

Children's Sports Activities - UK - October 2010

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What is this report about?

This report charts changing patterns of children's participation in sports activities and assesses the attitudes towards sport of both young people and their parents to identify how sports providers, brands and retailers can encourage more children to play more sport, more often. In so doing, it examines the hypothesis that: "the London 2012 Olympic Games present a unique opportunity to re-connect young people with the concept of playing sport for fun and deepen their participation habits as a result."

What have we found out?

- More than 90% of children now get at least two hours a week of high-quality PE and sport at school, while more than half play sport in their free time, making it the most popular leisure activity among 7-15s.
- In 2010, in excess of 4 million children are estimated to play sport outside school on either an organised or casual basis. While the majority of these children participate for less than three hours a week, 22% devote more than five hours weekly to sport.
- Around half of children play sport casually with friends or family, whereas only 40% play on an organised basis with clubs. This is partly due to cost pressures and reflective of the wider move towards free facilities and less structured sport seen in the adult market.
- Variations in the value placed on social aspects of sport present several challenges for providers and brands: socialising around sport is more important to boys than to girls, is positively correlated with socio-economic status and loses appeal as children pass through Key Stage 3.
- Most parents (62%) encourage my children to do sport, but not any sport in particular, while 26% are more prescriptive, encouraging their children to do particular sports they are interested in themselves.
- While the prime motivation for parents to encourage children to do sport is to ensure they stay fit and healthy (74%), other important factors include making sure they have a good balance between academic skills and other areas (46%) and helping them learn teamwork/leadership skills (34%).

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