



JUMPSTART STATE OF SPORT REPORT

MARCH 2022

Building Sport Back Better

– A Message from the President

For 17 years, Jumpstart has supported families in need and opened doors to sport and play for millions of kids across Canada. Implicit in our mission is that no kid should be left out of learning how to play a new sport or continuing with one they love.

The COVID-19 pandemic stripped away access far beyond what anyone could have imagined — and put the country's grassroots sport and recreation organizations at risk. In fact, we calculated that in the first nine months of the pandemic alone, 1.5 million children living in low-income households lost over 277 million hours of sport participation – due to programs being closed or running at reduced capacity.

To that end, we committed an additional \$12 million to our Sport Relief Fund in 2021. We listened to our community partners who described the persistent, systemic barriers for such groups like children with disabilities, girls and young women, Indigenous children and youth, and Black youth and families in financial need. We worked with academic advisors to develop measurement and evaluation standards related to equity, diversity and inclusion. I'm pleased to report that together we supported over 1,570 youth sport organizations, in turn reaching over a quarter-million kids.

The State of Sport in 2022

This report details the second year of a research study in which we partnered with Ipsos and our Canadian academic advisory panel to gauge COVID's impact – and understand how we must respond. Inside the data, we find a clear and compelling story: major barriers to sport remain for Canadian youth. It's having a continued impact on the health and wellbeing of children and on sport organizations, and it has created an uncertain future due to unclear long-term consequences.

So where do we go from here?

As we gradually recover and begin to return to sport, an opportunity presents itself: to shift from saving sport to building sport back better. The supply gap created by the pandemic – fewer programs due to closures or lower capacity, combined with the rising cost of participation – has resulted in a disproportionate impact on children and youth in need and those with already low access to sport and play.

Thankfully, we have a plan. Jumpstart is committed to helping organized sport return to pre-COVID levels, and to ensuring a more inclusive, equitable environment for Canada's youth. While uncertainty remains, we are confident that, with the right stakeholders working together, we can achieve a return to sport that our Canadian youth deserve and need.

Scott Fraser

President, Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the members of our academic advisory panel for providing invaluable insights and helping to develop this report:

- Cheri Bradish, Ph.D., Ryerson University
- Timothy Chan, Ph.D., University of Toronto
- David Legg, Ph.D., Mount Royal University
- Richard Norman, Ph.D., Ryerson University
- Catherine Sabiston, Ph.D., University of Toronto



**Renaming of Ryerson University in process, see ryerson.ca/next-chapter for more information.*



CONTENTS OVERVIEW

Survey Findings: 3 Key Takeaways — 06

- 1) *Significant barriers to sport remain for Canadian youth*
- 2) *Concerns mount over impact on children and organizations*
- 3) *Community sport faces an uncertain future*

Jumpstart is Making a Difference On the Ground —18

Building Back Sport Together - Better —20

- *A return to sport will require a collaborative effort*
- *Our call for action*

Survey Methodology — 25

About Jumpstart — 26



SURVEY FINDINGS



THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS

1) Significant barriers to sport remain for Canadian youth

Parents report: Fewer, more expensive opportunities for kids to participate in sports.

- 54% say the availability of organized sports has diminished
- 41% say the costs of participating has increased

Sport organizations report: Alarm over higher operating costs, lost capacity, and the ability to serve fewer families.

- 75% say the costs of running sport programs has spiked
- 94% are concerned that youth with already reduced access will be further shut out

2) Concerns mount over impact on children and organizations

Parents report: Lack of access to sport is negatively affecting children's health and wellbeing.

- Half (49%) of those who say their children play less sports also express concern about their kids' deteriorating mental health
- 46% of all parents say their children are feeling isolated, 40% a sense of loss, 39% anxiety and 43% lacking fitness

Sport organizations report: Running programs amidst recovery is daunting.

- 91% are concerned about their ability to provide the same level of service to the communities they serve
- 82% are concerned about their ability to run programs in 2022

As the pandemic leaves recreational sport organizations to rebuild their budgets, inequity in access to sport grows for families across Canada.

The vast interruptions to sport have caused a range of adverse effects.

THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS

3) Community sport faces an uncertain future

Sport organizations report:

- 80% are worried about obtaining government funding needed to stay afloat
- 52% now say it will take until at least 2024 to reach their pre-COVID state

In the wake of COVID, our return to sport is not straightforward. Organizations are worried about their ability to rebuild, access the support they need – and ultimately, survive.





“

It's heartbreaking to potentially lose more youth programming in our already small community. With limited fundraising, almost no business sponsors, and being denied grants, we are facing imminent closure.”

– Survey Respondent

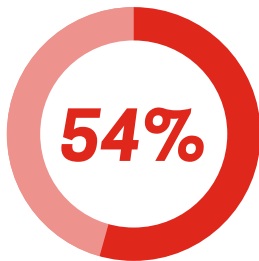
SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS TO SPORT REMAIN FOR CANADIAN YOUTH



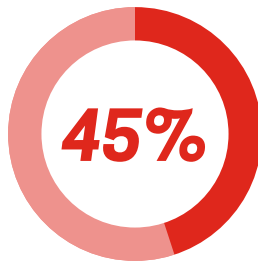
SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS TO SPORT REMAIN FOR CANADIAN YOUTH

THE FINDINGS

Half of parents (49%) say the number of organized sports their child participates in has declined



of parents say their child's participation in sport has been extremely or very much impacted by COVID



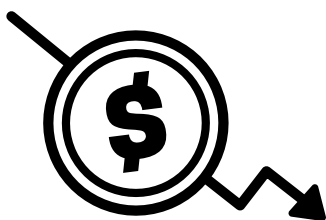
of parents say their child is now playing no sports



of organizations say the availability of organized sports for children to participate in has decreased



are very concerned about individuals with pre-existing low access to sport being able to play sport (up from 87% in Jan 2021)

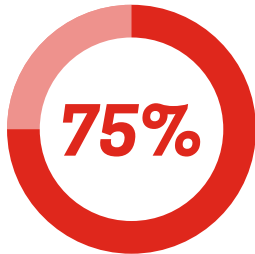
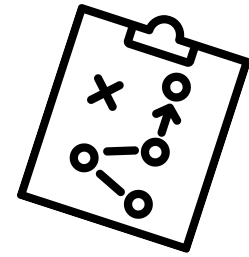


On average, revenue is down 37% for grassroots organizations

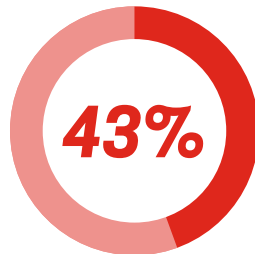
This amounts to an average of **\$109,000** per organization

Costs felt across the board

from programs to volunteers to facility rentals and management to resources for coaches and staff.



75% of community sport organizations say costs to **run programs** have increased



43% of community sport organizations say costs to **parents** have increased

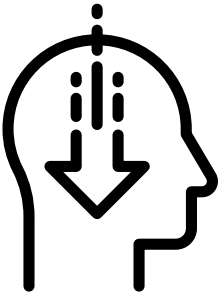




**CONCERNS MOUNT
OVER IMPACT ON YOUTH
AND ORGANIZATIONS**

CONCERNS MOUNT OVER IMPACT ON YOUTH AND ORGANIZATIONS

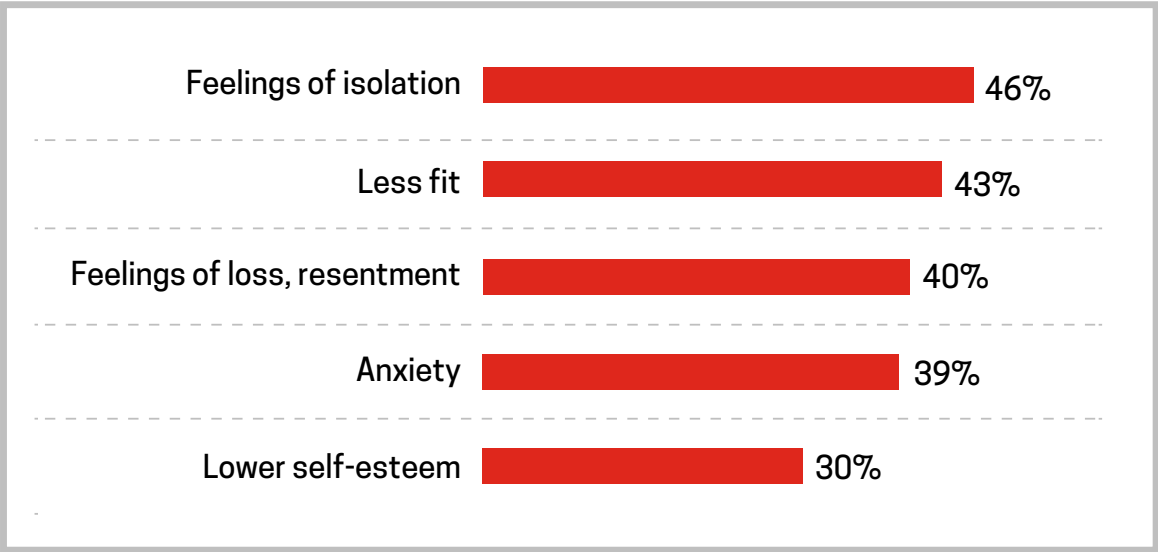
THE FINDINGS



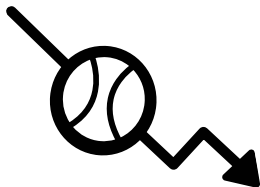
Almost **half of parents (49%)** whose children’s sports activities have been impacted by COVID say their **mental health has deteriorated**

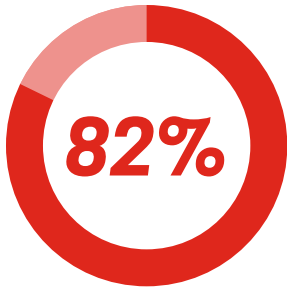
This compares to 38% who report mental health declining in their children – highlighting sport’s connection to mental health.

Of those parents who report adverse effects on their children from reduced activity:



41% report **reduced sport skills and competence**





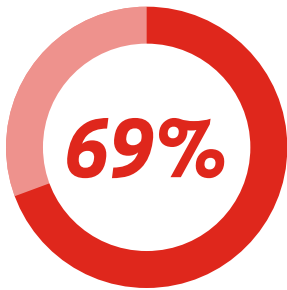
are concerned about their ability to run programming in 2022

Up 1 point



are concerned about their organization's ability to provide the same level of service to their communities

(+7 points) = 91% up from 84%



report that loss of programming is the hardest loss stemming from COVID

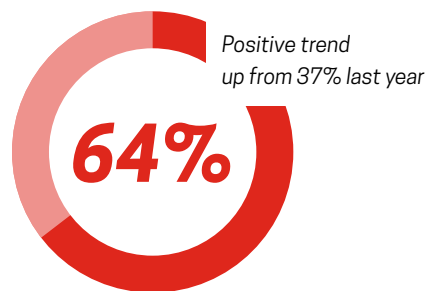
“ I think sport is the saviour of mental health for our children during this pandemic. They understand and appreciate all the efforts made to keep some level of sport available to them and I find they are willing to do whatever it takes (modified training, masking, distancing, etc.) in order to keep playing and training. It is heartwarming and heartbreaking at the same time.” –Survey Respondent

“ Being involved in sport becomes a habit in kids' lives. When that gets shut down, it takes a considerable amount of time for that to become a habit again, and in some cases...it never does. We already struggle with a decrease in girls participating in sport... now we will see the effect of the pandemic shut down on sports for the next few years.” –Survey Respondent

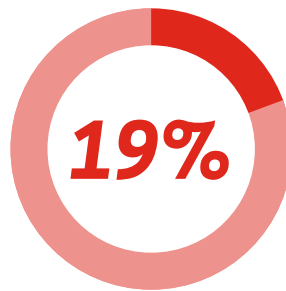


**COMMUNITY SPORT
FACES AN UNCERTAIN
FUTURE**

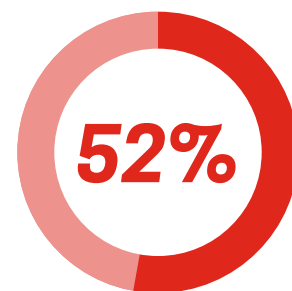
COMMUNITY SPORT FACES AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE



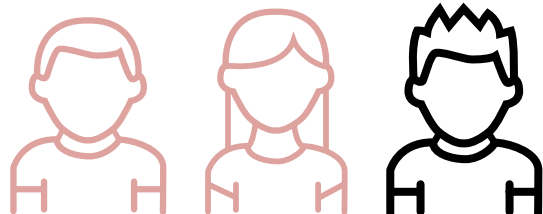
of organizers now say they can last more than a year even if the situation doesn't improve



of organizations say they have no idea how long they can last - timeline is longer than expected



say it will take at least two years for organized sport to get back to a pre-COVID state



Still, one-third express concern about the permanent closure of their organization

90%

are concerned about the level of **government focus** on sport and its importance

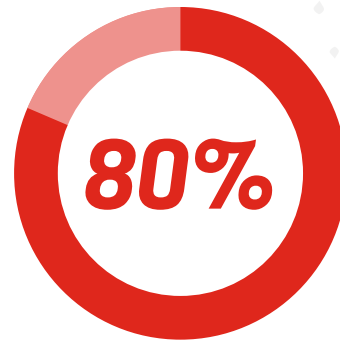
(up 8 pts from 82% last year)

87%

are concerned about **maintaining connection** and support for staff and volunteers



are somewhat or very concerned about obtaining financial support from non-government sources



are likewise worried about government assistance in order to continue operating

“

Access to sport and fitness for children within the school setting has essentially been eliminated since Covid restrictions have been in place. It has been left up to community organizations to provide most of the access for kids to play organized sports. More help must be made available to these community-based sports organizations to ensure greater opportunity for kids to play.” –Survey Respondent



**JUMPSTART IS
MAKING A DIFFERENCE
ON THE GROUND**

JUMPSTART IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE ON THE GROUND

There is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in front of us: to not only build back sport, but to build back sport better. Together.

As we close the chapter on the Sport Relief Fund, we look ahead to guiding the recovery of organized sport to exceed pre-COVID levels while keeping a laser focus on inclusivity and equitability.

Here's what we've committed to in 2022:

Funding Community Programs

Jumpstart will continue to support individuals and communities in their participation and building of programs. Families in financial need will receive support for the costs associated with their kids' participation in sport and recreation – including equipment, transportation, and registration fees. Community organizations will be supported through a mix of programming, operational and small capital grants.

Supporting Inclusive Play

We will increase accessibility across Canada through our inclusive play initiatives that centre around building play spaces, creating resources for coaches, and advocating for representation and awareness in sport.

Championing Girls In Sport

Through Jumpstart's gender equity initiatives, we are continuing to raise awareness of the disproportionate number of girls that do not stay in sport. We are working to promote representation and provide resources to support gender equity and help keep more girls engaged through new projects in 2022.

But we can't do it alone.





**IT'S TIME TO BUILD
BACK SPORT BETTER
- TOGETHER**

A RETURN TO SPORT WILL REQUIRE A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Our kids need stakeholders at all levels to work in tandem with organizations like Jumpstart and urgently invest in community sport across Canada.

Sport isn't only important for the health and development of our youth. It also:



Supports social justice

- A rising number of grassroots organizations are challenging traditional sport systems by:
 - Co-designing sport programs with Indigenous and youth leaders to actively move towards reconciliation;
 - Partnering with racialized peoples to identify and eliminate systemic racism in sport;
 - Confronting all forms of gender inequity, including barriers related to intersectionality, guided by thought leadership from Canadian Women & Sport;
 - Co-creating inclusive and adapted programs for persons experiencing disability

Drives economic growth

- In 2020, Calgary's [ActiveCITY Collective](#) showed that the region's "active economy" (sport/physical activity/recreation) injects \$3.3 billion into the economy each year and supports 43,000 employees.
- At a national scope, this means the "active economy" is one of the greatest drivers of GDP, and the source of countless jobs in communities across Canada.



OUR CALL FOR ACTION

First, we are calling on sport, physical activity & recreation leaders to embrace sport for all by:

- Connecting with community leaders to build equitable, diverse and inclusive spaces, programs & resources
- Focusing on enjoyment as a priority over performance
- Encouraging multisport participation and avoiding early specialization and intensification



Second, and specific to education, we ask schools to adopt a “no-cut sports program” and ensure that ALL children can experience playing sports.



Finally, there is an urgent need for governments and funders of sport at all levels to provide more coordinated capacity and build stronger support for community participation. To do so, we ask that all levels of government and funders:

- Invest in data collection to better understand what systems, programs and supports will sustain the participant journey
- Require a de-emphasis on performance as a key indicator of success and focus more broadly on outcomes related to health and wellbeing
- Apply consistent and transparent standards for quality and safe sport delivery

Federal

Create sustained funding streams separate to those in place for National Sport Organizations that are directly targeted to Community Sport (e.g.: [Community Sport For All initiative](#))

Explore innovative models such as those employed in the UK* to create more coordination and support for the community sport ecosystem.

Provide stable, long-term funding for arms-length agencies like the [Ontario Sport Network](#) or [viaSport B.C.](#) to ensure adequate resources to build capacity at the grassroots level.

Provincial

Provide stable, long-term funding for arms-length agencies like the [Ontario Sport Network](#) or [viaSport B.C.](#) to ensure adequate resources to build capacity at the grassroots level.

Municipal

Leverage local sport councils and other structures to ensure coordination and collaboration among the entire sport, physical activity and recreation ecosystem (including clubs, schools and youth-serving organizations).

** Sport England works independently to sustain community sport, physical activity and recreation. Its [Sport for Development Coalition](#) was born from a shared belief of sport's potential to play a greater role in addressing social issues.*

80% of sport organizations now say they are worried they will not obtain the government support needed to stay afloat.

JOIN US IN BUILDING BACK SPORT BETTER – TOGETHER

This report has presented some stark realities about the state of sport in Canada today. Significant barriers to sport remain for youth across this country. Concerns are mounting over the impact the pandemic has had on kids and organizations. There is no question that community sport faces an uncertain future.

We're committed to bringing certainty to that future. But we can't do it alone. We've presented a solid plan with key calls to action that are imperative to ensuring community sport survives – and thrives – in this country.

**We're confident we can get there.
Our kids need and deserve it.**



SURVEY METHODOLOGY

These are some of the findings of two Ipsos polls conducted on behalf of Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities.

The first online poll reached 1,000 Canadian parents of children aged 4 to 17, between December 14 to 24, 2021. It included Ipsos I-Say panel and non-panel sources. We employed quotas and weighting to ensure that the sample of respondents reflected that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian parents been polled.

The second online poll reached 324 providers of sports programming across Canada, between December 13 and 28, 2021. The sample was provided by Canadian Tire Jumpstart and included 96 registered charities, 202 non-profit organizations and 26 other organizations. These represented 16 municipal parks and recreation organizations, 24 multisport facilities, 183 sports organizations/clubs/associations, 29 provincial sport organizations, seven national sport organizations, and 94 other organizations. We believe this sample accurately captures the diverse sport ecosystem in Canada. As to the credibility interval, this poll is accurate to within ± 6.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all providers of sports programming across Canada been polled.

All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.



ABOUT JUMPSTART

[Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities](#) is a national charity committed to ensuring kids in need have equal access to sport and recreation. With an extensive, national network of more than 1,000 grantees and 289 local chapters, Jumpstart helps eligible families cover the costs of registration, transportation, and equipment, and provides funding to selected organizations for recreational infrastructure and programming. Supported by the Canadian Tire Corporation, Jumpstart has provided more than two and a half million opportunities for Canadian kids to get in the game since 2005. For more information, visit jumpstart.canadiantire.ca.

Follow Jumpstart on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) to learn about how the charity is giving kids across Canada a sporting chance.

How to cite this report

Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities, Jumpstart State of Sport Report, (March 2022).

