

# FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR AFTER SCHOOL YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAMS: AN OVERVIEW OF FUNDING SOURCES AND THE CURRENT NATIONAL POLICY DEBATE

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This paper reviews federal funding sources and current policy related to sports and recreation for school-age children and youth. It focuses particular attention on the barriers to engaging young people living in lower income urban areas in sports and physical activity. It describes a broad range of federal programs that provide support for after school sports and recreation — including funding sources as diverse as child care and social services, health care, education, juvenile justice, transportation, housing, and environmental protection. The paper notes that despite these extensive resources, there is actually little attention given to this issue in the national debate and only sparse research on the benefits of participating or on promising practices in youth development and sports.<sup>1</sup>

There is a tremendous need for after-school care for children and youth. Far too many families are unable to find safe, quality programs for their children, and are forced instead to turn to makeshift arrangements or leave their children unsupervised. At least 8 million children are left alone each day in the hours after school.<sup>2</sup> For some of these latch-key kids, the hours after school may be dangerous; between the hours of 2 and 8 p.m., children and youth are the most likely to use alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs, and more likely to experiment with sex. All of these risks greatly increase for low-income children in urban communities.<sup>3</sup> For many other children, the afternoon hours are simply wasted; time spent watching television or doing nothing could be used instead to participate in positive activities or to connect with responsible adults. Research indicates that children who attend high quality after-school programs have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, conflict resolution skills, grades, and behavior in school than peers who are not in after-school programs.<sup>4</sup> Students who spend one to four hours per week in

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<sup>1</sup>Just a note on the parameters of this paper: The paper highlights activities available for *both* school-age children and youth. It also treats sports, recreation and physical activity broadly — focusing not only on sports teams and sports-only programs, but also on after school opportunities that include sports or physical activity as an important part of the program.

<sup>2</sup> Miller, B. Update of the National Child Care Survey of 1990 (June 2000) from 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers: Providing Quality Afterschool Learning Opportunities for America s Families, U.S. Department of Education (September 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Fight Crime, Invest in Kids, After School Crime or After School Programs: Tuning In to the Prime Time for Violent Juvenile Crime and Implications for National Policy, A Report to the United States Attorney General (1999).

<sup>4</sup> Team Up for Youth fact sheet: Youth Sports Can Promote Youth and Community Health (citing National Institute on Out-of-School Time fact sheet, Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College, March 2001 (citing Baker and Witt, 1996; Kahne, Nagaoka & Brown, 1999; Posner and Vandell, 1999).)

extracurricular activities are 49% less likely to use drugs and 37% less likely to become teen parents than students who do not participate.<sup>5</sup>

Despite a perception of sports and recreation programs as expendable or even frivolous, sports programs provide an important mechanism to reach large numbers of children and youth and engage them in healthy and positive activities during non-school hours. More children and youth chose to take part in sports programs than in any other after-school activity. An estimated 38 million young people participate in youth sports programs in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Sports programs have the potential to promote physical health as well as healthy childhood and youth development.

Sports programs can help address the growing problems of inactivity and obesity among American children and youth. Today, there are nearly twice as many overweight children and almost three times as many overweight adolescents as there were in 1980.<sup>7</sup> A lack of physical activity has contributed to this sharp rise in obesity. A recent Surgeon General's report warns that physical fitness declines sharply between the ages of 6 and 18; activity among boys decreases by 24% and girls by at least 36%.<sup>8</sup> More than one-third of young people in grades 9-12 do not regularly engage in vigorous physical activity. Furthermore, 43% of students in grades 9-12 watch television more than two hours per day.<sup>9</sup> Girls are even less likely to be physically active. A study of over 800 students in an urban New York City high school found that 45% of girls, as compared to 13% of boys, spent no leisure time on sports.<sup>10</sup>

Sports programs can also promote healthy development. Examples abound of successful sports programs that build character, responsibility and leadership skills, help children and youth improve school performance, and nurture relationships with adult mentors. As Al Hunt wrote in the Wall Street Journal, the Elementary Baseball program [at the Garrison Elementary School in Washington, D.C.] has expanded and flourished this year because of a \$50,000 grant from the Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice. [Those] who love to ridicule feel-good programs — remember the derision two years ago over midnight basketball -- ought to talk to William Motley and Terrence Collier. They are third graders, who only a year ago barely could read, but who

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<sup>5</sup> Team Up for Youth fact sheet: Youth Sports Can Promote Youth and Community Health (citing National Institute on Out-of-School Time fact sheet, Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College, March 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Team Up for Youth fact sheet (citing Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports: A Report to the President from the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education, Fall 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Team Up for Youth fact sheet (citing The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Disease and Decrease Obesity, December 13, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Disease and Decrease Obesity, December 13, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Physical Activity Fundamental to Preventing Disease, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, June 20, 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Girls Inc. fact sheet (citing Fisher, M., Juszaczak, L. & Friedman, S. Sports participation in an urban high school: academic and psychologic correlates. Journal of Adolescent Health, 18(5), 329-334 (1996)).

recently scored over 90% on their standardized tests; their enthusiasm for schoolwork is rivaled only by their ardor for baseball.<sup>11</sup>

Girls particularly benefit from playing sports. Research indicates that two hours a week of exercise can substantially lower a teenage girl's lifetime risk of breast cancer, and adolescent girls who exercise regularly can reduce their risk for obesity, coronary heart disease and osteoporosis.<sup>12</sup> Participation in sports is also linked to an increase in girl's self-esteem, positive body image, self-confidence, and sense of competence, as well as a decreased incidence of depression, pregnancy, and smoking initiation.<sup>13</sup>

Yet children and youth in low-income urban areas, particularly girls and minorities, are less likely to participate in sports and recreation programs after school. In the suburbs, rates of participation in sports programs fall between 80 and 90%, while rates in cities reach only about 10 to 20%.<sup>14</sup> For reasons as varied as insufficient funding, deteriorating facilities and equipment, inadequate transportation, and social or cultural barriers, too many children and youth in low income urban communities do not have the same opportunities as other young people.

## **FEDERAL POLICY AND FUNDING SOURCES FOR AFTER-SCHOOL SPORTS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS**

The federal government currently supports after-school sports and recreation activities through a broad array of federal programs. Some help working families pay for child care, including care for school-age children. Others attempt to prevent delinquency and crime by providing positive alternatives to risky and criminal behavior. Still others are designed to improve health and fitness. This section describes the major federal funding sources for after-school sports and recreation programs and discusses current legislative or executive action related to these programs. Many of these funding sources are not specifically geared toward sports and recreation, but can be and are being used to support these programs -- to promote access for low-income children and youth to sports and recreation opportunities, build infrastructure, provide links to other important services, and improve the quality of programs.

After several years of growing interest in and support for after-school programs in the late 90s, both the Bush Administration and Republicans in Congress have sent a powerful signal in discussions of the FY2003 budget that spending on after-school

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<sup>11</sup> Public/Private Ventures: Rachel Baker, Marc Freedman, Kathryn Furano, Leveling the Playing Field: An Exploration into Youth Sports for the Evelyn and Walter Hass, Jr. Fund, (1998) (citing Albert Hunt, A Much Needed Rally for Children, *The Wall Street Journal*, May 30, 1996).

<sup>12</sup> Public/Private Ventures: Rachel Baker, Marc Freedman, Kathryn Furano, Leveling the Playing Field: An Exploration into Youth Sports for the Evelyn and Walter Hass, Jr. Fund, (1998) citing Dr. Susan Love, speech to Berkeley Women's City Club, July 1996).

<sup>13</sup> Team up for Youth Fact Sheet (citing National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College citing Girls Report, 1998).

<sup>14</sup> Kathryn Edmunson and Beryl Dithmer, Developing Opportunities for Participation in Structured Activities for Children and Youth, field mapping and program development report to The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, November 1997.

programs is in serious jeopardy. Despite tremendous need for after-school care, the Bush Administration passed a substantial tax cut last year and now faces significant budget pressure caused by dramatic increases in defense and domestic security spending since September 11. The Administration has proposed — and Republicans have in large part adopted -- level or reduced funding for the major sources of funding for after school programs, including the Child Care and Development Block Grant, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program, and juvenile justice programs.

#### **A. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDING STREAMS**

**Carol M. White Physical Education Program (PEP).** The Physical Education for Progress Program (PEP) provides grants to local school districts and community-based organizations to start, expand and improve physical education programs for kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Grants range from \$100,000 to \$500,000, and funds can be used to purchase equipment, develop curriculum, hire and/or train physical education staff, and support other initiatives designed to enable children and youth to participate in physical education activities. In FY2001, the first year of the program s operation, the Department of Education awarded \$5 million to 18 local education agencies. The following fiscal year, Congress authorized the Department of Education to expand potential recipients to include community-based organizations, and the Department awarded \$50 million. This year, despite the Bush Administration s efforts to eliminate the program, \$50 million in grants will be distributed, and the program has been renamed for Carol White, Chief of Staff and long-time aide to Senator Stevens (R-AK) (the original champion of the program).<sup>15</sup>

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers.** The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers program is designed to provide opportunities for academic enrichment during non-school hours -- particularly to help low-income students in low-performing schools meet academic standards. The program also offers a broad range of programs and activities, including youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, art, technology and recreation, and funds have been used to support programs with significant sports and recreation components. In the past six years, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program has increased from \$1 million to \$1 billion and, in FY2001, provided funding to approximately 6,600 schools serving 1,600 communities across the states.<sup>16</sup>

The program was reauthorized on January 8, 2002 as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization bill (ESEA), and there are several major differences from the original program. First, until this year, the Department of Education made competitive grants directly to local educational agencies (usually synonymous with school districts) to promote the use of public schools in creating after school opportunities. Beginning this year, 21<sup>st</sup> Century will be a formula grant program to *states*, with funding distributed based on poverty and student population, and states will

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<sup>15</sup> United States Department of Education, [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) (6/22/02).

<sup>16</sup> Telephone conversation with Adriana DeKanter, US Department of Education, 2001. No data are available for FY2002 because states have two years to distribute funding under new provisions in the law.

run competitive grant processes. Second, in the past, only local education agencies could apply for funds and were encouraged but not required to partner with other local government agencies (such as parks departments) and community-based organizations. Now, community-based organizations and other public and private entities can apply directly to states. Current 21<sup>st</sup> Century grantees will continue to be administered by the Department of Education.

This new system is likely to provide a greater opportunity for after-school sports and recreation programs that are not connected to schools to access funding. However, some worry that it will be more difficult to monitor the quality of the programs.

The program was reauthorized at \$1.25 billion for FY2002, rising in stages to \$2.5 billion by FY2007 (meaning that Congress can -- but is not required to -- appropriate this amount of money without changing any legislative authority). The FY2002 appropriation of \$1 billion (the amount Congress actually devoted to the program) did not reach the authorized level, although it did increase funding from \$846 million in the previous year. The Bush Administration's budget for FY2003 proposes to maintain funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program at the FY2002 level of \$1 billion. On March 20, the House approved its FY2003 budget resolution, which closely followed the budget proposed by the President and contained no increases for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program. On March 21, the Senate Budget Committee passed its version of the FY2003 budget resolution, which includes unspecified increases for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program. During the summer and fall, the Congress and the White House will work together to reach final agreement on appropriations for the program.

**Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA).** The Rehabilitation Services Administration, through the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), administers and funds recreational programs for individuals with disabilities. Recreation departments and therapeutic recreation programs are eligible for funding, and the program provides people with disabilities with recreation services that aid in their mobility, socialization, independence, and community integration. President Bush's FY2003 budget proposes to eliminate this program. In addition, the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) will be reauthorized this year. While the 1997 reauthorization and amendments to IDEA required all children and adolescents with disabilities to engage in physical education and allowed recreation services to be funded as related and transition services, advocates argue that far too many children with disabilities do not have adequate opportunities for physical activity.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> National Parks and Recreation Association, [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org).

## **B. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS**

### **1. CHILD CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAMS**

**Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).** One of the major issues facing Congress this year is reauthorization of the 1996 welfare reform law that created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF) and renewed the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). CCDBG is the primary federal grant program to fund child care, including care for school-age children. There is no requirement that a certain portion of the funds be used for school-age care, but there is nothing in the law that prevents after-school sports programs from receiving funds. TANF provides fixed block grants for state-designed programs to give time limited and work-conditioned aid to families with children. Child care is one of many services for which states may use TANF funding, and states may also transfer up to 30% of their TANF allotments to CCDBG. No data are available on the amount of CCDBG or TANF money spent specifically on school-age child care.

**CCDBG.** The CCDBG is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services and provides block grants to states, according to a formula, which are used to subsidize the child care expenses of families with children under 13 and family incomes less than 85% of the state median. (In practice, many states establish income eligibility levels lower than this federal threshold.) Child care services are provided on a sliding fee scale basis, and parents may choose to receive assistance through vouchers or certificates, which can be used to pay a range of child care providers. Currently, about one-third of CCDBG subsidies are used for school-age children, and only one out of seven eligible children receive subsidies.

The CCDBG is funded through both discretionary and capped entitlement grants. In FY2002, a total of \$4.817 billion was appropriated for CCDBG, including \$2.717 billion of entitlement funds appropriated in advance by the welfare reform law, and \$2.1 billion of discretionary funds (a \$100 million decrease from the level of funding provided for the CCDBG in FY2001). The \$2.1 billion does include a \$19 million set-aside for school-age care and child care resource and referral services.

**TANF.** States receive \$16.5 billion annually through FY2002 for TANF. In FY2002, states spent \$2.3 billion of TANF funding on child care and transferred \$2 billion to CCDBG. From FY1997 to FY2000, for all states combined, almost 9% of TANF funds were transferred to CCDBG. Many states have used this funding for after-school programs. For example, South Carolina is using \$8 million to start an after-school program for at-risk middle school students, including academic help, recreation and pregnancy prevention. Los

Angeles allocated \$74 million in unspent TANF funds in fiscal year 2000 to launch the nation's largest after-school child care system.

Both CCDBG and TANF will be reauthorized this year. In February, the Bush Administration released a welfare reform reauthorization document, Working Toward Independence, which proposes to leave funding for both mandatory and discretionary funding for CCDBG and TANF at current levels for FY2003. Bills have been introduced in both the House and the Senate to reauthorize both CCDBG and TANF. Both the House and Senate freeze TANF at \$16.5 billion for the next five years. In the House, the CCDBG reauthorization bill increases mandatory funding to \$2.917 billion in each year from FY2003- 2007 for a total increase of \$1 billion over 5 years above current funding. The authorization level for discretionary CCDBG funding would increase by \$200 million annually for five years, reaching \$3.1 billion in FY2007. The Senate will mark up their version of the reauthorization bill beginning on July 17; currently the bill includes a \$5.5 billion increase in mandatory spending over five years and a \$1 billion increase in discretionary spending for FY2003 (and additional unspecified increases after that). However, the bill that emerges will most likely contain considerably less.<sup>18</sup>

**The Younger Americans Act.** While the Younger Americans Act, currently pending before Congress, would be an important source of support for after school sports and recreation programs, it is unlikely to be enacted this year, given the Congress significant other priorities and the lack of Administration support. The Act was introduced last year by Senators Jeffords (I-VT), Kennedy (D-MA), Cleland (D-GA) and Stevens (R-AK) in the Senate (S.1005) and Members Miller (D-CA) and Roukema (R-NJ) in the House (H.R.17), and it is expected to be reintroduced later this year. It is still very much a priority for advocacy groups working on youth development generally and out-of-school time issues more specifically. The bill would authorize \$5.75 billion over 5 years and articulates for the first time in federal legislation a national youth policy, stating that all youth should have: relationships with caring adults; access to safe places with structured activities; services that promote healthy lifestyles; the opportunity to acquire marketable skills; and the opportunity for community service and civic participation. The bill does not provide funding for after-school programs specifically or mention after-school sports and physical recreation; instead, communities would receive a flexible funding stream that must be used to meet these goals and could be used for after-school programs. However, many of the purposes of the bill are completely consistent with the goals of after-school sports programs.

The bill is not likely to be enacted during this session of Congress. It has been referred to the relevant committees in both the House and the Senate but has not made further progress. The Bush Administration has not supported it. Senator Dodd and Congressman Miller also included this bill as the youth development section of a comprehensive bill on children that they introduced last year called The Act to Leave No Child Behind, but while some sections of that bill have become law, the youth development piece has not been seriously considered. Advocates for the Younger

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<sup>18</sup> Child Care Issues in the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, CRS Report, June 5, 2002; telephone conversation with Grace Reef of Senator Dodd's staff on the Subcommittee on Children and Families (7/11/02).

Americans Act are discussing ways to introduce a smaller and less costly alternative as a more incremental approach to a national youth development policy.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the Administration's lack of support for the Younger Americans Act and Bush's proposals to decrease funding for many children and youth programs, members of the Bush Administration do seem at least receptive to youth development issues. According to advocates, both Wade Horn, the head of the Administration on Children and Families, and Harry Wilson, the head of the Family and Youth Services Bureau, are interested in youth development. In my conversation with Harry Wilson, he stressed that he and Sonya Chesson of the Surgeon General's office are working to expand and improve the National Youth Sports Program, a partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services and the National Collegiate Athletic Association which uses university facilities to provide sports programs and important services -- including free lunches and alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs -- to low-income at-risk youth.<sup>20</sup> In addition, Bob Flores, the recently confirmed Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, supports prevention programs that offer positive alternatives to criminal or dangerous behavior.<sup>21</sup> Finally, the Administration sponsored a National Youth Summit in Washington at the end of June, and sent three Cabinet Secretaries to participate.

## 2. HEALTH AND PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAMS

**Recent White House Focus on Importance of Physical Activity and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS).** Recently, the Bush Administration has raised concern about the decline in physical activity among young people and voiced significant support for measures to encourage participation in sports and other regular physical activity. On June 20, the President held an event at the White House focusing attention on physical fitness and sports. The President issued an Executive Order naming new members to the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS). The PCPFS advises the President and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on ways to encourage and motivate Americans to become physically active and on developing physical fitness and sports programs. The Council gives grants to school systems, government agencies, businesses, recreation and park departments, non-profit organizations, and others to create or improve physical fitness or sports programs. In addition, the President's Council conducts outreach to educate the public on the importance of being physically active and to encourage participation in sports and other physical activity.

The President's Executive Order stated that the PCPFS should: (a) expand national interest in and awareness of the benefits of regular physical activity and active sports participation; (b) stimulate and enhance coordination of programs within and among the private and public sectors that promote participation in, and safe and easy access to, physical activity and sports; and (c) target all Americans, with particular emphasis on children and adolescents, as well as populations or communities in which

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<sup>19</sup> Telephone conversation with Miriam Rollin, Fight Crime, Invest in Kids (7/2/02).

<sup>20</sup> Telephone conversation with Harry Wilson, Family and Youth Bureau, Department of Health and Human Services (7/2/02).

<sup>21</sup> Telephone conversation with Miriam Rollin, Fight Crime, Invest in Kids (7/2/02).

specific risks or disparities in participation in, access to, or knowledge about the benefits of physical activity have been identified.<sup>22</sup> He also issued an order to improve the efficiency and coordination of federal policies related to physical fitness which requires all relevant federal agencies to review their policies and programs, participate in an interagency working group, and devise ways to improve physical fitness among Americans.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Evaluation released a report on June 20 accompanying the President's announcement that details declining health and increasing obesity and disease in this country and lays out the argument for physical fitness.<sup>24</sup>

However, despite the Administration's attention to the issue, actual investment in programs to increase physical activity has not increased. Recent legislation, known as the Child Health Act of 2000, authorized programs to support physical activity and obesity prevention for children, including children with cognitive and physical disabilities, in schools and community-based settings. These programs fall under the jurisdiction of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Administration for Children and Families. The Bush Administration failed to propose any funding for FY2003 for the physical activity programs of the Child Health Act.

**Recent Publications.** Numerous recent publications from the Department of Health and Human Services focus on the importance of physical activity. Healthy People 2010 -- a report published every ten years detailing the health status of the American people and outlining objectives to improve health -- includes physical activity as the first of ten leading health indicators, and states that improving health, fitness and quality of life through daily physical activity should be one of our major objectives over the next ten years.<sup>25</sup> The Centers for Disease Control and the Surgeon General have made physical fitness a priority and recently released papers documenting the decline of physical activity among young people, the importance of reversing this trend, and suggestions about how to accomplish it. The CDC recently published Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports, which suggests strategies for increasing participation in youth sports and recreation programs and outlines some guidance on the quality and standards for programs.<sup>26</sup> CDC also published Promoting Physical Activity: A Guide for Community Action, which aims to promote physical activity in schools, worksites and communities<sup>27</sup>. The CDC recently published a report titled, Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports, which outlines strategies for communities to promote physical activity, including: improving sidewalks and bicycle paths through programs like the CDC's Active

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<sup>22</sup> Executive Order on President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, June 20, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Executive Order on Activities to Promote Physical Fitness, June 20, 2002.

<sup>24</sup> Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, Physical Activity Fundamental to Preventing Disease, June 20, 2002.

<sup>25</sup> Healthy People 2010, Department of Health and Human Services, 2000.

<sup>26</sup> Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports, 2000.

<sup>27</sup> Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Promoting Physical Activity: A Guide for Community Action, 2000.

Community Environments initiative; helping communities start and sustain sports and recreation programs; providing training to coaches and staff on youth development; and enabling more after-school programs to provide regular opportunities for active, physical play.

**Centers for Disease Control (CDC).** There are various programs funded by the Centers for Disease Control that can be used to support after-school sports and recreation programs. They include:

**Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant.** The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant is the primary source of federal funding for states to support prevention activities and advance the objectives of Healthy People 2010, including activities related to the promotion of physical activity. A strong emphasis is placed on adolescents, and while most of the investments fall within more traditional public health activities such as infectious disease control and environmental health, states have used their PHHS block grant dollars for physical activity programs for inner-city children. The proposed funding in the Centers for Disease Control budget for this program for FY2003 is \$135 million, the same level as fiscal years 2002 and 2001.

**Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity.** The Centers for Disease Control: Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity was authorized by the Child Health Act of 2000 to fund state-based programs designed to increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and prevent obesity. In addition, CDC funds a Youth Media Campaign that crafts messages aimed at young people to encourage physical activity and healthy behavior. Finally, CDC's Physical Activity and Nutrition Project for Adolescents (PAN Project) is setting a research agenda for promoting physical activity and nutrition among adolescents.

**National Youth Sports Program.** The National Youth Sports Program (NYSP) is a partnership between the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the Department of Health and Human Services and the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Each year, ACF earmarks \$17 million to fund the NYSP at college and university facilities in 200 empowerment zones across the country. The program allows youth (between 10 and 16 years old) to participate in sports activities during the summer months while also receiving important services, such as free and reduced cost lunch, health screenings, educational programs, and alcohol and drug abuse prevention. As noted above, Harry Wilson, who runs the Family and Youth Bureau within HHS and who is responsible for this program, is working with Sonya Chessen of the Surgeon General's office to expand this program and to develop links between health and youth development programs throughout HHS.

**Health Promotion and Prevention Grants.** Other agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services — including the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Health Resources and Services Administration — support research and demonstration grants that provide preventive services relating to the overall health of children and youth, including

substance abuse prevention and health education activities that may be part of after-school sports and physical activity programs.

### C. JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAMS

There are several sources of juvenile justice funding at the federal level that are theoretically available to support after-school sports programs. However, juvenile justice funding has not actually provided much support for after-school programs. Funding is generally geared toward research, demonstration and evaluation of crime prevention strategies (rather than direct services) and is focused in large part on treating problems like substance abuse and juvenile crime that have already developed (rather than engaging youth in positive activities before problems start). Also, the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) — the major source of juvenile justice funding -- has focused much of its prevention work on helping communities plan and coordinate existing resources to develop comprehensive approaches to prevent juvenile crime, rather than on providing funding directly to prevention programs.

This traditional limitation is due in large part to the fact that funds flowing to after-school and other youth development programs reach youth who have not yet and may never commit a crime. In a world of shrinking resources, many juvenile justice programs are hard pressed to meet even the current demands to care for actual offenders and are reluctant to spend on problems that may never develop. While one astounding statistic from Fight Crime, Invest in Kids estimates that for each high-risk youth prevented from adopting a life of crime, the country saves between \$1.7 and \$2.3 million,<sup>28</sup> this analysis has not yet convinced many policy makers of the benefit of investing significant dollars in prevention.<sup>29</sup>

Two programs described below — the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) and a yearly earmark for Boys and Girls Clubs — have provided the most direct funding for after-school activities. In addition, the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative and the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Program also provide direct funding for after-school activities, although these have not been significant sources of support.

**Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP).** JUMP provides both block grants to states and discretionary grants to local education agencies and community-based organizations to reduce juvenile delinquency and gang participation through mentoring programs. Mentors are expected to provide the youth involved in the program with academic support, a supportive relationship, and exposure to new experiences. These funds are often administered through after-school programs, and many of them have a sports component. Almost \$16 million was appropriated for JUMP in FY2002 — the

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<sup>28</sup> Sanford Newman, James Fox, Edward Flynn and William Christeson, America's After-School Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime or Youth Enrichment and Achievement, p.25, 2000.

<sup>29</sup> Tony Proscio, Before It's Too Late: How one juvenile justice system saves lives and money by fighting crimes that haven't happened yet, December 2001.

same amount as FY2001 and the same amount that President Bush has requested in his FY2003 budget. Since 1994, OJJDP has funded 203 JUMP sites in 47 states and 2 territories, serving more than 14,000 at-risk young people. In addition, through a Congressional earmark, OJJDP provides funds annually to the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America organization, which supports hundreds of local mentoring programs across the country.

**The Boys and Girls Clubs of America Program.** The Boys and Girls Clubs, one of the nation's largest sponsors of after-school programs, provide a range of services, including a significant number of sports and recreation programs. Last year, the Boys and Girls Club grant was reauthorized for five years and is now part of the Juvenile Assistance Grant Program, which replaced the Local Law Enforcement Grant Program. In FY2002, the Boys and Girls Clubs received a \$70 million earmark (an increase from \$60 million in FY2001). This year, the Bush Administration has requested \$60 million (after being severely chastised in the press for requesting nothing in FY2001) and, while Congress has not yet acted, this year the program is expected to receive at least \$70 million.<sup>30</sup>

**Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative.** This program is part of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program which was reauthorized last year. Under the reauthorization, grants may go only to local education agencies — a change from previous years when funds could go to communities as well — but the mission of the program remains to help schools and communities implement comprehensive community-wide strategies for creating safe and drug-free schools and promoting healthy childhood development. The Departments of Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services jointly fund approximately 50 three-year grants — up to \$3 million per year to urban school districts, \$2 million for suburban school districts, and \$1 million for rural and tribal districts. Local education agencies which receive funds must then develop a plan together with the local public mental health authority, the local law enforcement agency, family members, students, and juvenile justice officials. This comprehensive plan must address six general topics: school safety; drug and violence prevention and early intervention programs; school and community mental health prevention and intervention services; early childhood psychosocial and emotional development programs; education reform; and safe school policies. Permissible activities include after-school programs, mentoring, conflict resolution, and early childhood education programs, and there is nothing to prevent communities from including sports or recreation programs as part of their strategy if they otherwise meet the initiative's requirements.

In FY2002, \$48.7 million is available for new grants, and the Administration expects to make grants to approximately 40 programs.<sup>31</sup> For FY2003, the Bush Administration has requested no appropriation, but the program will most likely be funded somewhere around current levels.

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<sup>30</sup> Telephone conversation with Ed Pagano, Judiciary Committee staff of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) (7/1/02).

<sup>31</sup> Department of Education, [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov).

#### **D. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FUNDING**

The Department of Agriculture administers three programs which can be used to provide food to children in after-school programs. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) pays for meals and snacks served in child care centers, family child care homes and after-school programs. The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provides snacks for eligible students in after school programs held in schools. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free meals and snacks to low-income children during school vacations. While the main purpose of CACFP is to serve food to preschoolers in child care and the main purpose of NSLP is to serve school lunches, in recent years, both programs have become a significant source of snacks in after-school programs. The number of children served snacks in after-school programs increased dramatically — from about 280,000 children each day in the 1998-99 school year to about 860,000 each day in 2000-01 — due to changes in the CACFP and the School Lunch program.<sup>32</sup> The main limitation on using these funds for after-school sports programs is that a program must not be a competitive sports league that selects children based on athletic ability. Children who participate in the National Youth Sports Program discussed above are automatically eligible for the Summer Food Service Program.

The CACFP, NSLP, and SFSP are entitlement programs (i.e. all who are individually eligible or in eligible programs are served). Under CACFP, children qualify to receive snacks in after-school programs if they are 18 or under and live in areas where there are significant numbers of low and moderate income families (so-called area eligibility which requires that more than half the children in the school come from families with incomes less than 185 percent of poverty). CACFP also pays for suppers in after-school programs for low-income children under 12 if they meet more stringent individual eligibility criteria. (However, under a pilot program currently underway in seven states (including large states like New York and Michigan), CACFP can be used to serve suppers to low-income children 18 and under on an area eligibility basis, as they do with snacks.) In FY2001, federal funding for CACFP was \$1.689 billion, enabling 2.7 million children a day to be fed through the program (although the majority of this funding is for children in day care, rather than after-school programs). Children qualify for the National School Lunch program snacks on the same area eligibility basis as the CACFP. For FY2001, federal funding was \$6.5 billion, and during the 2000-2001 school year, 27.4 million children participated in the NSLP. On a typical school day, 15.6 million of these 27.4 million total participants received free or reduced price lunches. Finally, the Summer Food Service Program provides free meals to children in low-income areas or in programs made up of predominately low-income children. Federal funding was \$271 million for FY2000, with about 2 million children served on a typical day in July.

These programs can be valuable sources of funding for after-school programs. According to the Food Research and Action Center, the average grant under the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers Program is \$625 per child. If an after-school program serves

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<sup>32</sup> Telephone conversation with Jim Weill, Executive Director, Food Research and Action Center (6/27/02).

snacks to children eligible for federal food assistance for 180 days, the program receives about \$102 per child. If the program serves snacks and suppers for 180 days, the program receives about \$506 per child. And if a program serves snacks and suppers for 180 days and two meals a day for eight weeks through the Summer Food Program, that program receives about \$664 per child — which is actually more than the program receives from 21<sup>st</sup> Century.<sup>33</sup>

After-school sports programs can also receive support from the Department of Agriculture through the Cooperative Extension Service. The Cooperative Extension Service sponsors 4-H clubs which offer a variety of enrichment and recreational programs. The 4-H clubs were traditionally found only in rural areas, but now can be found in urban areas. The Cooperative Extension Service also supports the Children, Youth and Families At-Risk Initiative, which provides support and services to at-risk families in areas served by a participating Extension Service office.<sup>34</sup>

## **E. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)**

### **The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement**

**Communities Program.** The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provides eligible cities and urban counties (called entitlement communities) with annual direct grants that they can use to revitalize neighborhoods, expand affordable housing and economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services, principally to benefit low- and moderate-income people. Almost 1,000 of the largest cities receive this federal assistance. The program specifically allows funds to be used for building recreational facilities and community centers, reconstructing or rehabilitating playgrounds, and providing public services for youths.<sup>35</sup> For example, CDBG funds have been used in conjunction with local parks and recreation funding in Los Angeles to fund recreation programs.<sup>36</sup>

**Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (PHDEP).** The Public Housing Drug Elimination Program grant (PHDEP, usually pronounced "FEE-dep") is a formula grant program that provides funds to local housing agencies to reduce or eliminate drug-related crime in and around their public housing communities. It is best known as the source of funds for midnight basketball — programs designed to reduce crime and drug use in public housing by providing youth with positive alternative activities. Midnight basketball has been a lightning rod in the debate over strategies for crime prevention; supporters argue that providing positive activities will reduce youth crime, while opponents see these programs as a waste of valuable and scarce dollars better spent on

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<sup>33</sup> Telephone conversation with Jim Weill (7/8/02).

<sup>34</sup> Telephone conversation with Greg Crosby, Department of Agriculture (7/10/02); Nancy Reder, The Finance Project, Finding Funding: A Guide to Federal Sources for Out-of-School Time and Community School Initiatives, 2000.

<sup>35</sup> Program Description, Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Communities, [www.hud.gov/progdesc/cdbgent.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/progdesc/cdbgent.cfm).

<sup>36</sup> National Parks and Recreation Association, [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org).

more traditional get tough on crime measures.<sup>37</sup> PHDEP was originally administered by HUD's Office of Community Safety and Conservation, in the Office of Public and Indian Housing. In FY2002, President Bush and the House Republicans attempted to eliminate PHDEP. Instead, PHDEP merged with the Public Housing Operation Fund, which received a small funding increase to cover some of the funds previously provided for PHDEP.

#### **F. INTERIOR DEPARTMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, AND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FUNDING**

A number of barriers limit participation in sports and recreation programs; advocates and experts note most often that facilities in urban areas are often inadequate or even dangerous, and that youth have no access to transportation to get to and from after-school programs (particularly those located in dangerous neighborhoods). Several departments offer funding streams that can be pieced together to address these barriers.

**The Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program.** Under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a portion of revenues generated from the depletion of the Outer Continental shelf's oil and gas must be invested in recreation and conservation initiatives. The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) provides matching grants and technical assistance to cities to revitalize park and recreation facilities, providing inner city youth and adults with recreation opportunities. These modest federal investments typically leverage much more from local and state agencies and private entities. From 1965 to 1995, a federal investment of \$3.2 billion in LWCF state assistance grants generated a total of \$6.8 billion to restore, acquire and develop over 37,500 state, regional and local park and recreation sites. Fifty-four percent of those funds were allocated to areas where recreation facilities were deficient.<sup>38</sup> UPARR projects have rehabilitated 290 public playgrounds, 240 recreation centers, 420 urban parks, 200 ball fields, 270 tennis and basketball courts, 170 swimming pools and 140 picnic areas — providing recreation and physical activity for many underserved populations, including older adults, youth in high-risk environments, people with physical disabilities, and residents of public housing.

**The Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative.** President Bush signed legislation reauthorizing The Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative (Brownfields) in January 2002 and proposed to double funding for the program from \$98 million to \$200 million for FY2003. The legislation provides state and local governments with \$150 million annually from fiscal year 2002 to 2006 to assess brownfield sites, and \$50 million in grants for state cleanups. Brownfield sites are defined as abandoned factories or industrial facilities that may contain contaminated substances. These sites can be safely cleaned by removing or storing any contaminants, and redeveloped for use as parks, playing fields or green spaces. Since its inception, Brownfields has contributed over \$280 million in pilots and grants to spur assessment, cleanup and redevelopment at brownfield sites. On May 20, EPA Administrator Christie

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<sup>37</sup> OJJDP also funds midnight basketball programs under the Part C — Special Emphasis funding stream.

<sup>38</sup> E-mail from Jessica Wolin, Director, Community Sports Organizing Project, Team Up for Youth (6/28/02).

Whitman announced \$14.6 million in Brownfields grants to assess the contamination of abandoned properties in 80 communities around the nation.

**Department of Transportation Funding.** Funding from the Department of Transportation can be used in two important ways: first, to transport children and youth to and from programs; and second, to improve the roads, trails and other facilities used for recreation.

**Federal Transit Administration.** Most of the federal programs supporting local transportation authorities do not provide funds specifically for after-school or community programs. However, many of these programs have broad goals, such as increasing public transportation ridership, that could easily include transporting children and youth to and from after-school programs. For example, the Transit Major Capital Grant Program supplies competitive grants to states to fund transportation-related capital expenditures, such as purchasing buses, vans and facilities. This grant can be used to help purchase vehicles for transporting children and youth to after-school programs. Urbanized and Non-Urbanized Area Formula Transit Grants provide federal funds to state and local governments to finance the planning and capital costs of transportation and may be used for after school programs in urban and rural areas. Job Access and Reserve Commute Grants, which primarily support transportation to and from jobs and training programs, can also be used to purchase vehicles for transporting children and youth to after-school programs.<sup>39</sup>

**Federal Highway Administration.** Most of the federal funding under the Highway Planning and Construction Program can only be used for highway construction and rehabilitation projects. However, one piece, the Surface Transportation Program, may be used for public transportation related capital projects, including purchasing vehicles or equipment for after-school programs.<sup>40</sup>

#### **Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21).**

Transportation funds can also be used to improve facilities and to ensure safety for pedestrians and bicycles, and these funds play an important role in supporting physical activity and recreation. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) includes transportation enhancements to improve the aesthetic and environmental aspects of the nation's transportation system. TEA-21 contains specific provisions to improve facilities and safety for bicycles and pedestrians, and requires consideration of the needs of cyclists and pedestrians in the planning and construction of the transportation system. Similarly, the Recreational Trails Program and the National Scenic Byways Program provide funds to improve and maintain recreational trails and roads with some historic, natural or recreational significance. The Transportation and Community and System Preservation Pilot gives grants to states, local governments and

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<sup>39</sup> Nancy Reder, The Finance Project, Finding Funding: A Guide to Federal Sources for Out-of-School Time and Community School Initiatives, 2000.

<sup>40</sup> Nancy Reder, The Finance Project, Finding Funding: A Guide to Federal Sources for Out-of-School Time and Community School Initiatives, 2000.

metropolitan planning organizations to take a comprehensive approach to planning transportation systems — which allows communities to look at the environmental impact of transportation and to ensure access to jobs and services. Finally, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, continued in TEA-21, provides funding to state and local governments to ensure that transportation projects meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act, and again eligible activities include improvements in pedestrian and bicycle facilities.<sup>41</sup>

## **STATE TOBACCO SETTLEMENT FUNDS: A POTENTIAL NON-FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCE**

While a strong argument could be made to use tobacco settlement funds on after school youth sports as part of a broader tobacco prevention program, it is unlikely that tobacco settlement funds will be available for youth sports in any significant way. In 1998, the attorneys general of 46 states reached an historic agreement with the tobacco industry to settle pending and prospective lawsuits by states to recover Medicaid expenditures incurred as a result of tobacco use. Four states had previously reached individual settlement agreements. The agreements require tobacco companies to pay \$246 billion to states over the next 25 years. There are no restrictions on the use of this money, and states have not fully decided how to allocate these revenues. Since the settlement, there has been significant debate about how the money should be spent. Anti-smoking advocates argue that a substantial portion of these funds should be used for prevention and tobacco cessation programs, particularly for children and youth. Health care and children s advocates argue that funds can also appropriately be used for other programs for children and youth — like health care services or even child care.

The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids tracks the percentage that each state spends on the Centers for Disease Control s minimum recommendations for controlling tobacco use. The CDC minimum recommendations provide a fairly narrow list of cessation and prevention activities and would not include youth sports programs.<sup>42</sup> A recent report by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Association and the American Lung Association, entitled *Show Us the Money: An Update on the States Allocation of the Tobacco Settlement Dollars*, shows that states are failing to use a significant portion of their settlement proceeds to fund tobacco prevention programs, and some states are using these funds to meet budget shortfalls. The report found that only five states currently fund tobacco prevention programs at the minimum levels recommended by the CDC, and the majority fund tobacco prevention at less than half the CDC minimum.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> All information on TEA-21 programs provided through e-mail by Jessica Wolin, Director, Community Sports Organizing Project, Team Up for Youth (6/28/02).

<sup>42</sup> Telephone conversation with Bill Corr, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (7/8/02).

<sup>43</sup> The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Association and the American Lung Association, Show Us the Money: An Update on the States Allocation of the Tobacco Settlement Dollars, January 15, 2002.

The National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) tracks state spending of tobacco settlement money in categories, including health, education, and children and youth programs. The children and youth category includes spending for after-school and preschool programs, though NSCL does not know what percentage of those funds were spent specifically on after-school.<sup>44</sup> According to a 2001 report by NCSL, 3.2% or \$685 million of the tobacco settlement revenue was spent by 9 states between FY1999-2001 on children/youth programs.<sup>45</sup>

On the federal level, the CDC has started a Sports Initiative to use sports and recreation activities and sports stars to teach young people about dangers of tobacco use. This effort is supported by the World Health Organization, National Cancer Institute, National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, National SAFE KIDS Campaign, International Olympic Committee, Federation Internationale de Football Association, and many other sports leagues and youth organization.<sup>46</sup>

## CONCLUSION

A broad range of federal resources can be and are being used to support after-school sports and recreation programs. Various funding sources are often pieced together in creative ways and combined with state, local and private sources to supply sufficient ongoing support for individual programs. However, most large federal funding sources for after-school are not geared toward sports and recreation programs; for example, while the 21st Century program funds sports-related programs, it focuses primarily on academic enrichment.

As a result, youth sports programs are not a central part of the public policy debate on child care, crime prevention or even after-school opportunities. Despite the tremendous numbers of children and youth who choose to participate and whose lives are affected by their experiences — both good and bad — in sports and recreation programs, there is remarkably little attention to the issue in the national policy debate. This could have important consequences. Sports and recreation programs tend to look less serious than youth development strategies like drug or violence prevention programs, or than after-school education programs offering tutoring or enrichment. As investment in after-school programs remains level or decreases as pressure on the federal budget grows, there is an increasing risk that sports and recreation programs will seem dispensable.

And while experience indicates that there are real benefits for children and youth who participate in sports and recreation, there is surprisingly little research to support this. In an extensive review of the literature for the Carnegie Corporation, Martha Ewing and Vern Seefeldt at the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports at Michigan State University found a conspicuous deficiency of reliable information on program

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<sup>44</sup> Telephone conversation with Lee Dixon, National Council of State Legislatures (7/8/02).

<sup>45</sup> National Council of State Legislatures, State Management & Allocation of State Tobacco Revenue, August 2001.

<sup>46</sup> Centers for Disease Control Sports Initiative Overview, [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sport\\_initiatives](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/sport_initiatives).

outcomes. They noted that evidence is particularly lacking on the effectiveness of sports programs in meeting the needs of adolescents at risk.<sup>47</sup>

There are clear leaders in the field who have done important research. Ewing, Seefeldt and others at the Institute for the Study of Youth Sports have written about the rewards and dangers of participation in youth sports. The Skillman Foundation in Detroit, one of the pioneers in the effort to look at sports and recreation, published Re-Creating Recreation, which revealed that staggering numbers of urban youth were not involved in recreational after-school activities. The report described the range of available programs in Detroit and the barriers to participation. A second Skillman study further detailed what was available to youth in the after-school hours and again outlined obstacles to accessing programs.<sup>48</sup> In 1996, the Carnegie Foundation convened a meeting and issued a report, titled The Role of Sports in Youth Development, which eloquently described the important role that sports and recreation can play in shaping youth on the path to adulthood. The Carnegie Foundation, well-known in the field of child and youth development, had published Great Transitions: Preparing Adolescents for a New Century, discussing what adolescents need to become healthy, constructive adults.<sup>49</sup> In The Role of Sports in Youth Development, Carnegie began to look at the power of sports and sports organizations to shape young people and outlined the elements of a sports program that would foster healthy youth development. The report urged increased investment in youth sports and provided at least some guidance on how to develop and improve youth sports programs. Finally, Rachel Baker, Marc Freedman, and Kathryn Furano (through Public/Private Ventures) wrote Leveling the Playing Field: An Exploration into Youth Sports for the Evelyn and Walter Hass, Jr. Fund, an extremely valuable and comprehensive analysis of after-school sports programs for children and youth, particularly in low-income urban areas.<sup>50</sup>

These reports, written in the mid- to late 1990s, remain the most important research in this area. Many advocates note that there remains no consensus in the field on standards for sports programs and little workable advice on how to overcome the barriers to participation. While numerous organizations operate successful sports programs for low-income urban youth (like America Scores, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Police Athletic Leagues), currently, Team-Up for Youth -- an advocacy and public policy organization in California -- is almost unique in its focus on developing and implementing practices in sports programs that promote effective youth development. They are also the leader in improving quality, increasing capacity, and creating community support for out-of-school youth sports.

Even among experts on youth development, only a handful make the argument for youth sports or know much about available sports initiatives. This is surprising given the

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<sup>47</sup> Public/Private Ventures: Rachel Baker, Marc Freedman, Kathryn Furano, Leveling the Playing Field: An Exploration into Youth Sports for the Evelyn and Walter Hass, Jr (1998).

<sup>48</sup> Re-Creating Recreation, Skillman Foundation, originally published in 1992, updated in 1995.

<sup>49</sup> Great Transitions: Preparing Adolescents for a New Century, Carnegie Council of Adolescent Development (1995).

<sup>50</sup> Public/Private Ventures: Rachel Baker, Marc Freedman, Kathryn Furano, Leveling the Playing Field: An Exploration into Youth Sports for the Evelyn and Walter Hass, Jr. Fund (1998).

significant opportunities to enhance healthy development through sports programs — by improving physical health, developing positive relationships with adults, and building character, a sense of responsibility, and a feeling of belonging to a community. Similarly, while health experts have made the obvious connection between the lack of physical activity among children and youth and dramatic increases in childhood obesity, this has not yet translated to a sustained argument for youth sports and recreation. An important opportunity therefore remains to make the links between sports and youth development and between sports and health. While Americans spend an enormous amount of time watching, playing and talking about sports and their children spend more time participating in sports than any other activity after school, the potential of sports to improve health and development for children and youth in the inner city has been largely overlooked for too long.