



THE PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO THE
UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN GENEVA

May 16, 2024

Alexandra Xanthaki
Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights
Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Special Rapporteur Xanthaki,

Please find enclosed the U.S. response to your communication dated April 12, 2024.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly A. Billingsley".

Kelly Billingsley
Deputy Permanent Representative
Human Rights

U.S. response to April 12, 2024 request for input for General Assembly report regarding the right to participate in sports

Thank you for your letter dated April 12 requesting input on a report for UNGA on the right to participate in sports. The United States is a strong supporter of opportunities for individuals, both youth and adults, to participate in sports, though we note there is not a right to participate in sports in international human rights law. Please accept answers to two of the questions in your letter, along with additional helpful information on participation in sports in the United States of America.

General

1. What are the benefits and potential shortcomings of the exercise of sport and play in developing one's identity? In developing groups' identities and cultural diversity? To which extent are these benefits and potential shortcomings reflected in the policies and programmes of your country?
 - Being active and playing outdoors are an important part of childhood. Playing outside can have many benefits for children, including the development of healthy bodies and healthy minds.
 - Children learn through free play and need opportunities to take risks, test their limits, and learn new skills. Being physically active by playing outdoors and in nature can help children develop strong bodies and meet important developmental milestones for movement and physical development.
 - Overall, about a third of preschool-aged children on weekdays and about a quarter on weekend days have low time playing outdoors.
 - Participation on sports teams has been associated with increased levels of physical activity and improved physical and mental health among children and adolescents.
 - Learning to enjoy physical activity at a young age can set the foundation for a lifetime of healthy habits.
 - Encouraging students to be physically active before and after school helps them identify activities they enjoy and might engage in long term.
 - Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Benefits include improved thinking and cognition and reduced risk of depression for children 6 to 13 years of age.

Participation in sporting life

5. What are main obstacles in ensuring participation of all in sports? You may wish to discuss general obstacles that affect all (such as corruption) or obstacles that are set for specific sections of the population, including any discrimination based on age, colour, sex and gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

- According to the [National Center for Health Statistics Data Brief from August 2022](#), disparities in sports participation have been found across age, sex, race, disability, and socioeconomic subgroups.
 - The higher the level of parents' education, the more likely children and adolescents were to participate in sports.
 - As family income increased, the more likely children and adolescents were to participate in sports.
 - Children and adolescents in the southern United States were less likely to participate in sports (48.7%) compared with all other regions of the country.

Helpful resources related to the information above include:

- [Outdoor Play and Safety for Children in ECE | CDC](#)
- [Time Playing Outdoors Among Children Aged 3–5 Years: National Survey of Children's Health, 2021](#)
- [Products - Data Briefs - Number 441 - August 2022 \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Sports and Fitness | Active People, Healthy Nation | Physical Activity | CDC](#)
- [Physical Activity Before and After School | Physical Activity | Healthy Schools | CDC](#)
- [Benefits of Physical Activity | Physical Activity | CDC](#)
- [Health Benefits of Physical Activity for Children](#)
- [Products - Data Briefs - Number 441 - August 2022 \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Thank you once more for your call for inputs. If we can provide any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.