



Delaware Youth Sports Coalition

The Power of Partnership:

**Transforming Physical and Mental Health Outcomes for
Delaware Youth**

**What kinds of
physical activities
were you involved
in as a child?**



**How have you
observed access to
youth sports and
physical activities
changing in your
lifetime?**



Delaware Youth Face Alarming Challenges

Mental Health, 2023 YRBS

33%

Of students reported feeling sad or
hopeless for more than 2 weeks in
a row and stopped doing their usual
activities because of it.

46.6%

Of females reported feeling sad or
hopeless for more than 2 weeks in a
row

24.7%

Of females reported seriously
contemplating suicide.

Physical Health

+70%

Increase in obesity prevalence
for high school students over the
last 11 years. (2022, *Delaware Obesity
Rates*)

In 2023, 17.8% of Delaware public high school students reported BMIs considered obese (15.9% Nat'l. Avg).*

- Males: 20.2%
- Females: 15.1%

Obesity prevalence among high school students:

- Black or African American: 17.6%
- Hispanic: 21.9%
- White: 17.3%

16.5% of Delaware public high school students report being overweight, but not obese (14.7% Nat'l Avg)*

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 1991-2023 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at <http://yrbs-explorer.services.cdc.gov/>. Accessed on 4/7/25

+19%

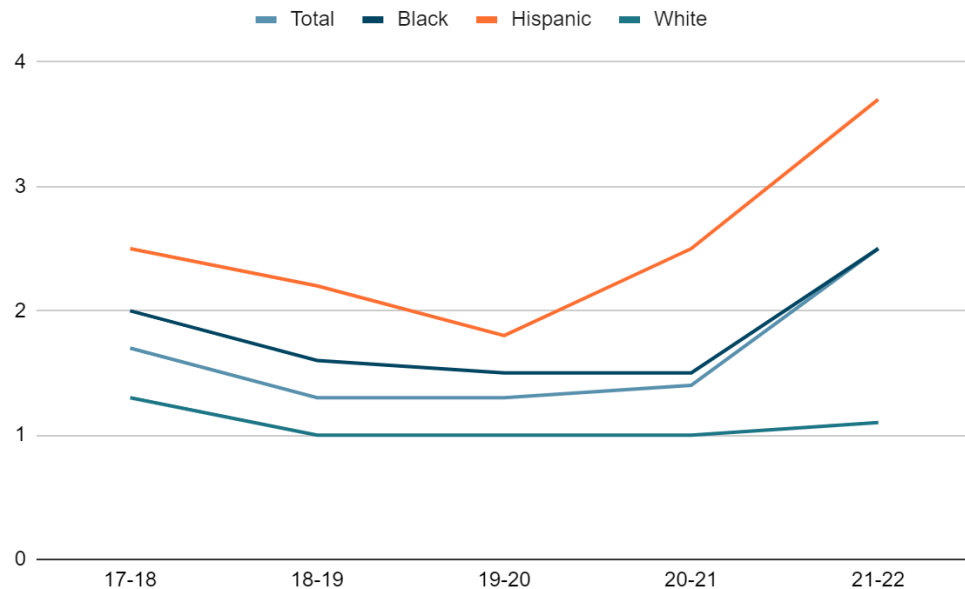
Percentage of students
chronically absent from school in
2024



Source: ([2024 Kids Count](#))

High School Completion

Drop Out Rates

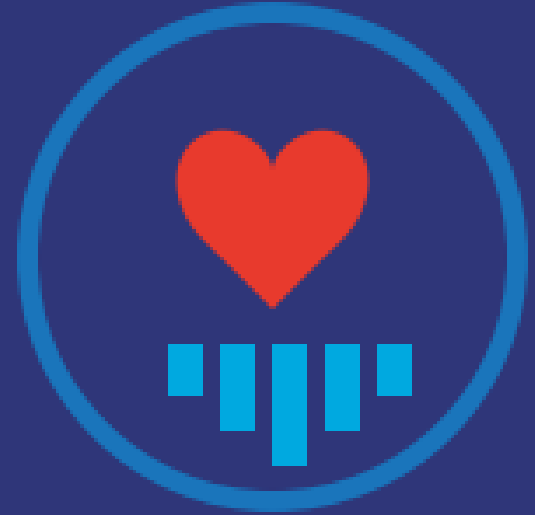


22%

% of Delaware high schools with
graduation rate < 80%

Source: (Delaware Department of Education, Educational Data Reports, 2023)

The Role of Sports - Improving Youth Outcomes



Proven Benefits

01

Lower rates of
anxiety, depression
and negative thinking

02

Higher Self-esteem
and confidence

03

Improved Cognitive
Development

04

Better social and
interpersonal skills

05

Higher High School
and College
Completion Rates

06

Better long-term
health outcomes

Sources: CDC Physical Activity Facts; National Youth Sports Strategy, 2019, Project Play Youth Sport Benefits

Healing Trauma *(emerging)*

01

Regulating the
nervous system

02

Enhancing brain
function and
neuroplasticity

03

Fostering sense of
safety and control

04

Building emotional
resilience

05

Promoting social
connections

06

Reinforcing
growth mindset

National Guidance



Healthy People 2030

63.3% of children ages 5-17 participate on a sports team or taking lessons.

CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics

One hour of physical activity everyday

Sports Participation Rates by Income Level

43%

Greater than \$100K

26%

Less than \$25K

How Delaware Measures Up

- In 2023, Delaware's *Healthy People 2030* participation rate was 50.2%. For children ages 5-17 (National Survey of Children's Health)
- Only 43%: of high school students reported participating in 60 min of physical activity for at least 5 days a week (YRBS, 2023) (National avg. 46.3%, 2023)



Current State of Youth Sports in Delaware

- Very fragmented landscape, difficult for families to navigate
- No knowledge of the following:
 - Barriers to access
 - Youth interests
 - Program quality (including coaches, facilities, etc.)
 - Program impact
 - Program needs
 - Size of the community need



Delaware Youth Sports Coalition

Mission

To unite key stakeholders across Delaware to create accessible, high-quality sports and physical activity opportunities that promote the physical, social and emotional well-being of all youth.

Vision

A Delaware where every young person thrives through equitable access to transformative sports and physical activity programs.

As a statewide backbone organization, DYSC provides resources, support and capacity to members, making it easier for them to focus on delivering high-quality programming, which in turn benefits Delaware youth, families and communities.

Benefits of a Coalition

- Allows communities to tackle interconnected challenges simultaneously.
- Enables communities to leverage and align multiple stakeholders and resources (parks departments, schools, pro teams, health systems, etc.) toward shared goals.
- Recognizes that achieving equitable access to quality youth sports requires reshaping policies, practices, resource flows, and power dynamics - not just funding individual programs.
- Provides the infrastructure needed to drive and sustain this deeper change.

Primary functions

- **Increase participation in and advocate for sports-based youth development programs (SBYD) across all sectors**
 - Grow enrollment in existing programs
 - Establish programs where gaps exist
 - Promote funding needs of SBYD field
- **Provide resources to enhance quality and capacity of SBYD programs**
 - Coach and leadership development opportunities
 - Strengthen organizational capacity
 - Outcomes measurement
 - Share best practices
 - Provide relevant state-specific resources to SBYD organizations; leverage national resources
- **Conduct state-level research regarding SBYD impact and share relevant national studies and best practices in the field**
 - Landscape analysis
 - Ongoing impact studies
 - Outcomes reporting

Participating Organizations (to date)

- 3&D Sports Performance
- Boys and Girls Club of Delaware
- Camp Abilities
- CheckRock League
- Delaware Interscholastic Cycling League
- DE Turf
- First State Squash
- Girls on the Run
- I Can Do 26.2 Kids
- Kent County Parks & Recreation
- MSK Community Center
- Network Connect
- Play With Passion
- Rodney Street Tennis and Tutoring
- Strive: How You Lead Matters
- Summer Learning Collaborative
- The Silk League
- The Teen Warehouse
- Walnut Street YMCA
- Wilmington Dept. Parks & Recreation
- Wilmington Youth Rowing Association
- Unlocke the Light Foundation
- DICK'S House of Sport
- Anthuan Maybank/Indoor Track Delaware
- Delaware Affordable Housing Group
- Wilmington Housing Authority
- Northeast Community Development Corp
- Advancing Healthy Lifestyles Coalition/PANO
- Diabetes and Heart Disease Prevention & Control Program
- Delaware State University (Dept. of Sport Management)
- Goldey-Beacom College
- University of Delaware, Center for Drug and Health Studies, Athletics Dept.

**Connect with
DYSC!**

