

Section 2: Quality

What is the perceived quality of Minnesota youth programs?

Topics covered in this section:

- Program quality**
- Program characteristics**

The National Research Council convened a fifteen member committee of experts in youth research, policy and practice in 2002 to study the elements of quality in all types of community youth development settings. The Council's approach integrated the current science of adolescent health and development with research findings related to program design, implementation, and evaluation of community programs for youth.⁶ Their work resulted in a list of key features of developmental settings for community youth serving programs:

- Physical and psychological safety
- Appropriate structure
- Supportive relationships
- Opportunities to belong
- Positive social norms
- Support for efficacy and mattering
- Opportunities for skill building
- Integration of family, school and community efforts

Other research shows that youth who participate regularly in high quality programs see significantly more positive outcomes than youth who participate less frequently or in programs of lesser quality.⁷ In fact, poor quality programs may actually harm young people.⁸

This section examines how parents and youth perceive the overall quality of the programs youth participate in as well as the views of young people about critical dimensions of programs.

What is the perceived quality of Minnesota youth programs?

The vast majority of Minnesota parents and youth believe the programs in which youth participate most often are of high quality, slightly higher than parents nationally. About one in four parents feel the programs are mid or poor quality in Minnesota. Income and race affect parent and youth ratings of high quality programs, with non-whites and lower income parents most likely to report youth participation in low quality programs. However, since this is only a rating of the programs youth participate in most often, it may overestimate the average quality of all programs.

A closer look

State results: Three-fourths of Minnesota parents and over 80% of Minnesota youth believe the program in which youth spent the most time during the school

year is of high quality. Only 3% felt programs most often attended were low quality.

Community type: Across all community types, more Minnesota parents typically perceive programs to be of high quality than youth. The largest discrepancies in parent-youth perceptions of program quality are in small towns and suburban metro areas where parent and youth perceptions are separated by nine and twelve percentage points, respectively. Overall, there are no major or systematic differences in perceived program quality by community type.

Family economic status: When compared by family income level, youth in most income levels rate programs as good quality slightly more often than parents. Across all income levels the vast majority of

parents and youth report youth programs as good quality.

Race/ethnicity: More white youth rated their programs as high quality than their parents and non-white or Hispanic and immigrant youth. Generally only small differences exist in either youth or parents ratings of high quality programs across racial categories. ■

Minority and lower income parents report lower quality programs.

Question:

How would you rate the quality of the program that you (youth) or your child (parent) participates in most often?

(Survey question for parents and youth)*

Parents?

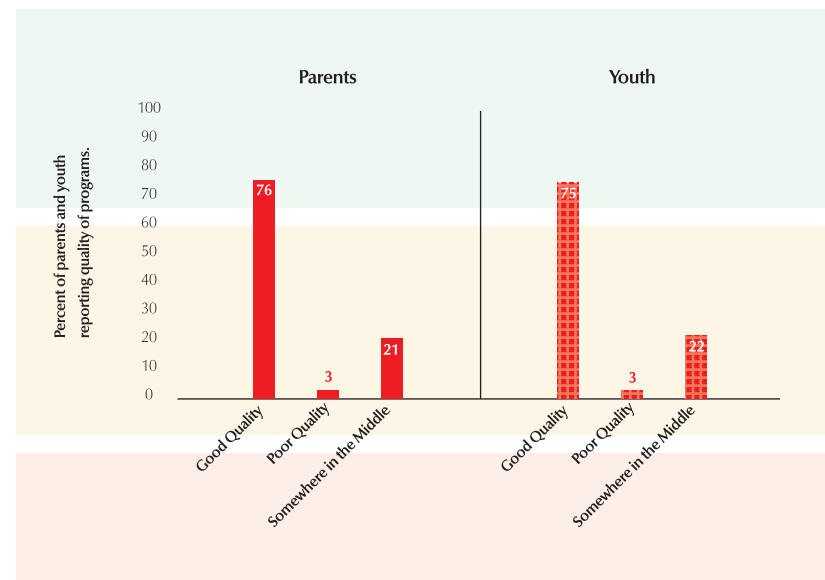
- Good quality
- Poor quality
- Somewhere in the middle

Youth?

- Good quality
- Poor quality
- Somewhere in the middle

* based on survey questions P21 and Y13

Minnesota results:



Minnesota breakdown:

□ Parents
■ Youth

Category	Sub-category	Parents	Quality Rating		
			Good quality	Poor quality	Somewhere in the middle
Community Type	Rural	75%	80%	4%	20%
	Small Town	71%	80%	3%	26%
	City in Greater Minnesota	79%	83%	2%	19%
	Suburban Metro	73%	85%	3%	23%
	Urban Metro	78%	83%	3%	19%
Family Economic Status	Less than \$25,000	77%	73%	2%	21%
	\$25,000 to \$50,000	74%	78%	3%	23%
	\$50,000 to \$75,000	71%	89%	5%	24%
	\$75,000 to \$100,000	74%	79%	4%	22%
	\$100,000 or more	79%	83%	2%	19%
Race/Ethnicity	White	75%	84%	3%	22%
	Non-white	79%	74%	5%	16%
	Immigrant	77%	76%	3%	20%

What qualities do Minnesota youth experience in out of school opportunities?

The vast majority of Minnesota youth report that they enjoy going to activities, that they feel safe and that they are treated with respect at these activities. However, just over half report that they receive individual attention and that the program leaders understand today's youth. Youth with the lowest family incomes are least likely to report that they often have any of these high quality experiences in youth programs. There are smaller and less systematic differences by community type. Hispanic and non-white youth as well as immigrants report less positive feelings across the dimensions studied. In general, youth of various types see the activities in which they participate most often in very positive terms. It appears these youth may have found the activities that make them feel best (e.g.

respected, safe, and fun) and participate in these most often. As a result, findings say less about the general experiences of youth across programs as a whole.

A closer look

State results: In reporting about the activity they participated in most often, the majority of youth reported that they often enjoy going (84%), feel safe (93%), the adults are friendly (88%), and they are treated with respect (91%). Only 56% reported often receiving individual attention and 59% said they often feel adults at the program or activity understand kids.

Community type: While there is some variation between community types, the variation is small and does not reflect a consistent pattern. Somewhat fewer youth in rural and urban communities enjoyed going

to activities than in other communities. Slightly fewer urban youth feel safe at their activities.

Family economic status: Youth from families with the lowest income levels report the lowest percentage of positive feelings about their programs. In fact, only a minority of youth whose families make less than \$25,000 report they receive individual attention or that adults understand the youth in the program. Youth reporting that their adult program leaders understand kids increases as income levels go up.

Race/ethnicity: There were surprisingly few differences between groups in how they perceived the program each youth most attended. All groups, white, Hispanic or non-white, and immigrant, had over 90% of youth report that they often were treated with

respect at the program they attend most frequently. White youth reported 86% of the time they enjoyed going versus 73% for non-white or Hispanic youth and 78% for immigrant youth. ■

Most youth enjoy going to programs and believe they are treated with respect. Having understanding adult leaders and receiving individual attention occurs less frequently.

Question:

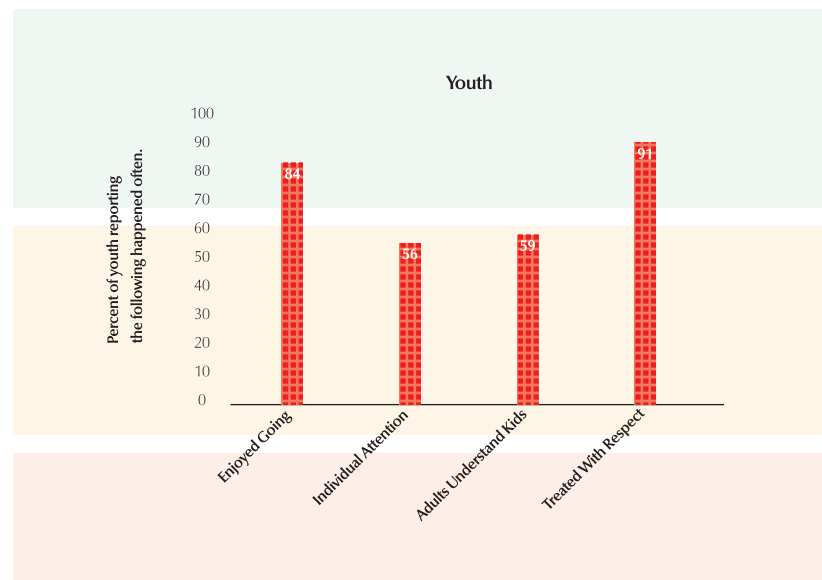
When participating in your favorite activity, did you feel any of the following?

(Survey question for youth)*

- Enjoyed going
- Received individual attention
- Adults understood kids
- Treated with respect

* based on survey question Y12

Minnesota results:



Minnesota breakdown:

		Enjoyed going	Received individual attention	Adults understood kids	Treated with respect
Community Type	Rural	81%	54%	57%	89%
	Small Town	90%	53%	65%	87%
	City in Greater Minnesota	84%	58%	59%	95%
	Suburban Metro	88%	56%	58%	90%
	Urban Metro	81%	59%	60%	93%
Family Economic Status	Less than \$25,000	73%	45%	46%	87%
	\$25,000 to \$50,000	82%	53%	59%	92%
	\$50,000 to \$75,000	86%	59%	60%	90%
	\$75,000 to \$100,000	88%	58%	61%	90%
	\$100,000 or more	88%	59%	65%	94%
Race/Ethnicity	White	86%	56%	59%	91%
	Non-white	73%	60%	60%	91%
	Immigrant	78%	51%	65%	92%