



## Pressure & Youth Sports Study

🕒 April 7, 2017 (<https://www.yellowbrickprogram.com/blog/pressure-youth-sports-study>) 📁 General

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Youth sports can offer a wide variety of positive benefits, such as team-building, personal commitment, friendly competition, and exercise. However, youth sports can make some children feel overwhelmed, under pressure, and like a failure for what is supposed to be a fun, important learning experience. We surveyed 1,000 Americans to get a sense of how rampant the pressure to succeed is within youth sports, as well as see what kind of effect it has had on people throughout their lives.

(<https://www.yellowbrickprogram.com/blog/pressure-youth-sports-study/pressure-youth-sports-final>)

According to the survey, 38% of children are between the ages of 7-9 when they begin playing youth sports, followed by 29% that start earlier. These are the ages are when social circles broaden through school and more independent activities. The most popular sports—soccer, basketball, baseball, and football—are team-based instead of individually focused so children start to learn how to work with others while learning the rules of the game together.

Within six years, the participation in sports drops—by the time children are 16, only 3% still participate in sports. One obvious reason for this may be because as children mature, their interests start to vary and schedules can no longer accommodate all their interests. Parents and kids then decide where they want to spend their time and energy and sports may not be the top choice for more independent teens. In fact, 70% of children leave organized sports by the time they are 13 years old.

Burn-out is another possible factor in declining participation. If a child is exceptionally talented in a sport, quitting a team to try new interests or simply to take a break may seem like an impossible option to the child. The financial cost of continued practice, the worry of looking like a quitter, and fear of disapproval from parents, coaches, and others add an enormous amount of pressure to a young athlete. 42% of respondents said that coaches pressured a person the most to stay in sports, followed by 27% claiming friends as giving the most pressure.

When looking back on their experience of youth sports, many respondents answered that they felt pressure to keep playing, despite wanting to quit. The highest percentage of those who said “yes” were from the ages of 18-25, with 57%, followed by 52% of 26-33 year olds. In fact, millennials were 10x as likely to feel pressured by their mom as baby boomers. And although parents were sources of pressure, they were also cited as the biggest supporters; 40% claim that Mom as their biggest supporter, and 36% said it was Dad.

A positive foundation for youth sports is built on fun of the game, skill-building, and teamwork. Because pressures naturally exist in competitive environments, having a foundation of emotional support and positive behavior can help young athletes thrive because they can genuinely enjoy the game. Visit our Consultation and Treatment Center (<https://www.yellowbrickprogram.com/consultation-treatment-center.html>) for more information.

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YATA - Young Adult Transition Association (<https://www.yataconference.com/>)



National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (<https://natsap.org/>)

Bethesda, MD

## References



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(<https://www.qualitycheck.org/quality-report/?bsnId=584939>)

2017 Joint Commission Gold Seal of Approval



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Yellowbrick is a national psychiatric center of excellence located just north of Chicago, in Evanston, Illinois.

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