



Cultivating the next generation of character

Quantifying the impact of extracurriculars, including sports, on youth development

2024 / Year 2



Table of Contents

1	Research introduction	03
2	Enriching character via extracurricular bridge	7
3	Cultivating character with youth sports	13
4	Thanks, coach!	16
5	Appendix	27

Section 1

Research introduction

Research methodology and
overview of key findings



Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of First Tee from April 5 to April 9, 2024, among 2,049 U.S. adults, including 498 parents of children under the age of 18.

We captured data on youth's involvement in extracurricular activities, including those who currently are involved (n=367), and those who are involved in sports (n=273). We also analyzed data by gender, age, race, education, and income, among other characteristics.

It also references findings from March 17 to March 20, 2023, among 2,082 U.S. adults, including 542 parents of children under the age of 18.

Parents' demonstrate ongoing focus on cultivating the character of the next generation in America

Appetite for character-building
opportunities is rising to close
the gap

89% +4%
YOY

of parents say, "Character is a lost
value that should be more
emphasized in today's society."



Parents increasingly report a
need to cultivate character in
today's society

89%

of parents say, "I am looking for more
opportunities for my child to build
character in the current climate."

Of the parents whose children do not
participate in extracurricular activities,
72% of them want to see them involved
in the future in at least some form of
extracurricular.

Sports present a unique avenue
to bridge the character divide

94% of parents say, "Sports
provide children with a
healthy outlet to navigate
differences."

74% of parents say their kids
are involved in
extracurriculars, with
sports being the #1 type of
extracurricular activity
(up 9% YOY).

73% of parents say that playing
golf helps children build
character and teaches
children important life
skills.

82% Gen X parents

79% Gen X parents

Parents actively seek coaches who not only elevate their child's skills but also impart vital personal values

91% of parents say, "I believe sports coaching should inspire my child to excel both on and off the field."

91% of parents see coaching from someone trustworthy and trained as very important.

64% of parents already have their child currently enrolled under the guidance of a coach.

Parents say their child's coaches could impact their ability to work well with others (95%), respect others (90%), and be resilient in the face of challenges (90%).

Top skills and values parents desire their children to gain from coaching



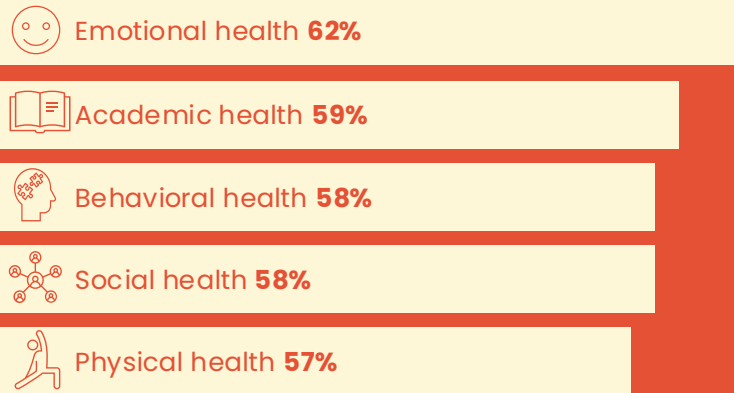
Section 2

Enriching character via extracurricular bridge

Parents persist in their concern for providing ample developmental opportunities for their children, turning to extracurricular activities to foster character and confidence.

Parents continue to prioritize their children's well-being as appetite for character-building rises

Percent of parents who are concerned about their child's...



89%

of parents say, "I am looking for more opportunities for my child to build character in the current climate."

89% ^{+4% YOY}

of parents also say, "Character is a lost value that should be more emphasized in today's society."

Parents emphasize the vital role of extracurriculars in development, with increasing focus on building confidence and exposing their children to new things

Most popular reasons for participating in extracurricular activities

Socialization	69%	Occupies time	30%
Build confidence	68% <small>+7% YOY</small>	Ongoing education	28%
Physical outlet	64%	Mentorship/support	26%
Exposure to new things	60% <small>+8% YOY</small>	Improves resume	14%
Pursue interests	54%	Serves as a childcare option	9%
Ongoing character development	43%	Requirement	8%
Emotional outlet	43%		

Moms are especially interested in extracurriculars for socialization (72%), and as an emotional outlet (49%). Lower income parents tap into more practical benefits, citing occupying time as a priority (38%). For parents of color, mentorship and support are favored by 31%, while 20% see extracurricular involvement as a means of enhancing their resume.

QS1Q9: Which of the following are reasons why extracurricular activities? Please select all that apply. (n=460 parents of children under the age of 18 that participate now in extracurriculars or will do so in the future) | S1Q16: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (Top 2=Strongly/somewhat agree) (n=498 parents of children under the age of 18)

94%

of parents say,
 “Sports provide children with a **healthy outlet to navigate differences.**”

Nearly three-quarters of parents say their kids are involved in extracurriculars, on par with last year

Seven in 10 (72%) of those whose children are not involved in extracurriculars right now, would like for them to participate in the future.

74%

of parents say their
child(ren) are involved
in extracurriculars

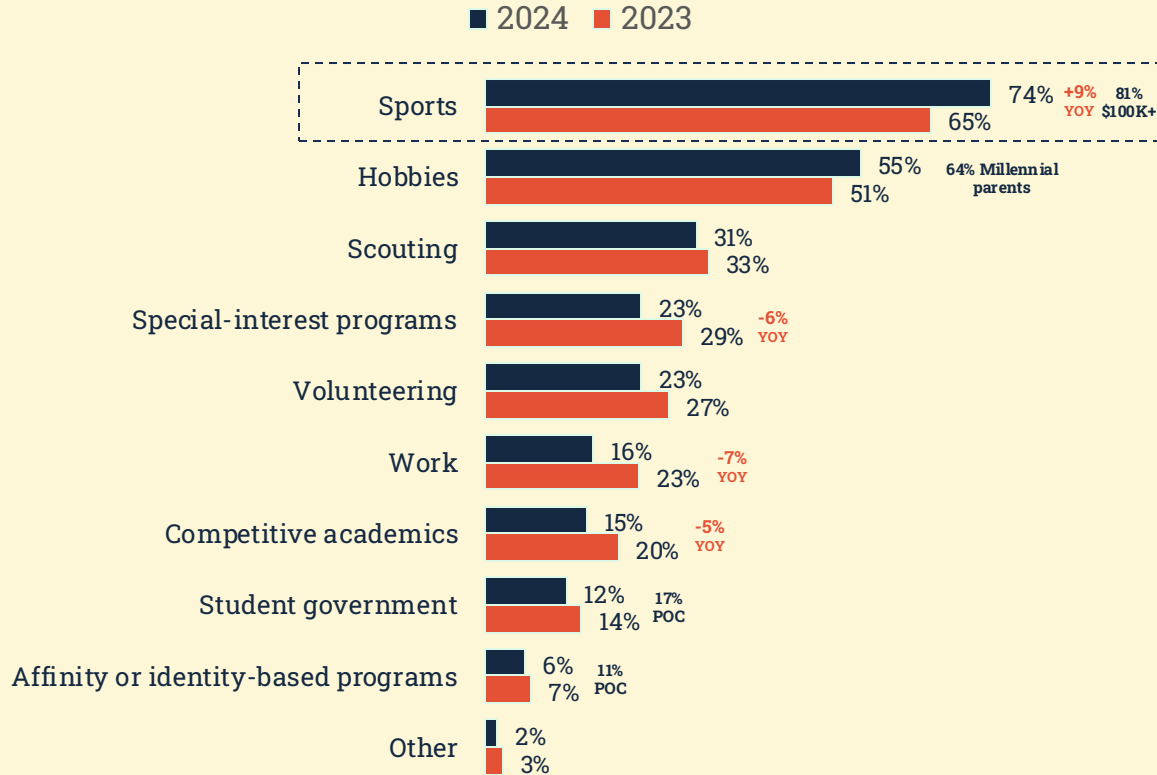
Almost half (47%) of parents say their children belong to at least one youth organization, including 52% of parents who have children between 6-12 years old.

More parents turn to sports to cultivate confidence and character, despite the uncertain economy

Sports, followed by hobbies (such as coding, music, and art), and scouting are the top types of extracurriculars today. Special-interest programs and volunteer work round out the top five. Sports are particularly favored by Gen X parents (82%).

Parents also make sure that their child gets their chance at an extracurricular, no matter the barriers, as 91% of parents agree in saying, **“Even in a tight economy, I make room in the budget for my children’s extracurriculars.”** This sentiment resonates consistently across households of varying income brackets, highlighting the universal value parents place on enriching their children’s experiences beyond the academic realm.

Top youth extracurricular activities



QSIQ13: Which of the following types of extracurricular activities, if any, does your child currently participate in (e.g., at school, through a youth organization)? Please select all that apply. (n=367 parents of children under the age of 18 who are currently involved in extracurriculars; n=393 data from 2023) | QSIQ16: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (Top 2=Strongly/somewhat agree) (n=498 parents whose child is under the age of 18)

While basketball retains its position as the most beloved sport, parents also see the character-building benefits of golf

Top youth sport activities

1 Basketball	45%	8 Tennis	13%
2 Soccer	36%	9 Dance	12% -5% YOY
3 Baseball or softball	34%	10 Golf	9%
4 Football	32%	11 Hockey	7%
5 Track & field	19%	12 Lacrosse	4%
6 Swim & dive	19%	13 Other	5%
7 Gymnastics	16%		

SIQ14: Which of the following sports does your child play as an extracurricular activity (e.g., on a school team, through a youth organization)? Please select all that apply. (n=273 parents of children under the age of 18 who plays sports as an extracurricular activity). | SIQ16: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (Top 2=Strongly agree/somewhat agree); (n=498 parents of children under the age of 18)

“

73%

of parents agree, “Playing golf helps teach children important life skills.”

79% Gen X parents
78% \$100k+ HH income

77%

of parents also agree, “Playing golf helps children build character.”

82% Gen X parents
82% \$100k+ HH income

”

The overwhelming consensus among parents persists: sports are not only enjoyable but also highly effective in instilling invaluable life skills for the long term

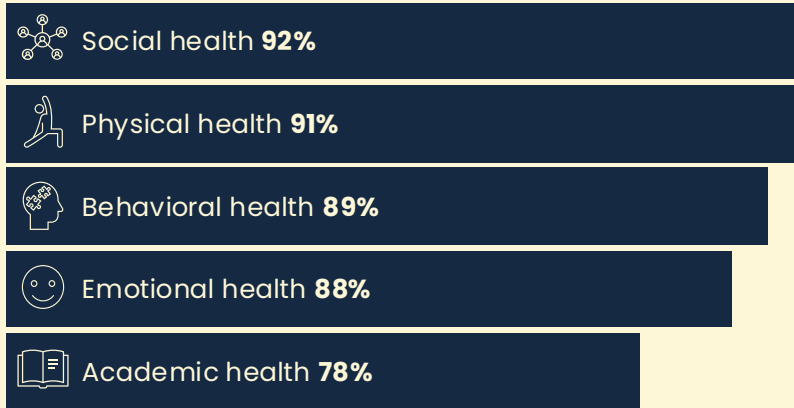
Parents say their child's activities are effective for...
(among parents whose child plays sports)



SIQ1: How effective are your child's extracurricular activities at each of the following? (Top 2= Very/somewhat effective) (n=367 parents of children under the age of 18 who are currently involved in extracurriculars)

Sports remain a cornerstone for fostering both well-being and character development

Parents say their child's activities have a positive impact on...
(among parents whose child plays sports)



SIQ12: What type of impact has participating in extracurricular activities had on each of the following aspects of your child's development? (Top 2 = Very/some what positive impact) (n=367 parents of children under the age of 18 who are currently involved in extracurriculars) | QSIQ16: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (Top 2 = strongly / somewhat agree) (n=498 parents of children under the age of 18)

93%

of parents agree,
"Playing sports
**helps children build
character."**

93%

of parents also agree,
"Playing sports
**teaches children
important life skills."**

Section 4

Thanks, coach!

Trustworthy coaches are critical to developing lifelong values of character and confidence

Parents advocate for trustworthy, well-trained coaches amid shortage

83%

“I wish my child had more access to **trustworthy coaches.**”

82%

“I wish my child had more access to **well-trained coaches.**”

80%

“There is a **shortage** of high caliber coaches today.”

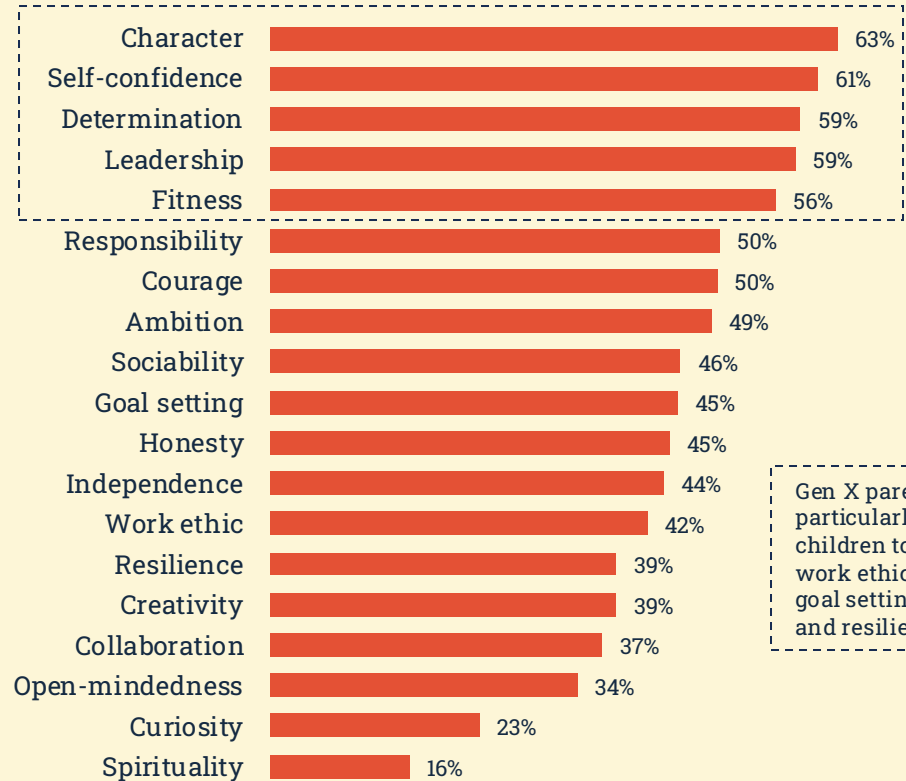
86% Gen X parents

Parents seek coaches who can enhance their child's abilities and instill essential personal values

91%

of parents say, "I believe sports coaching should inspire my child to excel both on and off the field."

Which of the following life skills and personal values, if any, would you like your child to learn from a coach?



Gen X parents, particularly want children to learn work ethic (52%), goal setting (55%), and resilience (46%).

Parents embrace coaches as champions of whole-child growth

“

90%

“Coaches are the **unsung heroes** of youth development.”

90%

“Coaching is crucial in giving my child a well-rounded experience **beyond academics.**”

90%

“I value coaching that goes beyond skill development to focus on the **holistic development** of my child.”

”

Trustworthy coaching spurs parental enthusiasm for enrolling children in more activities

Parents say having a trustworthy sports coach or mentor would increase their likelihood to...

(among parents whose child plays sports)



Commit long-term to the activity **53%**



Recommend the activity to other parents **51%**



Enroll my child in more activities **51%**



Prioritize the activity over other options **36%** 41% Gen X parents



Pay a premium for the activity **28%** 34% Gen X parents

QSIQ20: How important do you see coaching from trained and trustworthy adults for your child, whether it be through extracurricular activities or youth sports, on a scale from 1 to 10 (Top 5=6-10 on a 10-pt. scale) | QSIQ21: Is your child currently under the guidance of a coach, be it through extracurricular activities or youth sports? | QSIQ22: Complete the following sentence. Please select all that apply. Having a trustworthy sports coach or mentor for my child would increase my likelihood to... (n=498 parents of children under the age of 18)

“

91%

of parents see coaching from someone trustworthy and trained **as very important.**

64%

”

of parents already have their child currently enrolled **under the guidance of a coach.**

70% Gen X parents
70% \$100k+ HH income

Parents view coaching as instrumental for teaching collaboration, resilience, and leadership

Parents say their child's coaches could impact...
(among parents whose child is under the guidance of a coach)

95%

Ability to work well with others

90%

Ability to respect others

95% Gen X parents

90%

Ability to be resilient in the face of challenges

97% Gen X parents

88%

Ability to lead at work

94% POC

85%

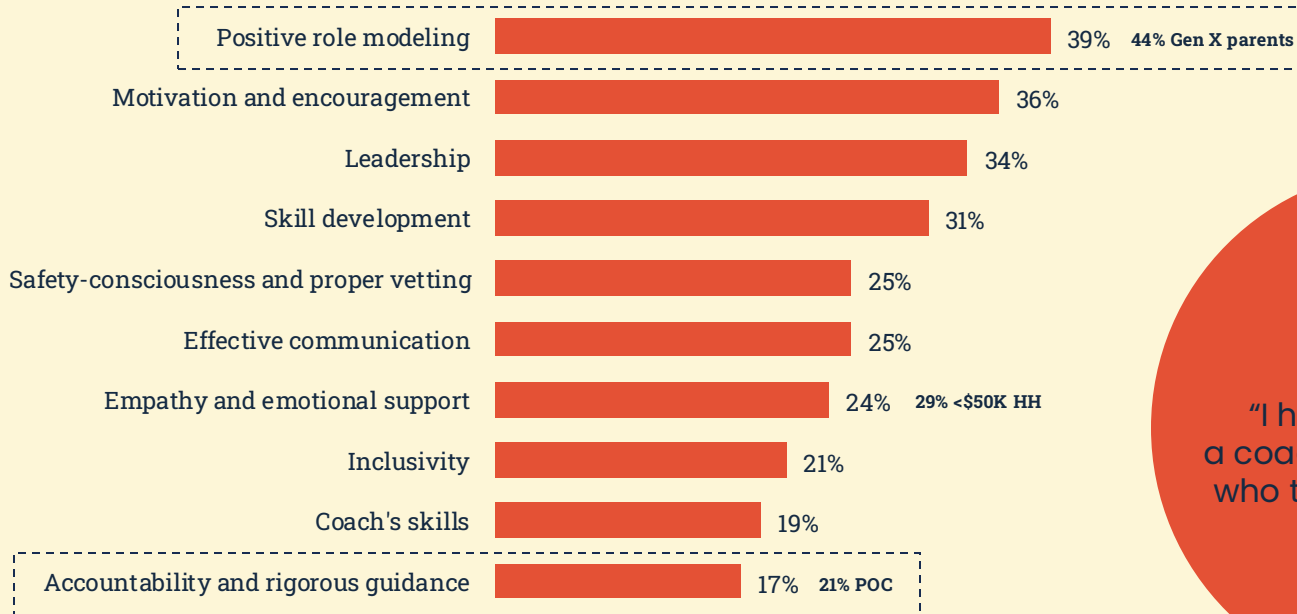
Ability to mentor others

73%

Ability to parent

Parents prioritize coaches that can role model lifelong values over those with rigorous expertise

What qualities or attributes do you prioritize the most when assessing a coach, whether for extracurricular activities or youth sports?



QSIQ24: What qualities or attributes do you prioritize the most when assessing a coach, whether for extracurricular activities or youth sports? Please select up to 3 responses. (n=498 parents whose child is under the age of 18) | QSIQ26: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (Top 2=Strongly/somewhat agree) (n=498 parents whose child is under the age of 18)

“

72%

“I had a coach as a child who I would consider a **role model.**”

77% Millennials, POC

92%

“I hope **my child** has a coach in their childhood who they would consider a **role model.**”

”

Vast majority prioritize background checks and values alignment for coaches

“

94%

“It is important to me
that coaches who
work with my kids are
**background
checked.**”

91%

“As a parent, I would
prefer my child’s
coach to **share the
same values** as I do.”

”

Trained coaches stand out as the unwavering preference among most parents, especially for a consistent coaching approach and teaching children new skills

In your opinion, which type of coach is best qualified to address each of the following?

■ Trained coach ■ No difference ■ Untrained coach



QSIQ28: In your opinion, which type of coach is best qualified to address each of the following? By training, we refer to the completion of comprehensive instructional programs provided either directly by the organization or by reputable non-profits, such as the U.S. Center for SafeSport. This training encompasses a range of topics pertinent to coaching youth, including but not limited to child safety, effective communication skill development, and fostering a positive and inclusive environment. (n=498 parents of children under the age of 18)

Thank you!



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