



Open the door to health and well-being.

Clubs Help Young People Live Healthy Lives

Health and well-being are essential for youth of all ages. Healthy eating and physical activity encourage normal growth and development and help prevent obesity, type 2 diabetes, anxiety and depression.¹ Mentally healthy young people develop the resilience needed to navigate challenges, maintain strong relationships and lead fulfilling lives.² And avoiding substance use supports young people's brain development, mental well-being and physical health.³

One in six youth (17%) aged 6 to 17 have obesity, and only 20% to 28% get the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity.⁵ Many young people live in food deserts or unsafe neighborhoods with few parks, lack school recess or physical education and cannot afford costly organized sports.^{6,7}

Mental health challenges can disrupt young people's academics and relationships, and make them more vulnerable to substance use, violence and risky sexual behaviors.⁸ Four in 10 high school students experience persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, and two in 10 have seriously considered attempting suicide.⁹

Boys & Girls Clubs give young people access to safe environments, healthy food, physical activity and emotional support. Fitness and social recreation programs provide inclusive spaces where youth can be active, play team sports and learn the value of movement and teamwork. Nutrition programs teach youth to grow, cook and eat healthy foods. Other programs help them explore their identities and develop relationships, regulate emotions and make responsible decisions. Programs also address substance use, sexual behavior and violence prevention.

Clubs equip young people to make smart, healthy choices that ensure their well-being.

Turn the page to see their impact.



Club Members Value their Physical and Emotional Health

Most Club members (81%) enjoy being physically active, report eating healthy is important to them (78%), and believe that it is important for people to talk about how they feel (81%).

Club members value taking care of their physical and emotional health.



Club Members Engage in Healthy Coping

Most Club members report strong emotional literacy and emotion regulation skills. Eighty-two percent report they know the emotions they feel and 84% say they understand how their feelings affect their actions. Three-quarters report they know ways to calm themselves down.



Club Members Are Physically Active

Club high schoolers report more physical activity than high schoolers nationally. Over half of Club high schoolers (59%) report at least 60 minutes of physical activity on five or more days compared to 46% of high schoolers nationally.¹⁰

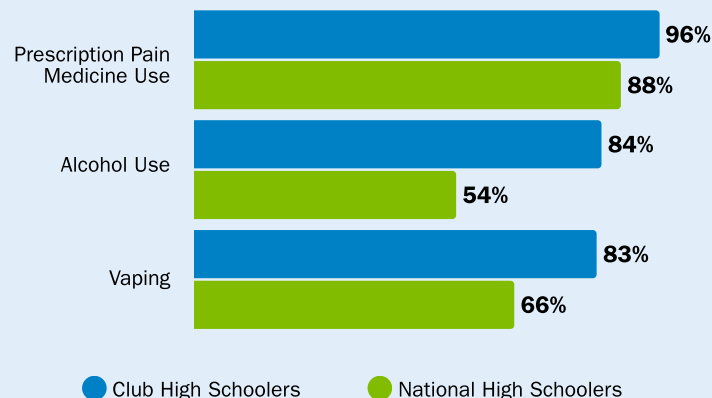
Over half of Club members are physically active for at least 60 minutes on five or more days per week.



Club Members Engage in Fewer Risky Behaviors

Club involvement serves as a protective factor that equips youth to make healthy decisions. Eighty-four percent of Club high schoolers report never drinking alcohol (vs. 54% of high schoolers nationally), 83% have never vaped (vs. 66% nationally), and 96% have never used prescription pain medicine without a doctor's order (vs. 88% nationally).¹¹

More Club high schoolers have abstained from using substances than high schoolers nationally.



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, and continuously improve their services. NYOI's principal tool for gathering youth outcomes data is a survey administered to members each spring. The survey measures youth achievement in health and well-being, character and leadership, academic success, and life and workforce readiness. It also asks members about their perceptions of their Club experience. In spring 2025, nearly 150,000 Club members from more than 3,700 sites completed the survey.

The Club member data featured here come from this survey. [Access a list of citations for the external data sources used here.](#)

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Learn more about the mission and work of Boys & Girls Clubs and how you can get involved.

bgca.org/get-involved