

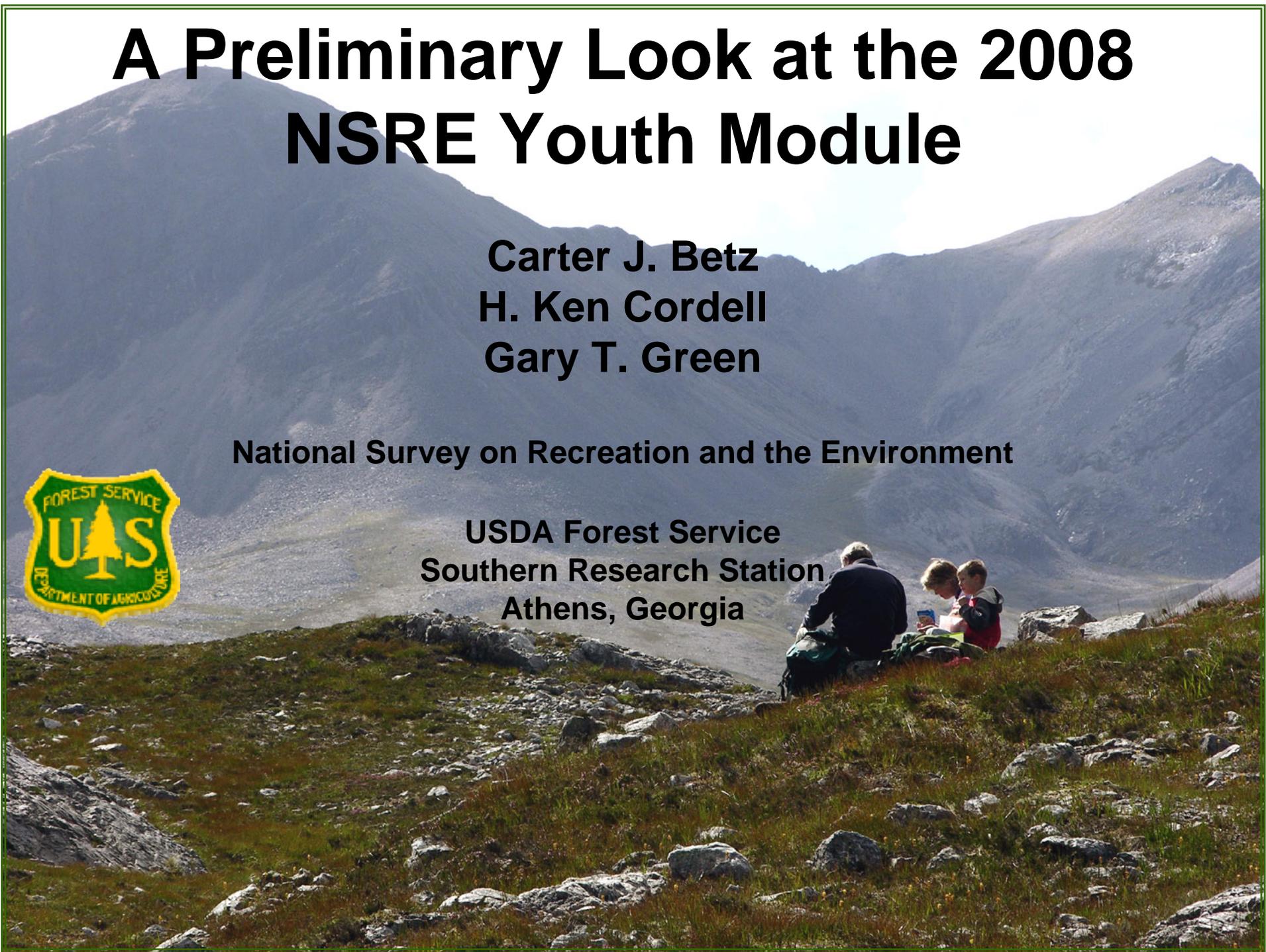
# **A Preliminary Look at the 2008 NSRE Youth Module**

**Carter J. Betz  
H. Ken Cordell  
Gary T. Green**

**National Survey on Recreation and the Environment**



**USDA Forest Service  
Southern Research Station  
Athens, Georgia**



AKA.....

*National Kids Survey*



# America's Youth and Outdoor Recreation

- Declining?
  - Increasing concern, especially since Louv (2005)
  - 'connection' to nature and the outdoors
  - Link to public health → mental health, obesity
  - Pergams/Zaradic (2008): videophilia
- What do we know?
  - 3 private and 2 public national surveys
  - Discerning trends not easy
  - different methodologies, questionnaire content/wording, etc.
- More in-depth empirical evidence needed

*National Kids Survey*



# Louv: Flawed Premise?

- Makes compelling case for youth connection with nature/outdoors, but says:

‘Time in nature is not leisure time; it’s an essential investment in our children’s health.’ (p. 120)

“.....most parents have an acutely tuned sense of responsibility—to the point where they consider relaxation and leisure, for themselves or their children, a self-indulgent luxury.”

- Seems to contradict AAP (2006): [Unstructured] play is essential to cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth

# Research Question

- Outdoor recreation is a primary indicator of youth's connection to nature
- Is there indeed a decline in youth OR?
- If so, does this reflect:
  - a) Lack of interest or desire re: nature/outdoors  
or
  - b) Other factors involved such as those which inhibit play



# Inhibitors of Play (indoors and out)

- working parents (lack of supervision)
- parents' over-managing children's time
- overscheduling (enrichment, arts, athletics → parents' desire for 'super-achieving' children)
- overemphasis on academic achievement (school/college preparedness)
- fear/safety/environment
- videophilia

(Ginsburg et al. 2006)

# National recreation surveys

- Private-sector
  - Outdoor Industry Foundation (2007)
  - National Sporting Goods Association (2007)
  - Sporting Goods Manufacturers Assoc. (2004)
- Public-sector
  - U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (2006)
  - NSRE youth module (2007-present)

# National survey results

- OIF
  - 2008 report (just released): Participation for youth age 6-17 dropped 11% since 2006, even more for age 6-12
  - ‘...outdoor activities start to lose appeal to females in their teen years and males in young adulthood’
  - youth tend to migrate from outdoor activities and team sports to indoor fitness as they age

# National survey results (continued)

- NSGA
  - 1998 to 2007: all 5 nature-based activities they track declined for 12-17 year olds; 4 of 5 for 7-11 year olds
- SGMA
  - No trend data
  - For 6-17 year olds: “it’s all about team and extreme” based on frequent participation

# National survey results (continued)

- USFWS

Age 6-15 from 1995 to 2006:

Fishing -18%

Hunting +3%

Wildlife watching -22%

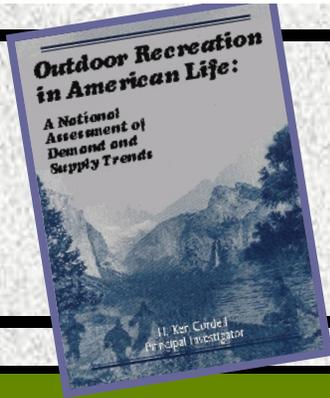
All sportspersons -18%

- NSRE

*National Kids Survey*

# National survey conclusions

- Difficult → different survey objectives, methods, content; trend data limited
- Findings do appear to support notion of declining youth interest/participation in OR
  - Decrease in selected activities (NSGA, USFWS)
  - Shift to indoor activities (OIF); popularity of team sports (SGMA)



# NSRE



- General population telephone survey
- Since 1999, sample > 90,000+ households
- 8<sup>th</sup> in ongoing series, started 1960
- Includes non-institutionalized individuals age 16 and older
- 'core' : activity participation & demographics; plus other modules

*National Kids Survey*

began Sept. 2007; age  
16-19 (self), ages 6-15  
(parent/surrogate); n=905

## *National Kids Survey*

Amount of time spent outdoors by youth on a typical day during the past week, by type of day

<b>Amount of time</b>	<b>Weekday (%)</b>	<b>Weekend day (%)</b>
None	2.7	4.4
Less than 1/2 hour a day	4.3	2.1
About 1/2 hour a day	8.2	3.0
About 1 hour	20.0	11.3
2-3 hours	32.8	26.8
4 or more hours	31.9	52.4

About 65% spent 2 or more hours outside on weekdays, 79% on weekends

## *National Kids Survey*

Amount of time spent outdoors by youth on a typical weekday during the past week, by age and gender

Percent (sums down to 100)

Amount of time	Age 6-9		Age 10-12		Age 13-15		Age 16-19	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Less than 1/2 hour	6.6	7.7	6.9	7.4	3.0	7.4	8.5	7.9
1/2 hour to 1 hour	29.6	40.0	21.1	35.2	23.6	21.4	19.7	32.9
2-3 hours	36.5	34.9	25.3	34.8	31.9	37.3	28.0	33.7
4 or more hours	27.3	17.3	46.7	22.6	41.5	33.9	43.8	25.5

Chi-square=67.8, p<.001.

Males of all ages more likely to spend 4+ hours outdoors on weekdays

## *National Kids Survey*

Amount of time spent outdoors by youth on a typical weekend day during the past week, by age and gender

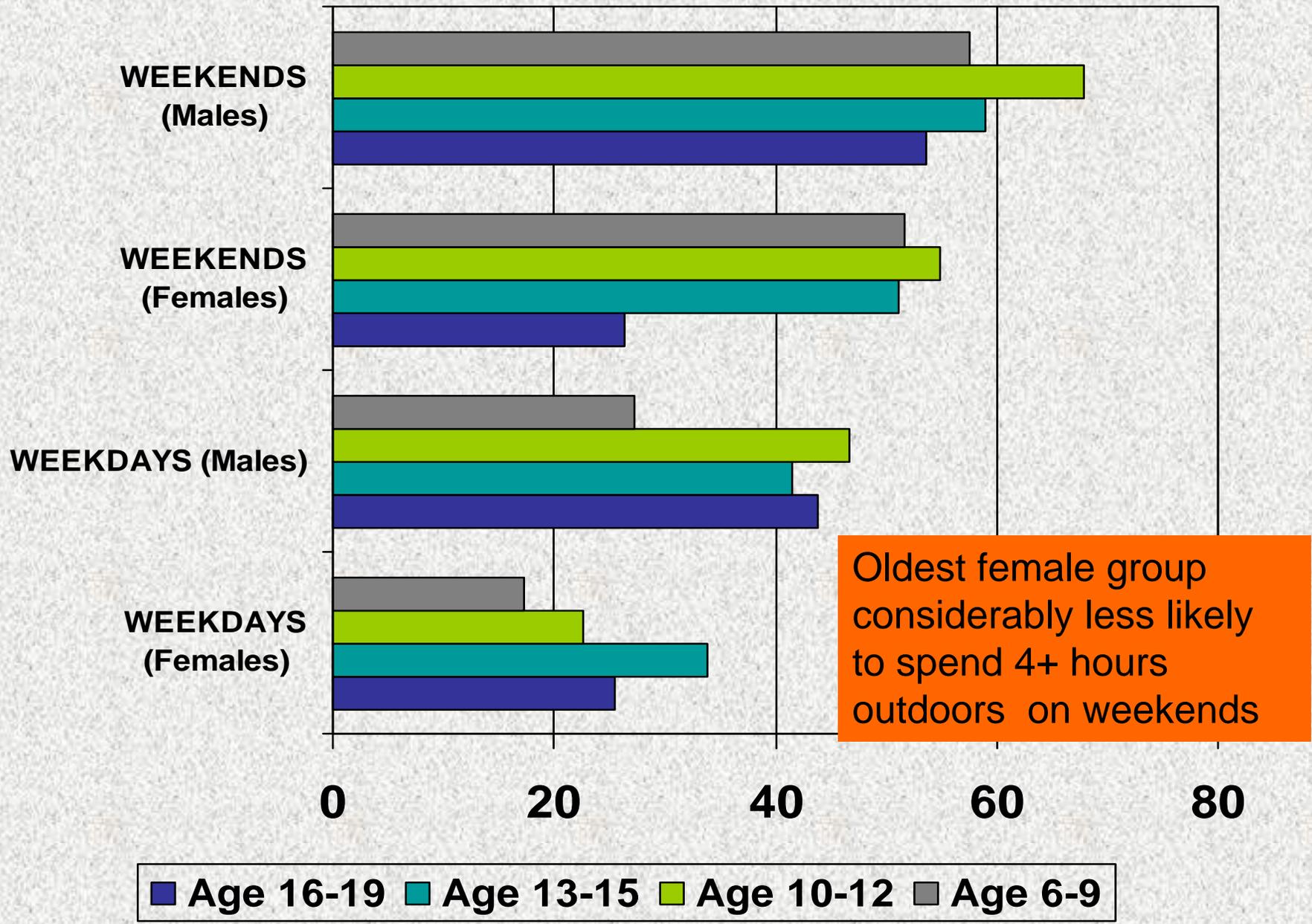
Percent (sums down to 100)

Amount of time	Age 6-9		Age 10-12		Age 13-15		Age 16-19	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Less than 1/2 hour	4.9	4.7	4.0	5.0	2.0	6.5	10.7	12.7
1/2 hour to 1 hour	10.9	11.8	5.2	11.0	11.9	12.7	19.4	29.1
2-3 hours	26.6	31.9	23.0	29.2	27.1	29.6	16.2	31.8
4 or more hours	57.5	51.6	67.8	54.8	58.9	51.2	53.7	26.4

Chi-square=98.1, p<.001.

Males, especially age 16-19, also more likely to spend 4+ hours outdoors on weekends. Females more likely to spend <1 hour, except age 6-9

Percent of youth who spent 4+ hours outdoors on typical week and weekend days during the past week, by age and gender



**During the past week, which of the following types of outdoor activities did this young person participate in?**

- \* Playing outside the home or at the playground with friends (Hanging out or just being with friends at our favorite outdoor places)
- \* Reading, studying, board games or other activities mostly done while sitting outdoors
- \* Listening to music, watching movies, etc. using hand-held/lap-top electronic devices
- \* Biking, jogging, walking, skate boarding, skating, or other muscle-powered activities
- \* Playing or practicing team sports such as soccer, baseball, field hockey, or football
- \* Other sports such as tennis, golf, archery, yard games or any other sport activity
- \* Swimming, diving, snorkeling or other muscle-powered activities in the water
- \* Attending camps, field trips, outdoor classes, or other organized outdoor events
- \* Bird watching, wildlife viewing, wildflower identification, or similar nature interests
- \* Riding motorcycles, ATVs, snowmobiles, or other off-road motor vehicles
- \* Boating, jet skiing, water skiing, or other motorized water activities
- \* Rowing, kayaking, canoeing, surfing, or other paddling water activities
- \* Snow skiing, snowboarding, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, or other winter
- \* Hiking, camping, fishing, or other nature activities

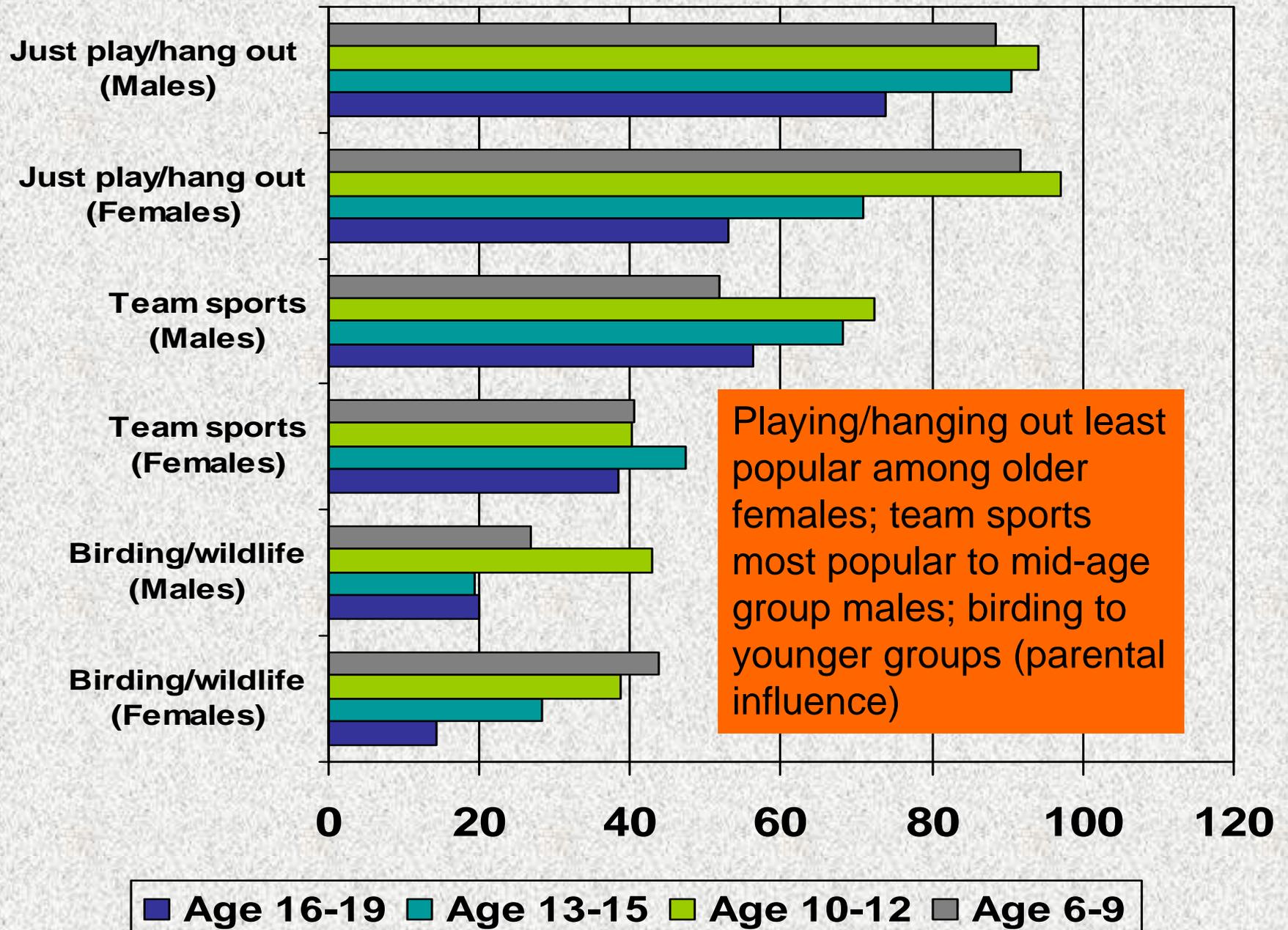
Percent of youth participating in outdoor activities during the past week, by age and gender

Activity	Age 6-9		Age 10-12		Age 13-15		Age 16-19		Age 6-19	χ <sup>2</sup>
	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Total	
Just play outdoors or hang out	88.5	91.7	94.1	97.0	90.5	70.8	73.7	52.9	81.9	*
Biking, jogging, walking, skate boarding, etc	80.9	83.7	83.9	83.7	71.3	69.2	72.6	82.2	78.7	*
Listen to music, watch movies, or use electronic device outdoors	37.9	47.2	39.7	59.7	82.0	72.0	68.4	64.3	57.9	*
Playing or practicing team sports	51.7	40.5	72.4	40.3	68.1	47.4	56.3	38.5	51.5	*
Reading, studying while sitting outdoors	33.7	45.0	47.4	53.5	21.4	56.6	49.6	59.0	45.6	*
Other sports, e.g., tennis, golf	37.9	42.2	53.5	38.9	21.1	29.4	29.1	25.7	34.8	*
Attending camps, field trips, outdoor classes	36.9	35.1	23.1	42.1	24.5	48.2	29.1	36.6	34.4	*
Swimming, diving, snorkeling, etc	33.3	38.8	27.3	38.6	33.2	31.6	30.3	21.8	31.8	**
Bird watching, wildlife viewing, etc	26.7	43.8	43.0	38.6	19.5	28.3	20.0	14.4	29.0	*
Hiking, camping, fishing, etc	30.8	37.2	33.6	17.4	28.7	24.5	29.4	19.6	28.0	*

Chi-square: \*, p<.01; \*\* p<.05

Passive, close-to-home activities (blue) are 4 of top 5 most popular

Percent of youth who participated in selected activities during past week, by age/gender



## *National Kids Survey*

Amount of time youth spends outdoors compared to this time last year, by age and gender

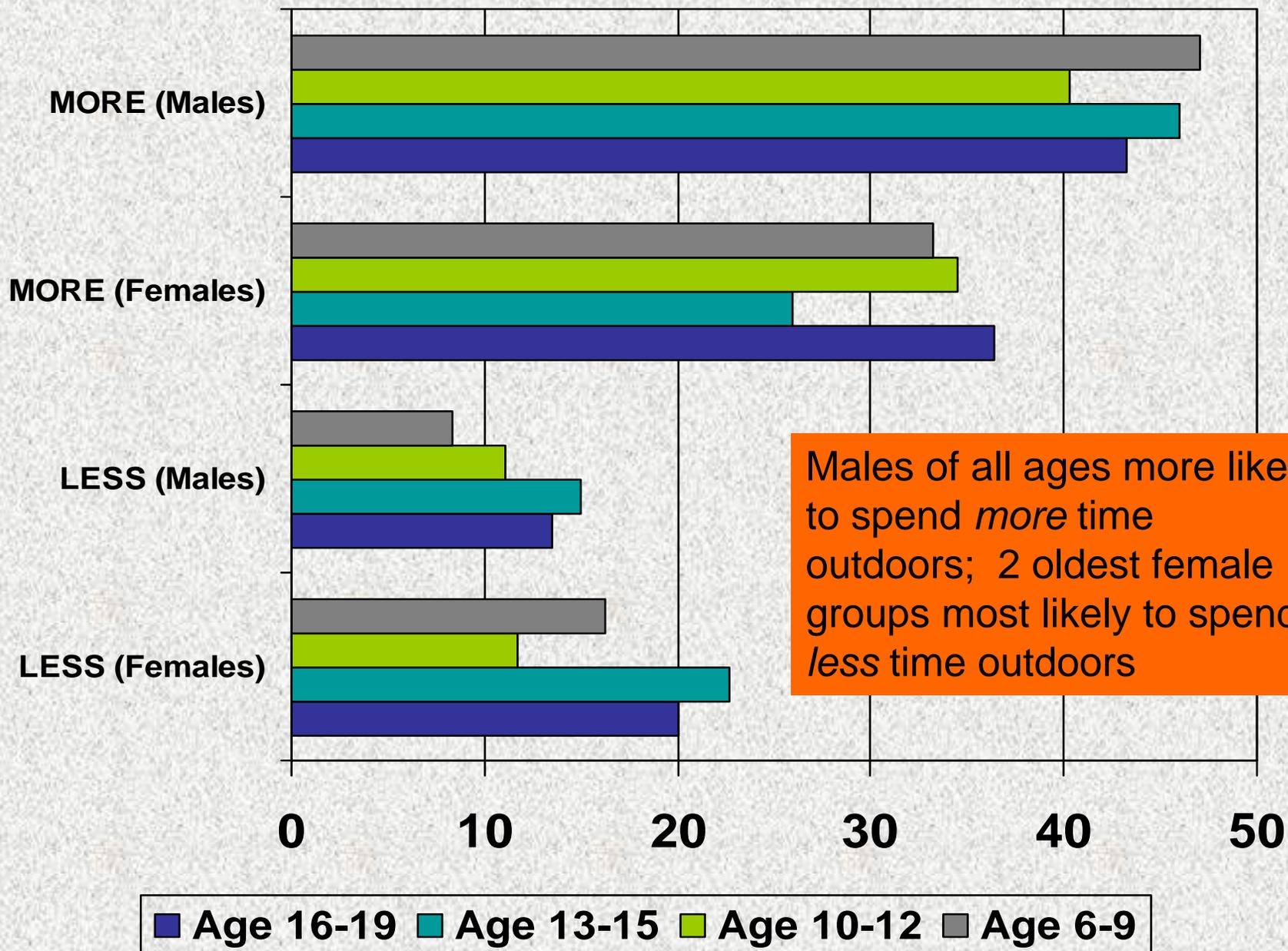
Percent (sums down to 100)

	Age 6-9		Age 10-12		Age 13-15		Age 16-19		
<b>Time outdoors</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
More	47.0	33.2	40.3	34.5	46.0	26.0	43.3	36.4	38.7
About the same	44.7	50.6	48.7	53.9	39.0	51.3	43.2	43.6	46.6
Less	8.3	16.2	11.1	11.7	15.0	22.7	13.5	20.0	14.7

Chi-square=33.0, p<.01.

Only about 15% overall spend less time outdoors, less than ½ of those who spend more time. Females more likely to spend less time; males more likely to spend more

Amount of time youth spends outdoors compared to this time last year, by age and gender

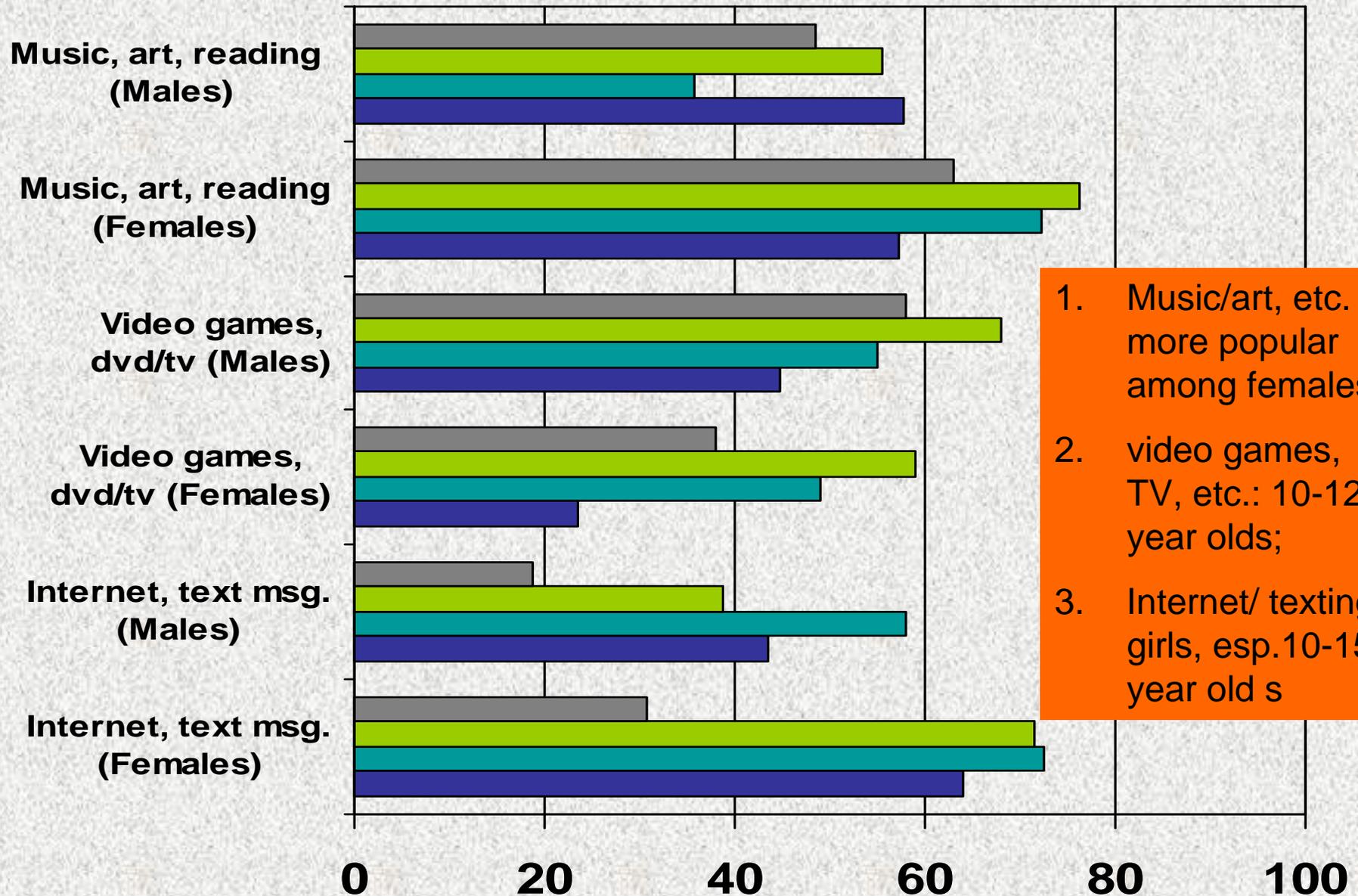


# National Kids Survey

Percent citing reasons why youth does not spend more time outdoors than they already do, by age and gender

Reason	Age 6-9		Age 10-12		Age 13-15		Age 16-19		Age 6-19	X <sup>2</sup> , p<
	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Total	
Interested in listening to music, art, reading, etc	48.6	63.1	55.4	76.3	35.8	72.3	57.8	57.3	57.9	0.001
Interested in video games, dvds and tv	58.0	38.1	68.1	58.9	54.9	48.9	44.8	23.6	48.6	0.050
Interested in Internet, text messaging, etc	18.7	30.7	38.7	71.5	58.0	72.4	43.6	64.1	47.8	0.010
More involved in indoor sports	30.5	32.1	23.3	52.2	42.9	47.0	41.4	38.0	37.8	0.001
Other reason time not spent outdoors	35.3	27.5	43.5	29.7	17.2	36.3	17.8	31.6	29.6	0.001
Neighborhood does not have good access	19.1	24.0	28.4	43.6	18.3	31.7	22.7	19.3	25.2	0.050
Spend time at mall, shopping, hanging out	4.7	3.8	7.5	18.2	33.4	26.6	40.1	56.4	23.7	0.001
Don't have anyone to play outdoors with	29.3	22.6	16.6	33.1	17.1	23.2	14.8	15.8	21.5	0.050
Don't have transportation	7.2	18.0	19.8	27.5	20.4	35.4	20.7	21.9	20.6	0.010
It is not safe to play or do sports outside	10.6	11.9	28.1	13.1	30.9	9.1	5.5	5.7	13.4	0.001
Was injured or developed a health problem	5.3	1.5	20.2	3.4	4.9	17.0	10.2	4.5	8.0	0.050

Percent citing selected reasons why youth does not spend more time outdoors (age/sex)



1. Music/art, etc. more popular among females
2. video games, TV, etc.: 10-12 year olds;
3. Internet/ texting: girls, esp. 10-15 year olds

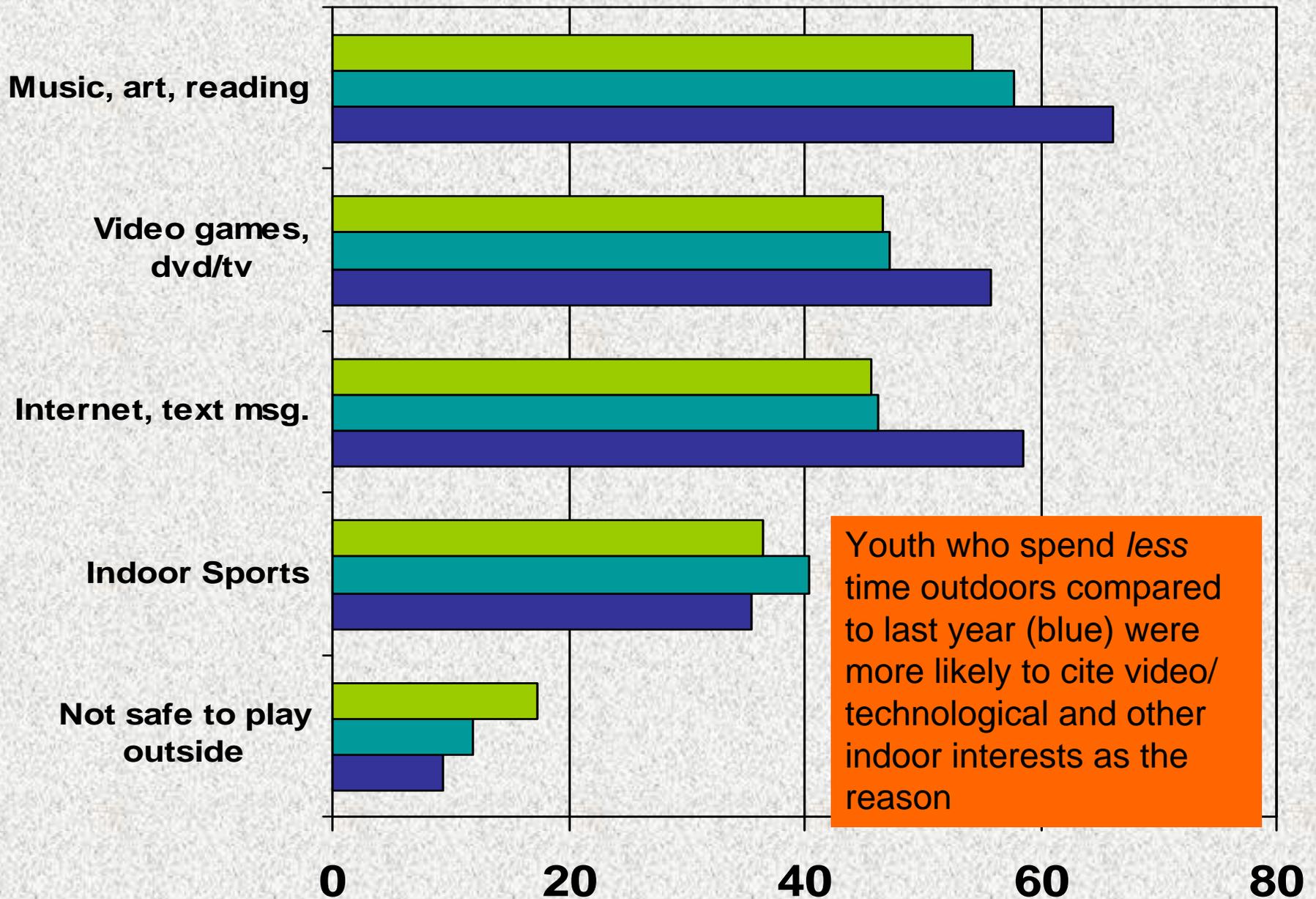
■ Age 16-19 ■ Age 13-15 ■ Age 10-12 ■ Age 6-9

## *National Kids Survey*

Percent citing reasons why youth does not spend more time outdoors, by amount of time spent outdoors compared to last year

Reason	More	About the same	Less	Total	Chi-square: p<
Interested in listening to music, art, reading, etc	54.3	57.8	66.2	57.9	0.001
Interested in video games, dvds and tv	46.6	47.3	55.8	48.6	0.050
Interested in Internet, text messaging, etc	45.6	46.3	58.5	47.8	0.010
More involved in indoor sports	36.4	40.4	35.5	37.8	0.001
Other reason time not spent outdoors	32.2	26.0	34.3	29.6	0.001
Neighborhood does not have good access	21.8	25.0	33.2	25.2	0.050
Spend time at mall, shopping, hanging out	26.0	22.7	22.7	23.7	0.001
Don't have anyone to play outdoors with	19.3	22.9	20.6	21.5	0.050
Don't have transportation	24.3	16.9	21.0	20.6	0.010
It is not safe to play or do sports outside	17.4	11.9	9.3	13.4	0.001
Was injured or developed a health problem	12.2	4.5	8.9	8.0	0.050

Percent citing selected reasons why youth does not spend more time outdoors, by amount of time spent outdoors compared to last year



## Other reasons youth doesn't spend more time outdoors

- homework/school
  - weather (cold, hot, rain)
  - work/job
  - less/no (parental) supervision
- 
- 'busy schedule'
  - 'other responsibilities'
  - 'no facilities close by; not enough places to go'
  - 'family circumstances'
  - 'not an outdoor person'
- 
- 'she is anti-social and doesn't like to go outside'
  - lazy

## Conclusions

- Existing information is sparse on national scale
- Other surveys point to declining youth partic. & interest in other forms of recreation
- NSRE Kids Survey an attempt to add some depth beyond participation
- Biggest limitation is time constraint of interview
  - few questions
  - need expanded definitions (e.g., 'time outdoors')
- SERR: first look (descriptive) at Kids Survey

## Conclusions (continued)

- Majority of youth spend >2 hours outside on both weekdays and weekends
- Passive, close-to-home activities dominate
- Only about 15% spend *less* time outdoors compared to last year (39% *more*)
- Other interests (e.g., videophilia) outpace safety/envir. and family/social reasons for not spending more time outdoors, especially for those who spent *less* time outdoors
- Significant differences in age/gender groups for time outdoors, activities, and reasons not outdoors
- Future research should investigate differences in lack of interest versus other inhibitors (e.g, family, overscheduling, safety/environment)