

Press release

For immediate release

New study shows older girls more likely than boys to do sport outside school

Older teenage girls are more likely than boys to do extra-curricular sport, reveals new CHILDWISE report.

The gender gap between boys and girls playing sport outside school has been narrowing over the past few years. This year girls aged 15-16 have tipped the balance and are more likely than boys this age to do extra-curricular sport.

“This is a trend that we have been mapping in our research over the last three years, brought on perhaps because of the success of campaigns such as This Girl Can or the influence of celebrities who are increasingly espousing fitness,” said Simon Leggett, research director at CHILDWISE.

“The balance has now tipped in favour of girls doing more sport out of school in this age group,” says Simon Leggett.

Traditionally, the least likely to get involved in sport, half of 15-16 year old girls take part in sports both at school and outside school this year – and increased from a year ago.¹

However, the amount of time all children age 5-16 spend playing sport outside of school is slowly decreasing – this year, children play for 2.2 hours on average, down from 2.3 hours a year ago and 2.4 hours the year before that.

“Among all but the very oldest children, boys do more sport outside education than girls, which is why this turnaround feels so significant. Around two in five children across the age range do around one to two hours of extra-curricular sport.”

The survey also found that boys’ and girls’ participation in sport at school is broadly similar across the age range. More than half of children play sport at school for an hour to two hours a week.

The 2019 CHILDWISE Monitor is a comprehensive annual report looking at 5 to 16-year-olds’ media consumption, purchasing and social habits as well as key behaviour and reading habits. More than 2000 children in schools across the United Kingdom completed in-depth online surveys for the report, which is now in its 25th year.

¹ 50% up from 46% a year ago

Findings of the report also include...

- The favoured out-of-school activities for boys age 5-16 are being in a sports club or team and swimming lessons. Girls of the same age favour swimming and dance lessons.
- Taking part in sport at all varies across the age range, but 15-16 year olds remain the least likely to do any sports at all with just over four in five taking part.
- Nine in 10 children take part in some sports, either at school or outside school.

CHILDWISE is an independent market research agency specialising in children and young people. CHILDWISE has a programme of published independent research and conducts research for government agencies, charities, broadcasters, publishers and brands www.childwise.co.uk

The Monitor Report 2018 covers... children and their media; TV viewing; music; reading; children's equipment; money; purchasing; sports & activities; health & wellbeing and education and employment.

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