

Youth Sports Participation - A Winning Strategy



Young children participate in youth sports. Photo courtesy of New Lenox (Illinois) Community Park District.

BENEFITS OF YOUTH SPORTS

When kids play sports, they build confidence, connection and character — skills that carry them from the playground to the classroom and beyond. They also grow up healthier — physically, mentally and emotionally.

PROBLEM

Despite the clear value of youth sports, obstacles continue to prevent all kids from having access to equal opportunities for all to play. **Only 55 percent of kids participate in youth sports.**

SOLUTION

Parks and recreation is the nation's largest local sports network, managing most public sports facilities nationwide. With 92 percent of agencies offering youth sports programs, **local park and recreation agencies reach more than 50 million youths each year.**

50M+

youth reached annually by local park & recreation agencies.

55%

of kids participate in youth sports, making it critical to invest.

CONGRESS'S ROLE

Launched in 2025 by Representatives Marc Veasy and Jake Ellzey, the **bipartisan Congressional Youth Sports Caucus supports the Healthy People 2030 campaign of increasing youth sports participation rates to 63 percent.** This increase would be a great stride toward NRPA's goal of ensuring all kids have access to high-quality youth sports opportunities.

OUR ASK



→ **Join the Congressional Youth Caucus.**

Contact: JR.Lewis@mail.house.gov (Rep. Ellzey)
and Sequoia.Ragland@mail.house.gov (Rep. Veasey).

→ **Support legislation that expands access to youth sports programs.**

NRPA and other youth-serving organizations are working to introduce the STRONG Kids Act — legislation that would provide funding for youth sports programs across the United States without cost to taxpayers.

If you are interested in learning more about this legislation or becoming a cosponsor, please email advocacy@nrpa.org.