

## Section 1: Time use

# How do Minnesota youth spend their time?

Topics covered in this section:

**Time use**

**Activity participation**

**Y**outh have approximately 2000 hours of discretionary time at their disposal every year—equivalent to a full time job. This is time that is not filled with school or family obligations and comprises a considerable portion of each day in the life of a young person. The extent to which this time is spent productively depends in large part upon the availability and affordability of programs and activities to which youth have access and in which they choose to participate. It is also related to choices that youth and their parents make given their values and the fit of available programs in their communities.

Data from the 2007 Minnesota Student Survey<sup>5</sup> suggests that the majority of youth participate in some type of organized activity during the school year. However, during the school year, nearly 50% of youth in grades 7-12 watch at least an hour of TV per day and 26% play at least one hour of video games each day. Thirty-three percent of youth spend at least an hour per day on the phone or text messaging and over 30% spend at least an hour per day on-line. Only 27% report spending an hour or more each day on homework and only 10% spend at least one hour per day reading for pleasure.

This section explores how and with whom youth spend this discretionary time and the types of programs and activities in which they participate during the school year and the summer.

## How do youth report using their time during the school year and the summer?

Much of Minnesota 7th thru 12th grade youths' out of school time during the school year is spent with friends or siblings with parents or adults around. During both the school year and the summer, few youth are home alone. While about half of youth spend most of their out of school time in sports or activities during the school year, only about one-quarter spend a large proportion of their time in activities over the summer. In both the summer and the school year, adult supervision is somewhat more common in the urban metro and least common in the suburbs. A majority of youth in families with incomes above \$50,000 participates in activities during the school year but only a minority of youth with lower family incomes does so. Non-white and immigrant youth have lower levels of activity participation than white youth during

the school year but participation rates are much closer during the summer.

### A closer look

**State results:** Most youth have a parent or adult around most of the time (70% during the school year and 64% over the summer). Correspondingly, most were rarely home alone (5% during the school year and 52% over the summer). Frequent involvement in activities drops from 51% in the school year to 28% in the summer. The proportion of youth spending most of their time with friends or siblings increases from 54% in the school year to 63% during the summer.

**Community type:** Across all community types, the majority of youth have a parent or adult around most of the time, with urban youth having the highest level of adult supervision (77%) and suburban youth

having the lowest (63%). Small towns, rural areas, and suburbs have higher percentages of youth involved in activities during the school year with lower percentages in cities in greater Minnesota and the urban metro. Over the summer, fewer youth in all community types are involved in sports and activities and spend more time with peers.

**Family economic status:** Youth reporting they had a parent or adult around is fairly consistent across income levels during the school year. Participation in sports and other activities is highest among youth with family incomes above \$50,000. Compared to the school year, there are considerably fewer youth involved in sports or activities at all income levels during the summer, though the decrease is less dramatic for higher income youth. At all income levels, youth

spend more time with friends and siblings during the summer.

**Race/ethnicity:** Youth of all racial/ethnic backgrounds often have a parent or other adult around. During the summer, white and minority youth are home alone more often than immigrant youth (16% vs. 8%). During the school year, a greater percentage of white youth participate in sports and activities, though participation is fairly equal across race/ethnic groups during the summer. ■

**Few youth grade 7 to 12 spend time alone. More time is spent with friends and in sports or activities during the summer.**

### Question:

In a typical week, how did you spend all or most of your time?

(Survey question for youth)\*

#### During the last school year?

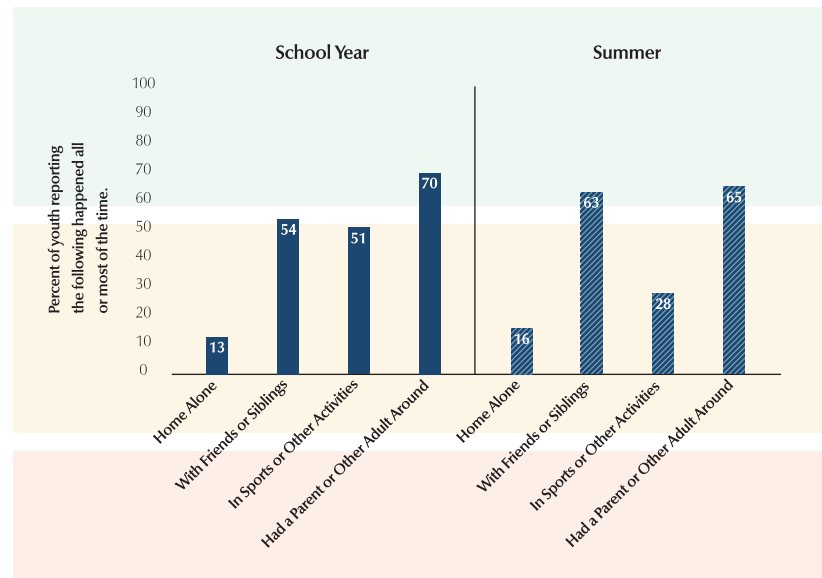
- Home alone
- With friends or siblings
- In sports or activities
- Had a parent or adult around

#### During the last summer?

- Home alone
- With friends or siblings
- In sports or activities
- Had a parent or adult around

\* based on survey questions Y7, Y8, Y17 and Y18

### Minnesota results:



### Minnesota breakdown:

□ School year  
■ Summer

Category	Sub-category	Home alone		With friends or siblings		In sports or activities		Had a parent or adult around	
		School year	Summer	School year	Summer	School year	Summer	School year	Summer
Community Type	Rural	12%	18%	54%	55%	56%	28%	73%	63%
	Small Town	11%	15%	61%	65%	58%	33%	69%	65%
	City in Greater Minnesota	13%	16%	52%	62%	46%	26%	67%	65%
	Suburban Metro	16%	18%	55%	70%	51%	32%	63%	59%
	Urban Metro	11%	10%	52%	66%	44%	25%	77%	67%
Family Economic Status	Less than \$25,000	13%	7%	43%	57%	34%	16%	71%	70%
	\$25,000 to \$50,000	13%	15%	57%	63%	47%	22%	72%	72%
	\$50,000 to \$75,000	14%	20%	56%	61%	53%	33%	68%	58%
	\$75,000 to \$100,000	8%	14%	62%	67%	57%	38%	68%	57%
	\$100,000 or more	11%	15%	51%	65%	56%	29%	70%	65%
Race/Ethnicity	White	12%	16%	54%	64%	53%	29%	70%	63%
	Non-white	12%	16%	65%	56%	43%	29%	69%	70%
	Immigrant	11%	8%	57%	55%	32%	25%	77%	66%

## In what types of activities do Minnesota youth participate?

Most youth in Minnesota (98%) participated in some type of organized activity at some time during the past school year. This means that at some point in a year, virtually all youth are connected to some form of organized activity for at least a short period of time. However, the number of youth constructively participating at any one point in time may be significantly less.

The top five activities in which youth participated are sports, religious instruction or youth groups, volunteering, school extracurricular activities, and art, music, or dance lessons. Youth participation rates in activities are generally comparable across communities. Youth in the lowest income categories are less likely to participate in any of the top five categories than those in higher income families. White youth have higher

participation rates across all activities than either youth of color or immigrant youth.

### A closer look

**State results:** The most common activities listed were sports (70%), religious instruction or youth groups (60%), volunteer work (59%), school-based extracurricular activities (56%), and music, dance, or art lessons (56%). Thirty-five percent of youth have part-time jobs. However, the results above are for youth in grades 7-12; when we limit the results to youth in grades 10-12, 53% had a part-time during the last school year. In the remaining activities, participation rates are around 25%. One in ten youth surveyed participate in the University's 4-H Program.

**Community type:** When looking at participation by community type, sports participation is highest in all

community types. Religious activities were the second most common activity in all communities (61-67%) except the urban metro area, where participation rates reach only 40%. The percent of youth reporting volunteer work was slightly lower than the state average in rural areas and small towns, while youth in the suburban and urban metro area reported volunteering at a higher rate than the state average. Youth in the urban metro area, however, were least likely to participate in music or art programs or extracurricular activities.

**Family economic status:** Youth in the lowest income group participate less frequently than other youth in all activities except volunteering. Participation in sports activities increases steadily with income, from a low of 60% to a high of 86%. Participation in religious activities, school extracurricular activities, and music,

art and dance lessons exceeded state averages for youth with family incomes of at least \$50,000, while participation in these activities was considerably lower for youth with family incomes below \$25,000.

**Race/ethnicity:** Immigrant youth were least likely to participate in any activity during the last school year. Fewer Hispanic or non-white and immigrant youth participated in sports activities, though sports remain the activity in which more youth spent time across all groups. Immigrant and non-white youth are less frequently involved in religious and volunteer activities than their white counterparts. ■

*Most Minnesota youth do participate in some out of school program or organization.*

### Question:

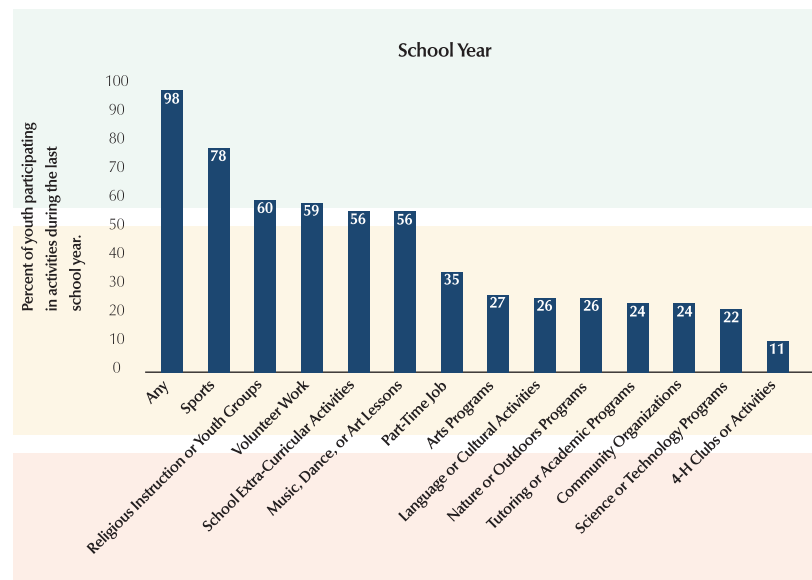
#### What activities did you participate in during the last school year?

(Survey question for youth)\*

- Any
- Sports
- Religious instruction or youth groups
- Volunteer work
- School extra-curricular activities
- Music dance or art lessons
- Part-time job
- Arts programs
- Language or cultural activities
- Nature or outdoors programs
- Tutoring or academic programs
- Community organizations
- Science or technology programs
- 4-H clubs or activities

\* based on survey question Y4

### Minnesota results:



### Minnesota breakdown:

(Top six answers)

		Any	Sports	Religious	Volunteer	Extra-curricular	Music, art, dance
<b>Community Type</b>	Rural	98%	76%	67%	55%	59%	58%
	Small Town	97%	78%	66%	51%	50%	52%
	City in Greater Minnesota	99%	78%	61%	61%	57%	65%
	Suburban Metro	99%	81%	63%	66%	58%	52%
	Urban Metro	96%	78%	40%	65%	54%	48%
<b>Family Economic Status</b>	Less than \$25,000	96%	60%	38%	55%	45%	41%
	\$25,000 to \$50,000	98%	74%	57%	51%	50%	54%
	\$50,000 to \$75,000	97%	82%	64%	61%	60%	61%
	\$75,000 to \$100,000	98%	80%	62%	66%	62%	61%
	\$100,000 or more	100%	86%	70%	65%	61%	61%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	White	98%	80%	64%	61%	57%	59%
	Non-white	98%	67%	43%	53%	55%	54%
	Immigrant	90%	70%	42%	49%	49%	32%