



## **THE LA84 FOUNDATION RELEASES THE 2022 LOS ANGELES COUNTY YOUTH SPORTS PARTICIPATION SURVEY FOR THE PLAY EQUITY FUND**

**LOS ANGELES** (Oct. 6, 2022) – Research commissioned by the LA84 Foundation and the Play Equity Fund reveals that youth in Los Angeles County are participating in sports and healthy activity less than they were prior to the pandemic – and experiencing a lack of equal access to sport and play in greater numbers than in similar studies from 2020.

These findings reaffirm the shared mission the LA84 Foundation and the Play Equity Fund, which are committed to creating play equity for children and work to provide young people with the benefits of access to team and individual sports, healthy movement, physical activities, P.E. in school and unstructured play.

As leaders of the play equity movement, the LA84 Foundation and the Play Equity Fund are dedicated to facing the challenges that hinder kids from poor communities and reversing these trends. Youth sports advocates who uplift the lifelong benefits of play do not have to accept a landscape in our city defined by restricted access and a lack of equal opportunities.

The LA84 Foundation has released the results of the *2022 Los Angeles County Youth Sports Participation Survey for the Play Equity Fund*. This comprehensive survey is the latest biennial report assessing youth sports, childhood health and community well-being that the LA84 Foundation launched in 2016. Key findings include:

- 57% of households with youth ages 6-17 say they developed an increased appreciation for sports & physical activity over the course of the pandemic.
- One out of every three adults said there were NOT ENOUGH opportunities for their children to play sports in Los Angeles County. This percentage was higher among lower-income households
- Parents and Caregivers indicated that LOWER COSTS, More ACCESSIBLE and CONVENIENT LOCATIONS closer to where kids live and FINDING MORE TIME would make it easier for their children to participate in sports.
- Similar to the 2018 and 2020 surveys, “I wish more sports were available at my child or children’s school(s)” was the statement receiving the highest level of agreement.
- 70% of adult respondents agreed the COVID pandemic “has made it difficult to find places for my children to play sports in LA County.” The agreement was higher among households making less than \$75,000.

When asked what sports/physical activities were played in late 2021 and early 2022, one in five children (21%) of Los Angeles County reported being physically inactive. Half of LA County youth (50%) reported being “less active” since the start of the pandemic, and 60% reported spending more time online/using the internet. Youth of color – and from lower-income households – were more likely to be inactive.

The survey found LA County youth have spent less time participating in sports with others than previously, less time participating in sports away from home, and less time taking part in organized sports/fitness.

“This data highlights the value of our work for play equity as we focus on creating an inclusive youth sports system to support the well-being of our young people,” said **Renata Simril, President & CEO of the LA84 Foundation, and President of the Play Equity Fund**. “The pandemic and its related hardships widened the gap between youth who have the opportunity to participate in sports and play programs and those who do not – particularly kids in communities of color. The benefits of physical activity and play cannot be just for the privileged.”

The LA84 Foundation and the Play Equity Fund invest in this research to inform solutions to the challenges communities and young people across the nation are facing in achieving play equity. Sports is proven to be beneficial to the physical, emotional and mental well-being of youth.

Due to the patterns of social and physical isolation, school closures and other stresses related to the COVID-19 pandemic, youth are experiencing significant learning loss, higher rates of anxiety and stress, and a decline in their social-emotional skills.

These trends among students emerging from the pandemic have been documented by [academic studies](#) and [media reports](#).

The COVID-19 pandemic inflicted its worst impacts on populations in communities with longstanding inequities, where access to park space and opportunities to participate in recreational activities as well as youth sports programs are also limited.

*The 2022 Los Angeles County Youth Sports Participation Survey for the Play Equity Fund* provides both aggregated and sport-by-sport data about the more than 1.4 million youngsters – ages 6 through 17 – who play sports in LA County.

Since 2016 the LA84 Foundation has documented the evolution of youth sports participation in Los Angeles. These reports offer insights into the challenges youth across LA experience when trying to engage in sport, healthy movement, and play – particularly those in under-resourced communities.

On Oct. 11, the LA84 Foundation and the Play Equity Fund, with Los Angeles Rams Head Coach **Sean McVay**, will unveil a completely refurbished playground in the Ramona Gardens Housing Development in Boyle Heights. The new playground equipment will provide enhanced opportunities for local youth to engage in play and healthy movement.

In the latest report, skateboarding (95), running/jogging (70), and basketball (54) had the highest average play frequency among youth. The Play Equity Fund will distribute 300 skateboards at Ramona Gardens at the playground ribbon-cutting on Oct. 11. In 2021, the LA84 Foundation celebrated the grand opening of a refurbished basketball court located only steps away from the new playground.

These projects in Ramona Gardens are completed with Legacy LA, a community organization that serves the surrounding neighborhoods. In recent months, the Play Equity Fund has also been bringing sport and play to neighborhoods that lack park space and recreation programs in LA County as part of “Park on the Move” program, a Legacy Program of Super Bowl LVI. This program is in partnership with County of Los Angeles Parks & Recreation, Playworks, the NFL Foundation, and the Los Angeles Super Bowl Host Committee.

The LA84 Foundation commissioned Sports Marketing Surveys USA (SMS USA) to conduct the survey, publishing these results first in 2016. The survey tracks youth physical activity, sports participation, and the effects of inequity on access and attitudes towards youth sports. A representative sample of households in LA County were surveyed and the questionnaire, administered in late 2021 and early 2022, included questions regarding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To achieve a representative sample, a target quota of completed surveys for each of the five regions of LA County (North, South, East, West, Metro) was established.

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### **About the LA84 Foundation**

The LA84 Foundation is a national leader in support of youth sport and public education about the role of sports in positive youth development. For more than 35 years, the LA84 Foundation has supported thousands of youth-serving organizations in Southern California through grant making, funding facilities and fields of play, training coaches and commissioning research. The LA84 Foundation takes on critical issues as a national thought leader by elevating youth sports and play as an integral to lifelong well-being. To learn more, visit [www.la84.org](http://www.la84.org) and @LA84Foundation on Twitter and Instagram.

### **About the Play Equity Fund**

A 501(c)3 public charity, the Play Equity Fund was established by the LA84 Foundation in 2014 as its charitable partner and supports programs and actions to ensure all children have equal access to the transformative power of sport and structured play. The Play Equity Fund supports the sports-based youth development ecosystem for greater impact, raises awareness of inequities and develops partnerships to advocate for funding and sustainable solutions to ensure children in communities of color have access to pathways for lifelong well-being. The Play Equity Fund is the only nonprofit focused on play equity as a social justice issue. To learn more, visit [www.playequityfund.org](http://www.playequityfund.org) and @playequityfund on Twitter and Instagram.

### **About Sports Marketing Surveys USA**

Since 1985, Sports Marketing Surveys USA (SMS USA) had led the way in being the informed, experienced and uniquely positioned source to assist with any custom research projects. SMS USA conducts quantitative and qualitative marketing research and information for many of the leading sports manufacturers and organizations throughout the industry.