030.³¹ Higher educational attainment results in higher earnings – 84% more for those with a bachelor’s degree³² – and leads to better health, a longer life, personal growth and a stronger sense of community involvement.³³ But the increasing costs of postsecondary education remain a barrier. For 2021-2022, the average cost of attendance was \$33,000 for vocational/trade schools; \$63,000 for

public two-year colleges; and \$102,000 for public, in-state, four-year institutions.³⁴ More than half of unenrolled adults planning to attend college cite cost as the reason they did not enroll.³⁵ The pandemic also disrupted current college enrollments. One in six youth (16%) who planned to take college classes did not,³⁶ and enrollment has declined 9% since the start of the pandemic.³⁷

Equipping Youth for the World of Work

The U.S. workforce today requires youth to be prepared with both hard skills, the job-related knowledge and expertise needed to do a job effectively, and soft skills, the personal qualities that will allow them to succeed in the workplace. Almost all employers (91%) say that soft skills are as important or more important than hard skills or technical expertise.³⁸ But youth today feel largely unprepared for the workforce; in a survey of high school students, only 23% said they feel well prepared to join the workforce.³⁹

Also important for equipping youth is early exposure to work through internships, apprenticeships and early job experiences, giving them firsthand involvement in a specific career field and the possibility of a permanent job.⁴⁰ Young people who enter the workforce early are more likely later in life to find quality, better-paying jobs.⁴¹

CLUB RESPONSE: PREPARING YOUTH FOR POSTSECONDARY AND CAREER SUCCESS

Career Awareness, Exploration and Preparation

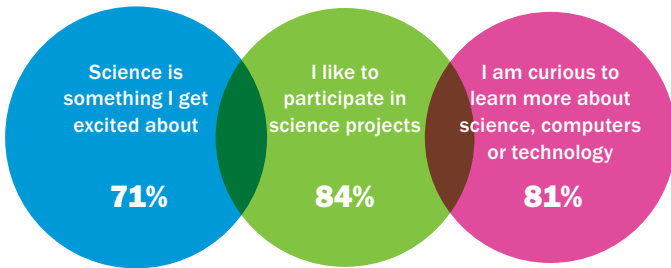
Career awareness starts as soon as youth enter the Club at age 6. Whether Club staff are talking to youth about different types of work, taking them on field trips to local companies or introducing them to community business leaders, they make sure even the youngest members have opportunities to learn about careers. Through programs like CareerLaunch and Roadmap to Careers on MyFuture – BGCA’s interactive digital platform youth can access to learn, play and socialize – youth discover their unique abilities and interests, see how these relate to potential careers, explore a wide variety of occupations, consider the education needed and take steps toward pursuing their first job. As they do, they are mentored by Club staff who recognize and encourage their talents, achievements and the possibilities for their lives beyond high school graduation.

To encourage youth to explore STEM careers, Clubs offer experiences to build skills and help youth envision a future in STEM. Family STEM nights and technology events encourage creativity and exploration, and field trips expose youth to a variety of STEM careers. Virtual events offer more exposure to STEM careers. For example, a DIY STEM event gives youth a chance to observe scientists extracting DNA from a strawberry, teaching them about DNA and STEM.

Clubs like the Los Angeles Air Force Base Youth Center encourage girls to explore new career paths and meet female leaders in STEM through virtual STEM programming. Girls stay interested in STEM as they learn valuable skills, connect with others and build relationships. The 2022 NYOI data shows that most Club youth enjoy participating in STEM and are excited and curious to learn about it.



Most Club members enjoy participating in STEM and are excited and curious to learn about STEM.



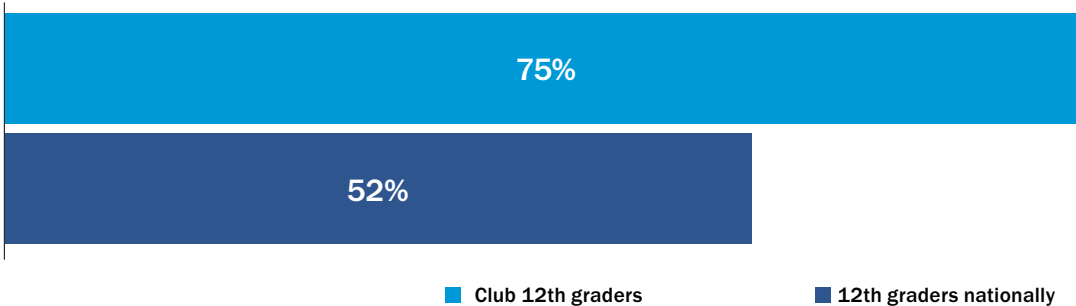
Readiness for Postsecondary Education

With Diplomas to Degrees (D2D), a college readiness program, Clubs encourage teens to make connections between their interests and future pathways. Youth plan

for postsecondary education, identify ways to finance their education, and develop the skills and attributes to be successful in their educational endeavors. Clubs also integrate readiness for postsecondary exploration throughout all areas, from arts to leadership to health and wellness.

The 2022 NYOI data shows that Club 12th graders demonstrate readiness to pursue secondary education. Three-fourths reported submitting the FAFSA, compared to half of 12th graders nationally.⁴²

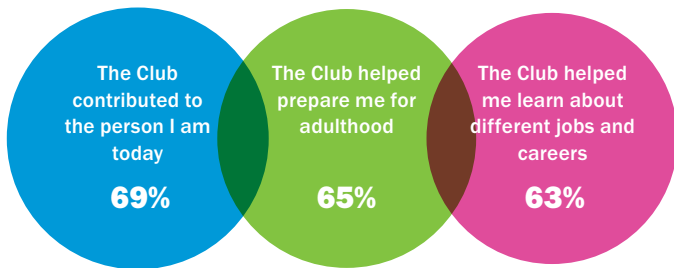
Three-fourths of Club 12th graders submitted the FAFSA, compared to half of 12th graders nationally.



Building Essential Workforce Skills

Giving youth the chance to practice essential workforce skills is an important focus for Clubs. It may be as simple as giving them responsibility for co-facilitating activities or collaboratively running a Club store. Staff set expectations for punctuality, dependability and teamwork and recognize youth when they demonstrate these behaviors. Clubs also work to ensure that all youth have the chance to build critical digital literacy skills such as online safety, collaboration and technical know-how. Members can access the MyFuture digital platform to build digital competence while participating in hundreds of self-directed activities in areas such as STEM, leadership and the arts. Findings from BGCA's alumni study confirm that some two-thirds of Club alumni believe their Club experience helped prepare them well for adulthood and their career.

Club alumni report that the Club helped prepare them for adulthood and their career journey.



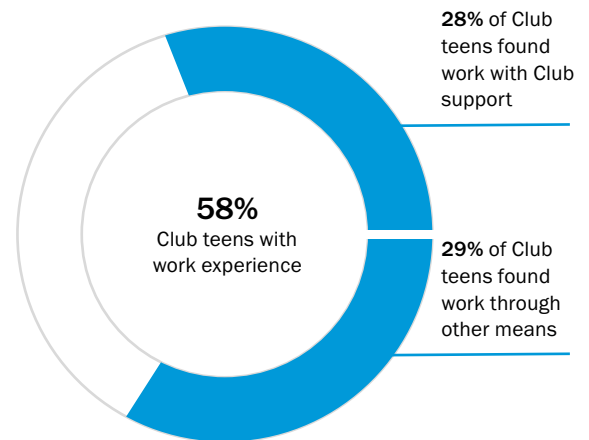
Opportunities for Work-Based Learning

Club youth have many opportunities to explore careers through work-based learning: service-learning projects, credentialing, first jobs, internships and pre-apprenticeships. For example, partnerships with local employers, postsecondary and vocational training institutions and government agencies enable Clubs to offer older teens industry-specific training and certification programs in areas of interest such as first aid/CPR, phlebotomy, information technology and warehouse logistics. Clubs across the country participate in an innovative partnership with retail employers and the National Retail Federation to implement the RISE Up Retail Industry Fundamentals training program, which helps Club youth find jobs in retail and advance into promising careers. In This Way Onward, Clubs partner with local Old Navy stores to offer teens their first jobs, giving them experience in retail careers, teaching them job-readiness skills and providing coaching through the hiring process. Toyota's T-TEN (Technical Training Education Network) pre-apprenticeship program, a partnership of community

colleges, vocational schools and Toyota and Lexus dealerships, gives youth automotive technical training. Boys & Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee in Wisconsin, through a partnership with the local workforce development board, offers three tiers of training, starting in middle school with a Club job, moving to an entry-level job in retail and progressing to occupational skills training in a field of interest.

The 2022 NYOI data shows that 58% of Club teens had a work experience in the past year and, of those, about half indicated that the Club helped them get into that work experience.

More than half of Club teens have had work experience in the past 12 months.



Focus on the Future

In response to a rapidly changing landscape in education and the workforce, Clubs are finding new and innovative ways to meet the needs of youth. For example, as Esports (electronic sports) leagues and tournaments grow exponentially, many Club leaders are seeing the value of competitive gaming and are using it as a creative learning platform for young people. Youth can compete in multi-player video game competitions that allow them to develop teamwork, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity and social-emotional skills. Club members also can build their leadership skills and earn certification as Esports coordinators, preparing for future tech careers. As more employers emphasize the need for soft skills in the workplace, youth participating and earning certification in Esports can develop a competitive edge for their future educational and career performance.⁴³



Developing 21st Century Leaders

Young people today are guardedly optimistic. They are much more likely than older people to believe the world is getting better yet they are realistic about the challenges facing them.⁴⁴ In a 2019 survey, nearly all 8- to 17-year-olds (90%) reported being concerned about one or more critical issues.⁴⁵ Their concern, optimism and realism mean that youth are well positioned to lead now and in the future⁴⁶; in fact, in every movement throughout history, young people have been central to driving positive change.⁴⁷

Laying a Foundation for Leadership

THE NEED: SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, CHARACTER AND INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Through leadership and service experiences, youth practice “doing” leadership in real-world settings where they can make a difference. But these experiences need to be built on a foundation of skills so youth can develop the qualities of “being” a leader. When youth have a chance to practice these dimensions of leadership, they become caring and competent and move from merely participating in change-making activities to creating change themselves.⁴⁸

A first step is fostering social-emotional skills, the abilities, knowledge and attitudes to help youth reach their goals and contribute to their communities.⁴⁹ Particularly important is self-awareness; to be effective leaders, youth must know their values, beliefs and personal goals.⁵⁰ With self-awareness and self-confidence, youth gain a sense of efficacy, believing in their abilities and knowing they can make the world a better place.⁵¹ In addition, youth need to develop character traits such as honesty, respect, caring, responsibility, integrity, fairness, a willingness to stand up for others and an appreciation of cultural differences.⁵² Also essential are interpersonal skills, especially as leadership is increasingly understood as relational.⁵³ Youth need to be able to communicate well, listen actively, express values and beliefs clearly, remain open to and appreciate the input of others, work effectively with peers and adults from diverse group, and resolve conflicts.⁵⁴

“ Club youth build a strong foundation for personal growth, collaboration with others and the ability to take positive action in the world.

CLUB RESPONSE: FOCUS ON BUILDING SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Leadership: Self, Others and Community

By laying the groundwork for character and leadership development, Boys & Girls Clubs and Youth Centers prepare youth to become the innovators and change-makers our world needs today. Youth build a strong foundation for personal growth, collaboration with others and the ability to take positive action in the world. These are the understandings youth need for effective leadership: a deeper knowledge of themselves, their social setting and the world around them.

Youth develop self-leadership as they get to know themselves, recognize their unique backgrounds, acknowledge experiences that have shaped their lives and become aware of their emotions and personal values. Since adolescence is a time for young people to discover their identity, Club programs like SMART Girls and Passport to Manhood foster these critical dimensions of identity. By taking part in group experiences, field trips and mentoring with caring adults, Club youth build character and self-esteem, explore their identity and values and develop strong leadership abilities.

In practicing leadership with others, Club youth learn perspective-taking, the ability to see their own perspective, appreciate the perspectives of others and communicate well with others to encourage collaboration. Because relationships are central to emerging leadership in young people, Clubs help them feel a sense of connection and belonging through collaborative relationships in which all are valued equally in decision making. Through the Youth for Unity Activity Guide on Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s MyFuture digital platform, for example, youth learn a sense of responsibility to themselves and others, the importance of standing up for others and an appreciation of cultural differences. Club staff also support this skill-building by modeling peer support, collaboration and mutuality.

Leadership in the community teaches youth how to take positive actions toward a shared goal, actions informed by their self-awareness and ability to partner with others. As youth seek to understand community needs, listen and engage with people from diverse perspectives, they learn that they can leverage their self-knowledge to collaborate with others in making transformative change in their communities.

In the 2022 NYOI survey, youth report having strong leadership abilities. Eighty-nine percent of frequently attending Club members ages 6 to 18 responded positively to the statement, “If I’m the leader of a group, I make sure that everyone in the group feels important.” The percentage combines “strongly agree” (36%) and “agree” (53%) responses. Of the 88% of Club members responding positively to the statement, “I feel like I can stand up for what I think is right, even if my friends disagree,” 36% chose “strongly agree,” and 52% chose “agree.”

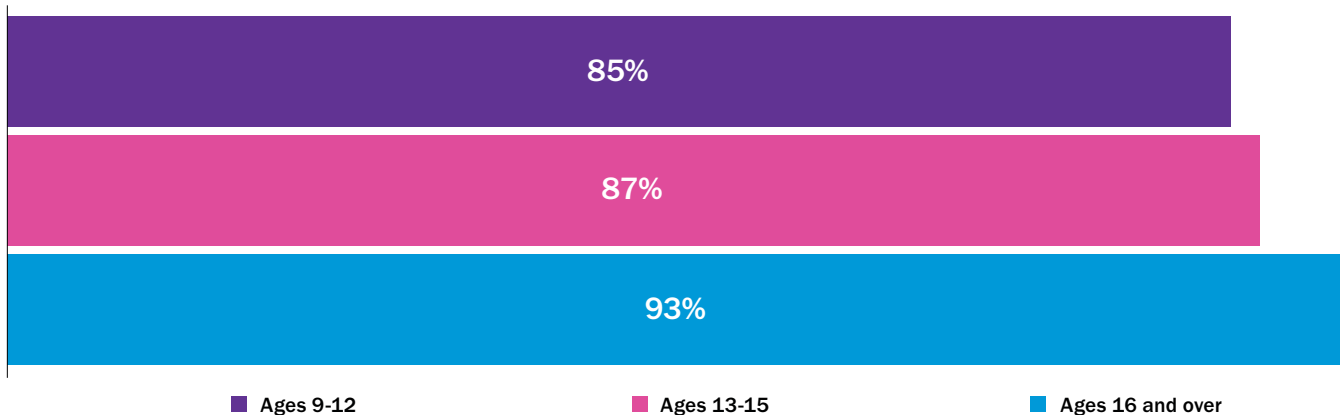
The majority of Club members report having strong leadership skills.



Club members also have the interpersonal skills needed for emerging leadership, such as having high concern for others. Most Club youth (86%) think about how others will be affected by a decision they make – and this increases as they get older.



Club members think about how other people will be affected when they make a decision, and as they mature, this increases.



Empowering Youth as Change Agents

THE NEED: YOUTH VOICE, SOCIAL AWARENESS AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Developing leadership in youth means empowering them, fostering voice and agency, encouraging social awareness and providing opportunities for them to engage in meaningful action for change.⁵⁵

Youth need a voice, a chance to speak and be heard, to have their opinions matter and to be seen as experts in their own lives.⁵⁶ This can only happen in settings that are physically and emotionally safe and that foster and value their input.⁵⁷

Social awareness also is important for emerging leaders. Youth need to think critically about the important issues they face, seeing their experiences in light of the social, political and cultural forces that impact them. Through these efforts,

youth gain self-awareness, a sense of self and cultural identity; social awareness, recognizing how their social world affects them and others; and global awareness, reflecting on the inequities and problems of people around the world.⁵⁸

Finally, youth need active engagement, putting their knowledge and skills to work to make change.⁵⁹ Volunteering, service-learning and social-justice efforts are powerful avenues for young people to become actively engaged in change. Volunteering (taking part in a neighborhood clean-up, for example) gives youth a chance to address real-world problems in the community. In service-learning (organizing a food drive, for example), youth participate in a service project that goes beyond volunteering to reflect critically on needs and issues affecting the issue at hand and their communities.⁶⁰ Social justice goes beyond service learning, enabling youth to advocate for equity, equality and fairness – getting involved in the Black Lives Matter movement or working to address food insecurity in the community, for example. As they play an active role in addressing real-world needs, youth can become powerful change agents and responsible citizens who are more likely to work for meaningful change throughout their lives.⁶¹

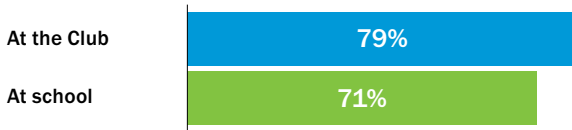


CLUB RESPONSE: FROM VOLUNTEERING TO SOCIAL JUSTICE, CLUB YOUTH LEAD AND MAKE CHANGE

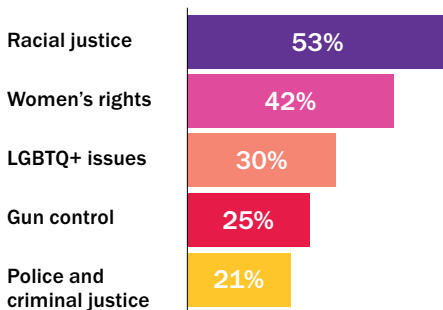
Fostering Social Awareness in Youth

Because social awareness is essential for emerging leaders, Clubs give youth opportunities to become informed about critical issues that affect them, the community and the world. Clubs provide a safe space for conversation, exploration and learning, as evidenced by findings from BGCA's 2022 Teen Survey. Nearly four-fifths of Club teens (79%) talk about social issues they care about at the Club, as compared to 71% who talk about them at school. Club members also are clear about the issues that matter most to them: racial justice (53%); women's rights (42%); LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning and/or queer) issues (30%); gun control (25%); and police and criminal justice (21%).

Club teens talk about social issues they care about at the Club more than at school.



Racial justice, women's rights, LGBTQ+ issues, gun control and police and criminal justice are the social issues that are most important to Club teens.



Dynamic, Tween- and Teen-Driven Leadership Movements

Central to leadership development at the Club are small-group experiences that build on the foundation of social-emotional and character development. Youth have opportunities to develop their leadership potential by initiating, planning and implementing projects to address issues that are meaningful to them.

Torch Clubs, small-group, peer-driven leadership and service clubs, encourage members ages 10 to 13 to identify needs in their Club or community and create and implement projects to address those needs. The purpose is to foster in youth the ability, confidence and motivation they need to lead meaningful change in themselves, with others and in their communities. Torch Club members at Joint Base Langley-Eustis Youth Programs demonstrated the tremendous impact youth can have on the community with their Sidewalk Project. Concerned for the safety of youth walking in the neighborhood, Torch Club youth studied traffic laws, interviewed law-enforcement officials and took part in a traffic study. They built a network, developed a safety video, organized rallies, and went door-to-door to collect signatures on a petition. Their efforts resulted in a new sidewalk that made the community safer for all.

Torch Club prepares members to move on to Keystone Club, a small-group club for teens ages 14 to 18. Every year, Keystone teens spearhead a movement to address needs and issues that are most important in their lives; they then create and lead projects locally to build leadership in academic success, career preparation, community service and teen outreach. For 2022-2023, Keystone members chose to focus on addressing longstanding issues of race and racism in their communities. The annual National Keystone Conference, which brings together Club teens from all over the world, gives members the chance to lift up their voices on important issues, interact with peers, develop skills to advocate for change and create a plan for action. Keystone members also work together on on-site service projects. For example, at the 2022 conference, teens representing the next generation of STEM leaders built specially designed cars for toddlers with disorders that affect their mobility.

“ 40% of Club 15-year-olds volunteered at school, in the neighborhood or in the community, compared to 26% of 15-year-olds around the world.

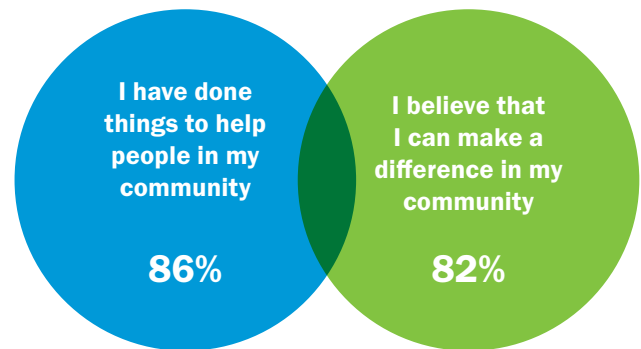
Experiences Focused on Advocacy, Activism and Service

Beyond Torch Clubs and Keystone Clubs is Youth of the Year, a leadership program that gives Club youth the chance to showcase and be recognized for leadership excellence. A leadership recognition program for all ages, a leadership readiness program for younger teens and a leadership development program for older teens allow youth to learn and practice the skills to lead their generation. Each year, one exceptional youth from a Club rises to the role of National Youth of the Year, serving as an ambassador for Club youth and a strong voice for young people. For youth who want to explore advocacy and activism even further, the Youth for Change Roadmap allows them to make their voices heard and become agents of change. In partnership with staff, youth discover personal and collective passions, identify and address a community problem and develop a project to encourage participation from the community. In addition, advocacy, activism and service activities on the MyFuture digital platform – like “Rise Up in Your Community” or “Stand Up, Speak Out” – allow youth to experience firsthand the power of talking about issues that are most important to them.



The 2022 NYOI data shows that these experiences shape Club members as leaders and as global citizens. In the past year, 40% of Club 15-year-olds volunteered at school, in the neighborhood or in the community, compared to only 26% of 15-year-olds around the world.⁶² In addition, Club youth already are working as change agents in their communities. More than three-fourths of Club youth have done things to help people in their community (86%) and believe they can make a difference in their community (82%).

Club members are active in helping their community.



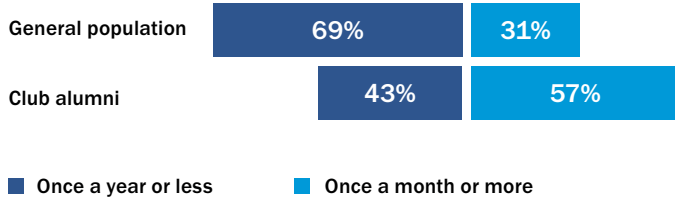
Club youth also learn what it means to partner with others beyond the Club to advocate for change. In summer 2022, Club youth from across the U.S. (150 in person and 600 virtually) met with legislators and other government officials at the first National Youth Advocacy Days (NYAD) in Washington, D.C. Young advocates heard from inspirational leaders to learn effective advocacy strategies and receive training and resources to help them carry out these strategies in their communities. Most importantly, they participated in hands-on advocacy by meeting with members of Congress to talk about issues directly impacting America's youth.

Young alumnus Arturo Gonzalez, from Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Los Angeles, attended NYAD. He shared that being a Club member raised his awareness of the problems facing his community, which motivated him to learn about those issues and join a social justice group at his Club. It was this involvement that made him truly feel a part of his community, as he and his fellow Club members developed a plan to present to Congress to prevent gentrification of their area.

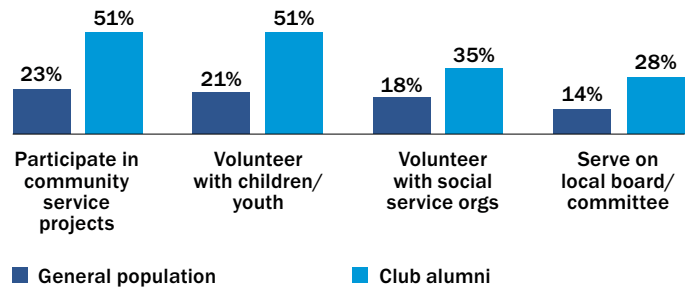
Clubs offer innovative platforms for youth to speak up for change around the most pressing issues in our world. Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston in Texas launched a social justice initiative called “Be the Change You Want 2 See,” inspiring Club teens to be catalysts for social change and racial justice through critical and intentional conversations, artistic expression and service-learning projects. Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington in Washington, D.C. partnered with local businesses to empower teens in their own forum on racial, climate, educational and community justice, the #OurLivesMatter Teen Summit. Organizing and managing the annual event, teens exercise voice and agency by speaking out on these issues and taking steps to create positive change that will affect the community. By gaining leadership experience in a supportive environment, Club youth are equipped to make the institutions that shape their world more accountable, effective, equitable and inclusive.

As BGCA’s 2022 Club alumni study shows, alumni volunteer more often than adults in the general population; they also volunteer and participate in a variety of service projects at a significantly higher rate than adults in the general population.

Club alumni volunteer more often than adults in the general population.



Club alumni participate in service projects at a higher rate than adults in the general population.



Focus on the Future

As Clubs look to the future, one critical area is the need for programs addressing diversity, equity and inclusion. In preparing youth to advocate for transformative change, Clubs will help them understand that everyone deserves equitable economic, political and social opportunities. Young people benefit from opportunities to acknowledge and discuss their experiences with discrimination, inequality and negative stereotypes – and to better understand power, privilege and oppression. In the future, BGCA and Clubs will continue to develop programs that elevate voice and agency, raise personal and social awareness, and help youth learn to live and lead in a diverse, complex world.





Developing a Healthier Generation

Although physical health and well-being are vital for young people, they also need support for emotional well-being, so they develop strong social-emotional skills and are able to make healthy decisions.

Promoting Healthy Decision-Making

THE NEED: ADDRESSING CHALLENGES THAT AFFECT YOUTH WELL-BEING

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many youth were exposed to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), events that threaten a young person's sense of safety, stability and connection and that can lead to chronic health problems, mental illness and substance misuse in adulthood.⁶³ ACEs include experiencing abuse or neglect, witnessing violence in the home, having a death in the family, growing up in a home with substance-use or mental-health problems, witnessing community violence, or experiencing racial discrimination.⁶⁴ Nearly half (45%) of children in the U.S. experienced at least one ACE in 2016,⁶⁵ and the pandemic has almost certainly driven those numbers higher.

Recent Stressors Affecting Young People

Prior to the pandemic, many American children were living in poverty, leaving them at increased risk of poor nutrition, lost health insurance, eviction or foreclosure. Although poverty has declined since 1993, rising inflation means many families continue to struggle to make ends meet.⁶⁶ The pandemic exacerbated this: more than one-fourth of high school youth (29%) had a parent or other adult in their home lose a job during the pandemic.⁶⁷ These stressors meant that many youth faced a greater risk of exposure to intimate-partner violence, abuse and neglect in the home.⁶⁸ During the pandemic, 55% of high school youth reported emotional abuse by a parent or another adult in the home.⁶⁹ In addition, many youth experienced the loss of a parent or caregiver due to COVID-19; about one in 500 American children under the age of 18 lost a caregiving adult.⁷⁰

But the stressors affecting youth were not confined to the home. Youth have faced ongoing exposure to systemic racism and the daily reality of discrimination. More than one-third of high school youth (36%) experienced racism before or during the pandemic.⁷¹ Even for youth not experiencing racist acts themselves, the killings of Black young people by law enforcement officers has brought to light the devastating impact of racism on all people of color.

Impact on Development and Well-Being

The traumatic stressors brought about or made worse by the pandemic have had a profound effect on youth development and well-being. In particular, social-emotional growth – facilitated in part by positive peer interactions⁷² – was disrupted when school and social activities were suddenly not part of young people's daily lives.⁷³ With little connection to peers, many youth showed signs of low self-esteem, had trouble making new friends, had more emotional distress or lower self-confidence.⁷⁴ Youth also experienced a profound sense of social isolation, separated from peers, teachers, extended family members and community networks.⁷⁵ Early in the pandemic, more than one-third of adolescents reported high levels of loneliness.⁷⁶

For some youth, these experiences can be traumatic. Trauma can occur when a young person perceives an experience as frightening, threatening or harmful, and studies show that trauma and ACEs can affect a young person's brain architecture, immune system and stress-response system.⁷⁷ For example, children living in poverty are more likely to have learning difficulties,⁷⁸ and youth who face racial discrimination have more trouble concentrating, remembering or making decisions.⁷⁹ Similarly, exposure to violence⁸⁰ puts youth at risk for shock, confusion, sadness and anxiety, and, in the long term, insomnia, nightmares and depression.⁸¹



Before the pandemic, a serious mental health crisis already existed. From 2009 to 2019, the number of high schoolers reporting persistent feelings of hopelessness and sadness, seriously considering suicide and attempting suicide steadily increased.⁸² This growing crisis was exacerbated by the pandemic; rates of depression and anxiety among youth likely doubled,⁸³ and the number of emergency room visits for suspected suicide attempts was 22% higher in the summer of 2020 and 39% higher in the winter of 2021 as compared to the same periods in 2019.⁸⁴ These types of challenges in childhood and adolescence make youth more vulnerable to substance use, experiencing violence and risky sexual behaviors,⁸⁵ all of which can compromise academic achievement, future career potential and health later in life.⁸⁶ From January to June of 2021, 20% of high school youth reported currently using alcohol, 15% were using electronic vapor products, 13% were using marijuana and 4% were using prescription opioids.⁸⁷

Other threats to youth well-being were evident during the pandemic. In 2020, more than one-fourth (26%) of 6- to 17-year-olds nationally reported being bullied, picked on or excluded by other children in the past year.⁸⁸ Bullying behaviors in school settings appear to have increased in the 2021-2022 school year compared to previous years: 30% more bullying, 33% more fights or attacks between students, and 36% more threats of fights or physical attacks.⁸⁹

CLUB RESPONSE: SUPPORTING WELL-BEING AND HEALTHY DECISION MAKING

Boys & Girls Clubs and Youth Centers use a whole child approach,⁹⁰ fostering physical and emotional wellness and a sense of safety and inclusion, while addressing adversity and stress with trauma-informed practices.

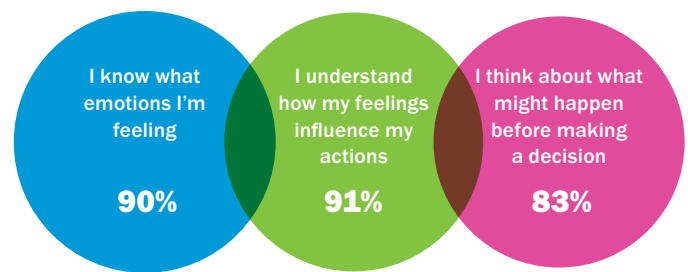
Fostering Emotional Wellness and Positive Choices

The earlier in life youth develop strong social-emotional skills, such as stress management and problem-solving, the more likely they are to make healthy decisions in their adolescent years.⁹¹ Good social-emotional skills can lead to physical and mental health and reduce the likelihood of problems with substance abuse, unhealthy behaviors or relationships.⁹² For example, being in a safe, nurturing

environment where youth can develop positive relationships has been shown to reduce the risk of drug use.⁹³ Clubs provide this kind of environment and help youth build protective skills so they can make positive health decisions.

The 2022 National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI) data shows that members develop strong social-emotional skills at the Club. For example, 90% of frequently attending Club members ages 6 to 18 responded positively to the statement, “I know what emotions I am feeling.” The percentage combines “very true” (63%) and “sort of true” (27%) responses. Of the 91% of Club members responding positively to the statement, “I understand how my feelings influence my actions,” 62% chose “very true,” and 29% chose “sort of true.” Club members (83%) also rated as true the statement, “I think about what might happen before making a decision”; 43% chose “very true,” and 40% chose “sort of true.”

The majority of Club youth report having strong social-emotional skills.



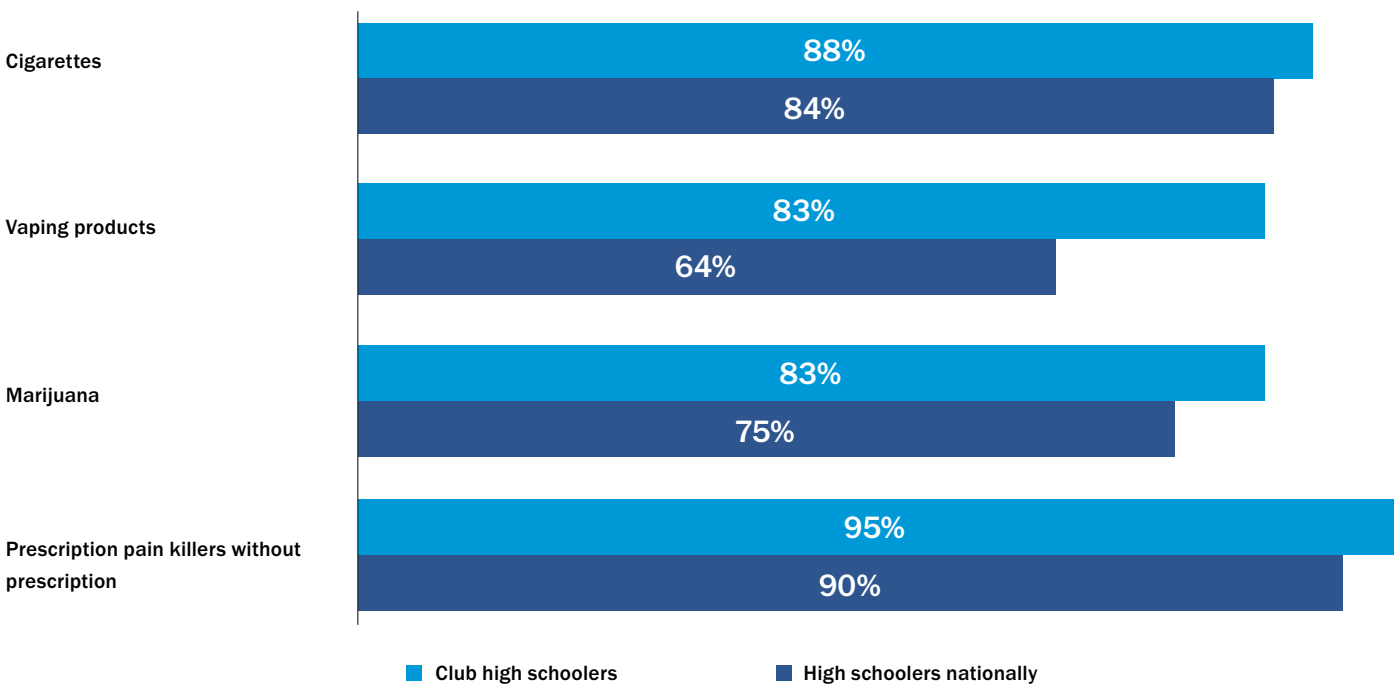
“ Young people’s Club involvement serves as a protective factor that equips them to make healthy decisions.

The SMART Moves: Emotional Wellness program builds the social-emotional skills that are most linked to helping youth avoid negative thought patterns and behaviors. It helps elementary and middle school Club youth acquire tools for self-management and coping at an early age. The SMART Moves: Core program builds healthy decision-making attitudes and skills, teaching youth to communicate effectively, make healthy decisions and avoid unhealthy

behaviors. SMART Moves modules focus on applying skills from the core program to making decisions about nicotine and substance use and healthy relationships. Boys & Girls Clubs of America is currently expanding the program with new materials to address sexual/reproductive health, violence and alcohol.

Young people’s Club involvement serves as a protective factor that equips them to make healthy decisions, as shown by the 2022 NYOI data. Club members in grades nine to 12 are more likely to abstain from cigarettes (88%) than ninth to 12th graders nationally (84%). They also are more likely to abstain from vaping products (83% of Club high schoolers vs. 64% of high schoolers nationally); marijuana use (83% of Club high schoolers vs. 75% of high schoolers nationally); and prescription pain killers (95% of Club high schoolers vs. 90% of high schoolers nationally).⁹⁴

Club high schoolers are more likely to have abstained from substance use in their lifetimes when compared to high schoolers nationally.



“ Having a sense of belonging and being cared for and supported are key to keeping youth healthy and reducing the likelihood that they will act in ways that place their health at risk.

Focus on Safety, Equity and Inclusion

Clubs are committed to creating safe, positive and inclusive environments for youth of every race, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status, religion or cultural belief. When youth encounter inclusive settings, they feel safe, represented and valued by the Club community, and able to participate in meaningful ways.

At the heart of Boys & Girls Clubs' focus on safety, equity and inclusion is positive staff-youth relationships. Having a sense of belonging and being cared for and supported are key to keeping youth healthy and reducing the likelihood that they will act in ways that place their health at risk. When youth know that adults and peers care about them, they are likely to stay in school longer, attend school more regularly and have higher grades and test scores. They also are much less likely to feel sad or hopeless, to have considered suicide or to have attempted suicide.⁹⁵

A safe environment and supportive relationships are especially important for youth who have been impacted by racism.⁹⁶ Clubs provide space for youth to have courageous conversations that acknowledge injustices, which can help counter the negative physical, emotional and social effects of racism.⁹⁷ BGCA's Growing Up Black Discussion Guides help youth process their feelings about the unfair treatment and violence inflicted upon Black people in the U.S. These sessions help youth feel supported and heard on issues of critical importance to them.

For LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning and/or queer) youth, the need to be seen, heard and valued is vital, as well.⁹⁸ Through Boys & Girls Clubs' LGBTQ+ Inclusion Initiative, which provides training and practice guidance to Clubs, staff can cultivate an environment where LGBTQ+ youth, families and staff feel welcome, safe and free to thrive.

Some Clubs are initiating Genders & Sexualities Alliances (GSAs), which unite LGBTQ+ youth and allied youth to create safe spaces and to advocate for transgender and queer young people in their Clubs and larger communities. A GSA at Boys & Girls Club of Green Bay in Wisconsin, for example, created an Equality Day event to raise awareness, inviting LGBTQ-identifying adults to participate on a panel for education and discussion.

At Boys & Girls Clubs of Kentuckiana, staff invited community leaders to the Club to lead conversations, including representatives from the Fairness Campaign, the LGBTQ department at the University of Louisville, Louisville Youth Group and the local PFLAG. These conversations created a sense of belonging and safety for Club members who identified as LGBTQ+ and helped other members see themselves as allies and better understand how to support their friends.

Trauma-Informed Approach

Many Clubs are adopting a trauma-informed approach that seeks to increase the sense of safety, trust and belonging for all youth. Every young person can benefit from trauma-informed practices designed to create a safe and reliable environment, focus on an individual's strengths and use asset-based language. Through these trauma-informed practices, staff help Club youth feel supported and connected, explore their strengths and identities, exercise their agency and develop meaningful, positive relationships with adults and peers.⁹⁹

Also integral to Boys & Girls Clubs' trauma-informed approach is a focus on social-emotional development. As youth learn to understand and express their emotions, they are better able to express how they are feeling, cope with distressing and challenging experiences and communicate when they need support. Building strong relationships with families allows staff and caregivers to approach each other when a child needs support. Because a small number of youth may need additional support, Clubs build awareness among staff, training them to identify signs and symptoms of youth in distress so they can connect these members and their families to the support they need through referrals to mental health providers.

Clubs are making great strides in trauma-informed practices and programming. Several have set up staffed, quiet and comfortable spaces where youth can go when they feel upset or stressed and need to get away from the usual Club noise and bustle to manage how they're feeling (some Clubs call this a "zen den"). Boys & Girls

Club Fox Valley in Wisconsin supports the wellness of members through innovative initiatives such as The Center for Grieving Children, a safe place for children, teens and families to find compassionate support for grieving the loss of a parent, grandparent, friend or other loved one. Another initiative, Home Base, addresses youth homelessness and transience by providing hotline support, counseling, crisis intervention, family mediation, wellness groups, community referrals, care packages and temporary shelter for youth experiencing housing insecurity.

The Power of Supportive Relationships

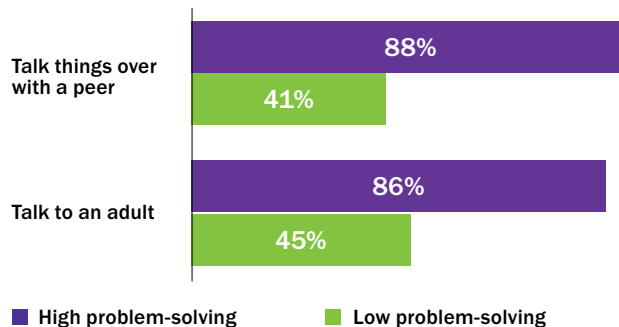
Strong relationships between staff and youth are what make the Club a safe space for members to talk about issues that concern them, explore who they are, exercise their voice and agency, forge positive relationships and develop strengths that will empower them throughout their lives. Club youth feel comfortable talking about difficult subjects. Findings from the 2022 Teen Survey show that three-fourths of Club teens are comfortable talking with Club staff about their mental health (78%), personal struggles (75%) and personal identity (73%).

Most Club teens are comfortable talking with Club staff about personal topics, like their mental health, personal struggles and personal identity.



As Club youth develop skills in one area, it can foster strengths in other areas. For example, as Club youth develop their problem-solving skills, they are more able to resolve conflicts by talking things over. According to the 2022 NYOI data, Club members with high problem-solving skills are twice as likely as those with low problem-solving skills to talk things over with a peer their age when they have a problem with that person (88% vs. 41%). Youth with high problem-solving abilities also recognize the value of talking to an adult; they are significantly more likely to do so than youth with low problem-solving skills (86% vs. 45%).

Club members with strong problem-solving skills are more likely to report resolving conflicts by talking things over with a peer or talking to an adult.



Focus on the Future

Boys & Girls Clubs are always looking forward, responding and innovating to meet emerging needs. For example, programs like SMART Girls and Passport to Manhood, designed to support identity development in Club youth, include supplementary materials for staff to lead discussions on gender stereotypes, so that all members – including non-binary and transgender youth – know they are included and supported. Through exploration guided by caring facilitators, all youth have the chance to discover their personal identity, their place in the world and their potential as leaders. But, as Clubs move toward being even more inclusive, they will develop programs that provide in-depth opportunities for all Club members to explore and discover different dimensions of their identity. One way BGCA is addressing this is by creating an identity development curriculum to ensure that all youth have an entry point for their own identity exploration. This curriculum could be facilitated through mixed-gender programming or through traditional SMART Girls or Passport to Manhood programming.



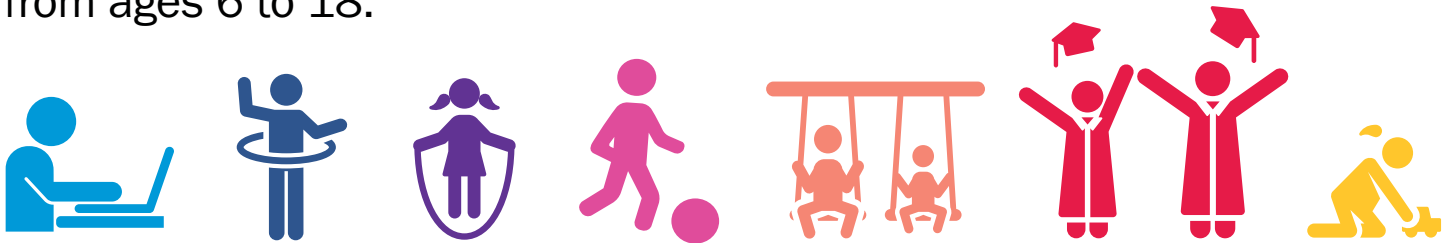
About Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Our Reach

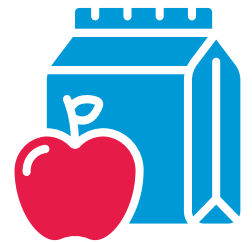
Boys & Girls Clubs provide a safe, affordable place for children and teens during critical out-of-school time. Clubs offer life-changing programs and services to young people.

Boys & Girls Clubs serve **3.3 million young people**, a diverse population ranging from ages 6 to 18.

On a typical day, **350,000 children and teens** attend a Boys & Girls Club.



62% of Club members live in households that qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches, an important indicator of low-income status, compared to 52% of public school students nationally.¹⁰⁰



67,000 adult staff work to fulfill our youth development mission, supported by **341,000 volunteers**.

More than 5,200 facilities are located in schools; public housing; on Native lands and U.S. military installations worldwide; and in rural, urban and suburban areas – wherever youth need us most.

Endnotes

¹ Osher, D.; Pittman, K.; Young, J. et al. (July 2020). *Thriving, Robust Equity and Transformative Learning & Development* (Washington, D.C.: Forum for Youth Investment), <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/Thriving-Robust-Equity-and-Transformative-Learning-and-Development-July-2020.pdf>.

² The term “cognitive” is defined as relating to conscious intellectual ability, such as thinking, reasoning or remembering.

³ Darling-Hammond, L. and Cook-Harvey, C. M. (September 2018). *Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Learning Policy Institute), https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/educating-whole-child-report?gclid=CjwKCAjwqJSaBhBUEiWAg5W9p5kw4P9UNJEU7Tsc59kLAz1H05XJobyhKG6BADYTr9egzbE5fXGIBoCEToQAvD_BwE.

⁴ “Optimal” means that the Club environment is consistently providing the Club member with positive experiences in a specific area, based on positive youth development and what young people need. “Needs improvement” means the member’s responses reflect an experience that was overall negative, or strongly lacking in certain areas. BGCA uses regression analysis to examine the effects of the Club Experience. This method evaluates the strength of relationships between variables, allowing researchers to examine how strongly a specific variable may be associated with a particular effect by factoring out other variables that might also influence the effect. Researchers can then calculate a level of statistical significance for associations they find; that is, they can rule out with some degree of confidence whether a particular finding occurred by chance. For relationships that are statistically significant, follow-up comparisons are made to quantify group differences in simpler “more likely to” or “less likely to” percentage terms.

⁵ HHS (2021). “U.S. Surgeon General Issues Advisory on Youth Mental Health Crisis Further Exposed by COVID-19 Pandemic,” Press Release, December 7, 2021, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <https://www.hhs.gov/patient-satisfaction/population-health-care-continuum/article/21249604/us-surgeon-general-issues-advisory-on-youth-mental-health-crisis-further-exposed-by-covid19-pandemic>.

⁶ Transforming Education (2022). *Trauma-Informed SEL Toolkit*, [transformingeducation.org, https://transformingeducation.org/resources/trauma-informed-sel-toolkit/](https://transformingeducation.org/resources/trauma-informed-sel-toolkit/).

⁷ Bauer, L. (2019). “What Are the Factors that Affect Learning at Your School?” The Brookings Institution, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2019/09/10/what-are-the-factors-that-affect-learning-at-your-school/>.

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