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The 2025 SSF National Sports-Life Survey of Children and Young People

● Executive Summary December 2025, Japan



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Introduction

Since 2001, the Sasakawa Sports Foundation (SSF) has conducted its Sports-Life Survey of Ages 10 to 19 on children in Japan, with the goal of achieving “Sport for Everyone” by understanding exercise and sports participation of children during after-school periods and on holidays as well as sports environments surrounding these children. In 2009, the SSF also began conducting the Sports-Life Survey of Ages 4 to 9 on young children in order to better ascertain the factors that lead to the polarization of exercise and sports participation observed in those aged 10-19 and the turning points for such phenomenon.

From the 2017 survey, the target age groups were newly categorized into those aged 4-11 and those aged 12-21; these surveys have been conducted every two years on exercise and sports participation of preschool through university-age in Japan.

Methods

- 1) **Population:** 4-21 year olds living in Japan
- 2) **Sample numbers:** [4-11 year olds] 2,400
[12-21 year olds] 3,000
- 3) **Locations:** 225 (207 urban areas and 18 rural areas)
- 4) **Extraction method:** 2-staged stratified random sampling
- 5) **Survey methods:** Leaving method
- 6) **Survey period:** June-July 2025
- 7) **Collected questionnaires (rate):** [4-11 year olds] 1,320 (55.0%)
[12-21 year olds] 1,438 (47.9%)
- 8) **Survey contents:** Frequencies, time, and intensity of exercise and sports participation, sports facilities, sports teams/clubs, liking for exercise and sports participation, sports spectating, favorite athletes, sports volunteering, status of physical activities of daily living, sleeping time, media usage time (screen time), and frequencies of exercise, sports, and physical play with family, etc.
- 9) **Scope of exercise and sports:** Activities and free play after kindergarten or preschool, as well as school club activities and activities during recess periods, are included. However, lessons at kindergarten, preschool, or school are not included, nor are school events such as sports days or race tournaments.

Frequencies of exercise and sports participation

4-11 year olds

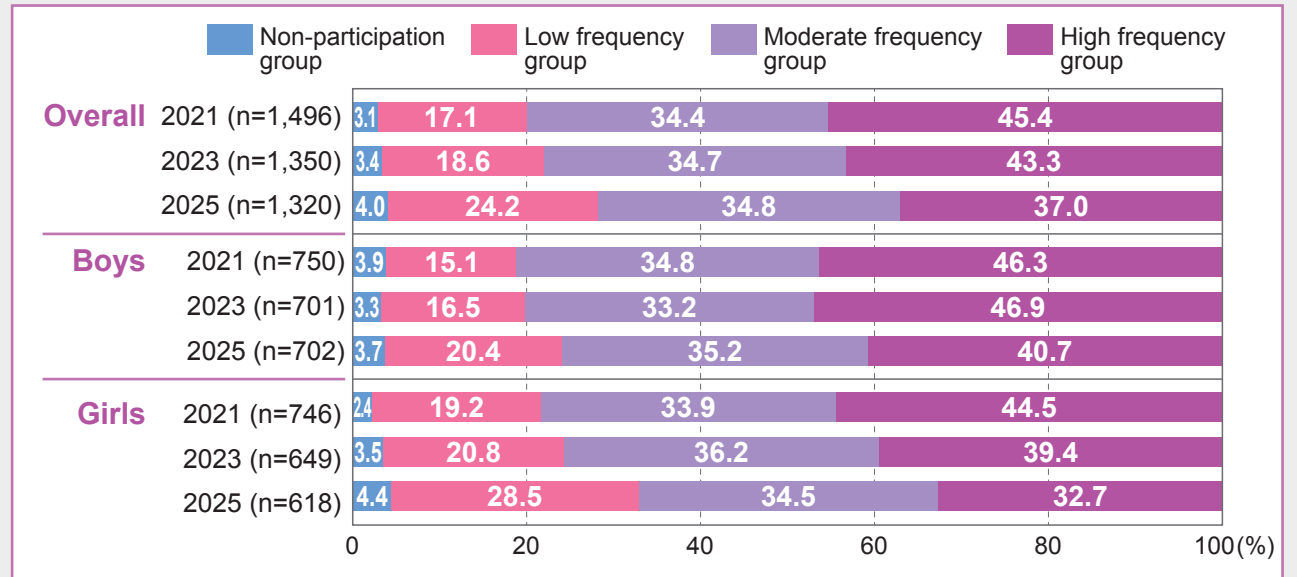
[Table 1] Exercise and sports participation frequency groups (4-11 year olds)

Frequency	Standards
Non-participation group	Non-participation for the past year (0 time/year)
Low frequency group	At least once a year but less than 3 times a week (1-155 times/year)
Moderate frequency group	At least 3 times a week but less than 7 times a week (156-363 times/year)
High frequency group	At least 7 times a week (364 or more times/year)

Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 4 to 11

The 4-11 year old group was classified into 4 groups of “Non-participation group”, “Low frequency group”, “Moderate frequency group”, and “High frequency group” based on standards set from exercise and sports participation frequency over the past year (Table 1).

[Fig.1] Annual trends in exercise and sports participation frequency groups (4-11 year olds)



Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 4 to 11

Annual trends in exercise and sports participation frequency groups (ages 4-11) are indicated in Figure 1. The overall result of the 2025 survey shows that the high frequency group accounted for the largest proportion at **37.0%**, followed by the moderate frequency group at **34.8%**, the low frequency group at **24.2%**, and the non-participation group at **4.0%**. The percentage of the high frequency group showed a decrease of 8.4 points from the 2021 survey, whereas that of the low frequency group showed an increase of 7.1 points.

Regarding the percentages by gender, the high frequency group was **40.7%** for boys, which was 8.0 points higher than **32.7%** for girls. The percentage of the high frequency group decreased by 5.6 points for boys and 11.8 points for girls compared to the 2021 survey. Since 2021, the percentage of the high frequency group has been higher for boys than for girls, while the percentage of the low frequency group has been lower for boys than for girls.

12-21 year olds

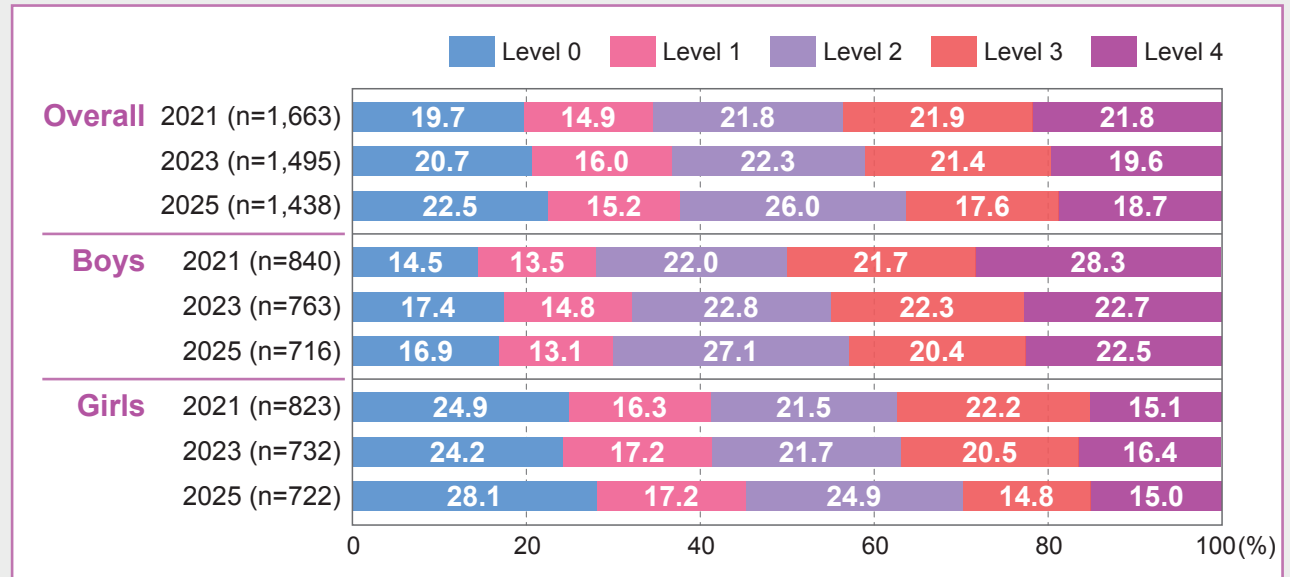
[Table 2] Exercise and sports participation levels (12-21 year olds)

Level	Standards
0	Non-participation for the past year (0 time/year)
1	At least once a year but less than once a week (1-51 times/year)
2	At least once a week but less than 5 times a week (52-259 times/year)
3	At least 5 times a week (260 times or more/year)
4	At least 5 times a week (260 times or more/year) with a duration of 120 minutes, and with more than moderate intensity

Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

The 12-21 year old group was classified into 5 levels from level 0 to level4 based on standards set from exercise and sports participation frequency, time, and intensity over the past year (Table 2).

[Fig.2] Annual trends in exercise and sports participation levels (12-21 year olds)



Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

Annual trends in exercise and sports participation levels (ages 12-21) are indicated in Figure 2. The overall results in the 2025 survey were 22.5% for Level 0, 15.2% for Level 1, 26.0% for Level 2, 17.6% for Level 3, and 18.7% for Level 4. There is an increasing trend in the percentages of Level 2 and lower levels, where participation in exercise and sports is less than 5 times a week.

Regarding the percentages by gender, Level 2 was the highest for boys at 27.1%, whereas Level 0 was the highest for girls at 28.1%. Annual trends show that Level 4 has continued to decrease for boys since 2021, whereas Level 2 and lower levels have continued to increase for both boys and girls.

Exercise and sports types

[Table 3] Exercise and sports types often carried out over the past year (multiple answers were allowed.)

4-11 year olds (n=1,267)			12-21 year olds (n=1,114)		
Rank	Types of exercise/sports	Percentage (%)	Rank	Types of exercise/sports	Percentage (%)
1	Tag	51.8	1	Badminton	20.3
2	Dodgeball	33.9	2	Basketball	19.0
3	Swimming	32.8	3	Volleyball	17.4
4	Jump rope (including long jump rope)	26.2	4	Walking	17.1
5	Swings	26.1	5	Soccer	17.0
6	Bicycle riding	24.0	6	Muscle training	15.9
7	Soccer	23.0	7	Jogging/running	15.0
8	Iron bar	17.4	8	Table tennis	13.6
9	Hide-and-seek	15.2	9	Tag	10.9
10	Race	13.8	10	Baseball	10.1

Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 4 to 11 and National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

Table 3 indicates the top 10 exercise or sports activities carried out often (on many occasions) in the past year.

For the 4-11 year old group, “Tag” was the highest at **51.8%**, followed by “Dodgeball” at **33.9%**, “Swimming” at **32.8%**, “Jump

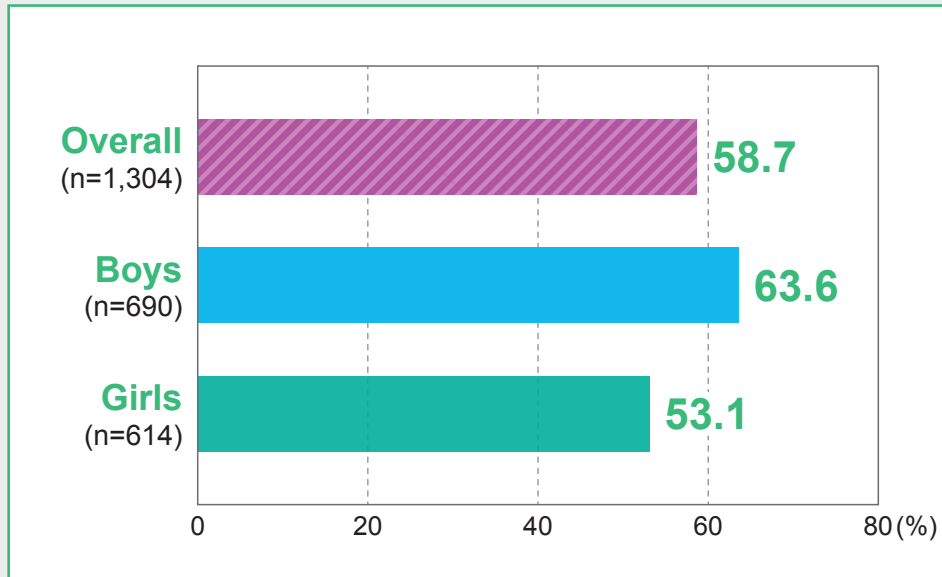
rope (including long jump rope)” at **26.2%**, and “Swings” at **26.1%**.

For the 12-21 year old group, “Badminton” was in the first place at **20.3%**, followed by “Basketball” at **19.0%**, “Volleyball” at **17.4%**, “Walking” at **17.1%**, and “Soccer” at **17.0%**.

Sports teams/clubs

4-11 year olds

[Fig.3] Participation rates in sports teams/clubs
(4-11 year olds)



*1) Including school club activities, sports teams, private sports teams/clubs (swimming, gymnastics, etc.), community sports teams/clubs (youth sports team, sports classes, etc.).

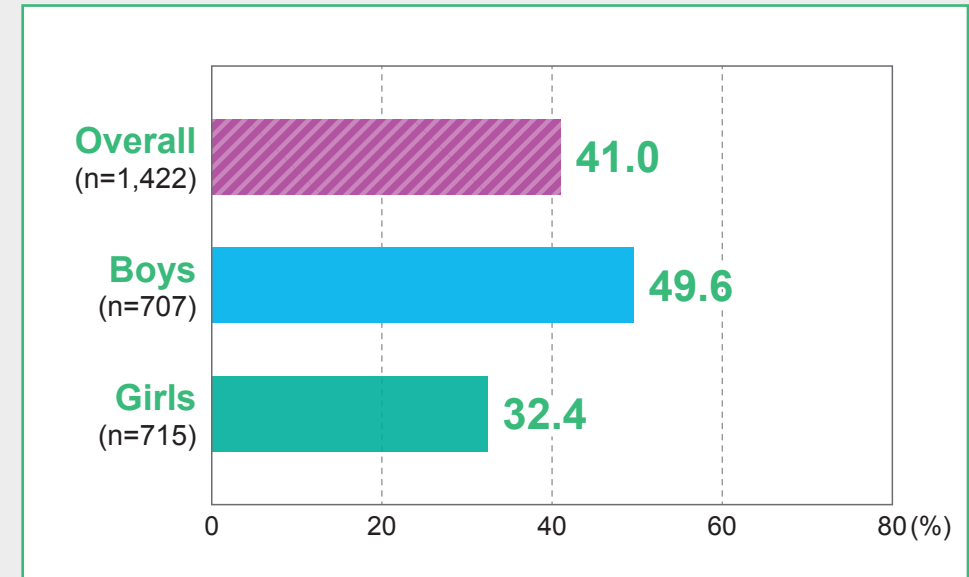
Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 4 to 11

The participation rates in sports teams/clubs for ages 4-11 are indicated in **Figure 3**.

The overall rate of participation in sports teams/clubs for ages 4-11 was **58.7%**. Regarding the rates by gender, boys had a participation rate of **63.6%** and girls had a participation rate of **53.1%**.

12-21 year olds

[Fig.4] Participation rates in sports teams/clubs
(12-21 year olds)



*1) Including school club activities, sports teams, private sports teams/clubs (swimming, gymnastics, etc.), community sports teams/clubs (youth sports team, sports classes, etc.).

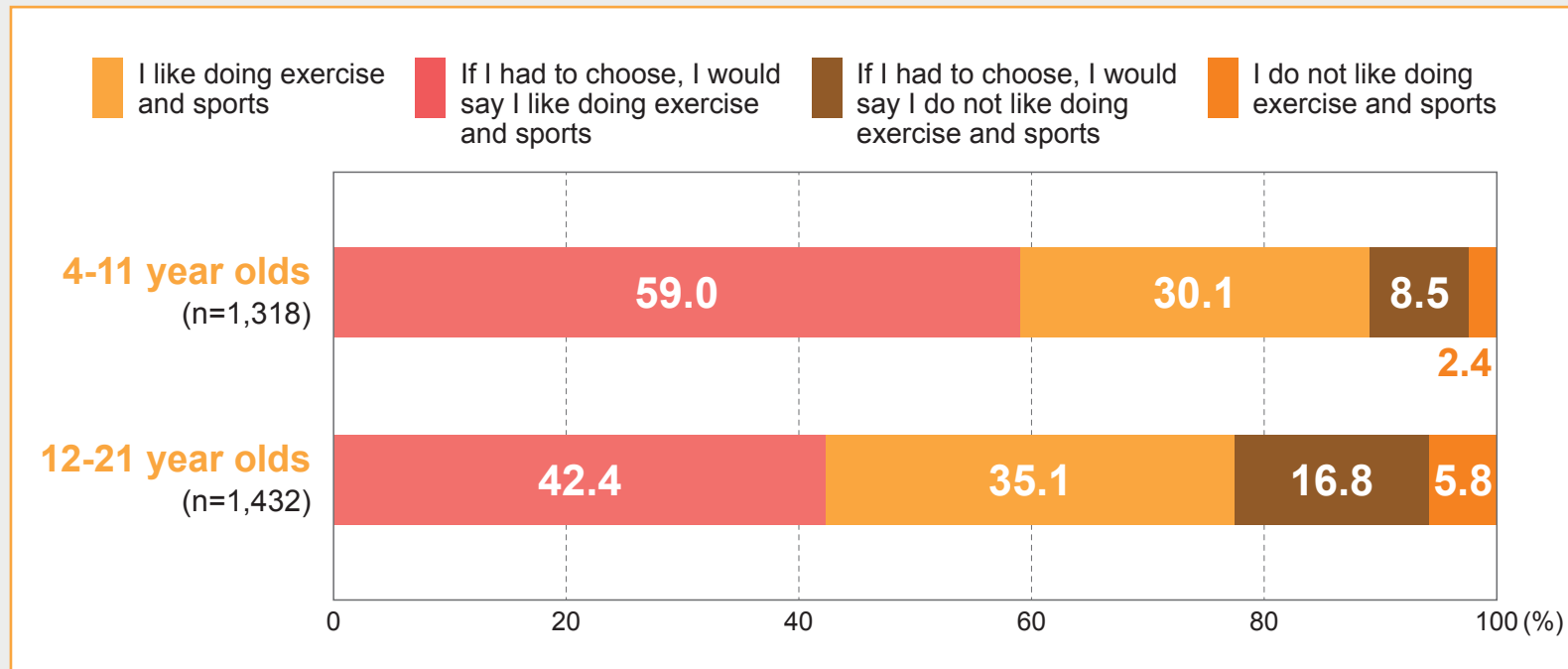
Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

The participation rates in sports teams/clubs for ages 12-21 are shown in **Figure 4**.

The overall rate of participation in sports teams/clubs for ages 12-21 was **41.0%**. Regarding the rates by gender, boys had a participation rate of **49.6%**, which was 17.2 points higher than **32.4%** for girls.

Liking for exercise and sports participation

[Fig.5] Liking for exercise and sports participation



Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 4 to 11 and National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

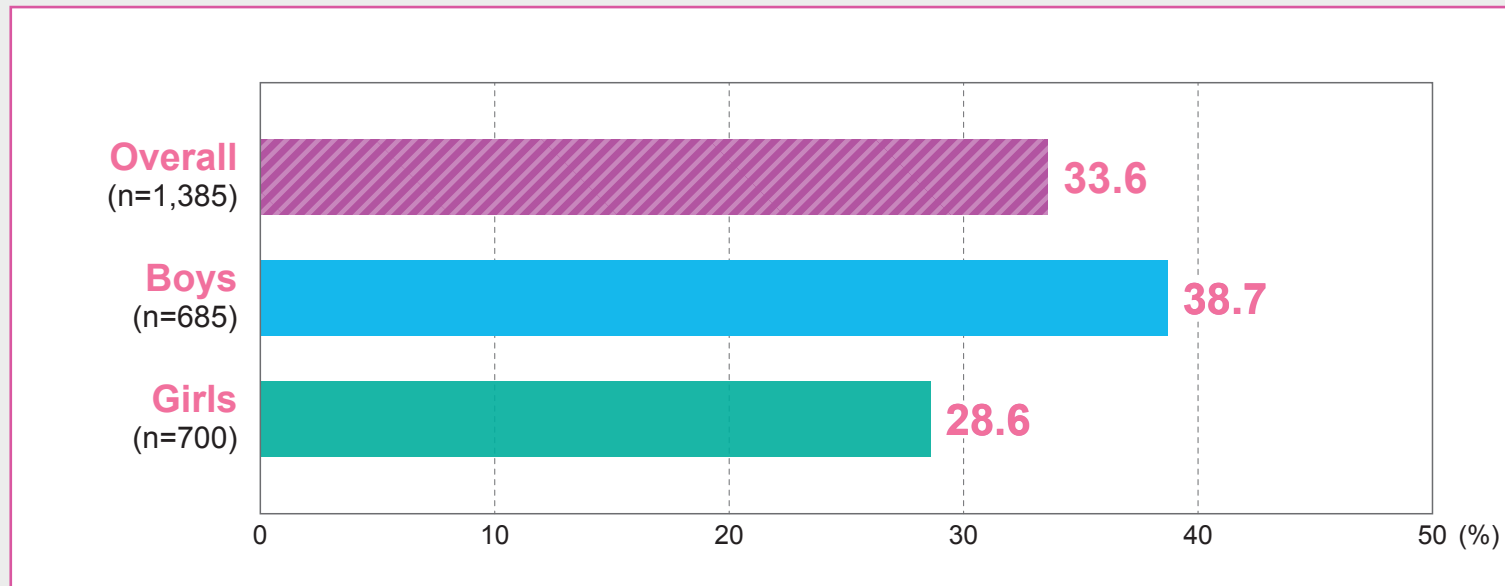
The rates of liking and disliking for exercise and sports participation are indicated in **Figure 5**.

For ages 4-11, “I like doing exercise and sports” was **59.0%**; “If I had to choose, I would say I like doing exercise and sports” was **30.1%**; “If I had to choose, I would say I do not like doing exercise and sports” was **8.5%**; and “I do not like doing exercise and sports” was **2.4%**.

For ages 12-21, “I like doing exercise and sports” was **42.4%**; “If I had to choose, I would say I like doing exercise and sports” was **35.1%**; “If I had to choose, I would say I do not like doing exercise and sports” was **16.8%**; and “I do not like doing exercise and sports” was **5.8%**.

12-21 year olds

[Fig.6] Rates of live sports viewing at the venue (12-21 year olds)



Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

The rates of live sports viewing at the venue for ages 12-21 are shown in **Figure 6**.

Overall, **33.6%** of the survey respondents watched a sports match at a gymnasium, stadium, or other facilities in the past year. In terms of the rates by gender, **38.7%** of

boys and **28.6%** of girls watched a sporting event, with boys exceeding girls by 10.1 points. This tendency of boys with a higher rate of live sports viewing at the venue than girls has remained unchanged since the first survey of this item in 2001.

Sports spectating

12-21 year olds

[Table 4] Types of sports viewed live at the venue (12-21 year olds) (multiple answers were allowed.)

(%)

Rank	Types of sports	Overall (n=1,385)	Boys (n=685)	Girls (n=700)
1	Professional baseball (Nippon Professional Baseball)	11.3	15.3	7.3
2	High school baseball	7.4	8.9	5.9
3	Japan Professional Football League (J1, J2, and J3 Leagues)	4.7	7.3	2.1
4	Professional basketball (B.LEAGUE)	4.0	4.2	3.7
5	Basketball (high school, university, W LEAGUE, etc.)	3.0	2.3	3.7
	I have not watched a sports match at the venue live	66.4	61.3	71.4

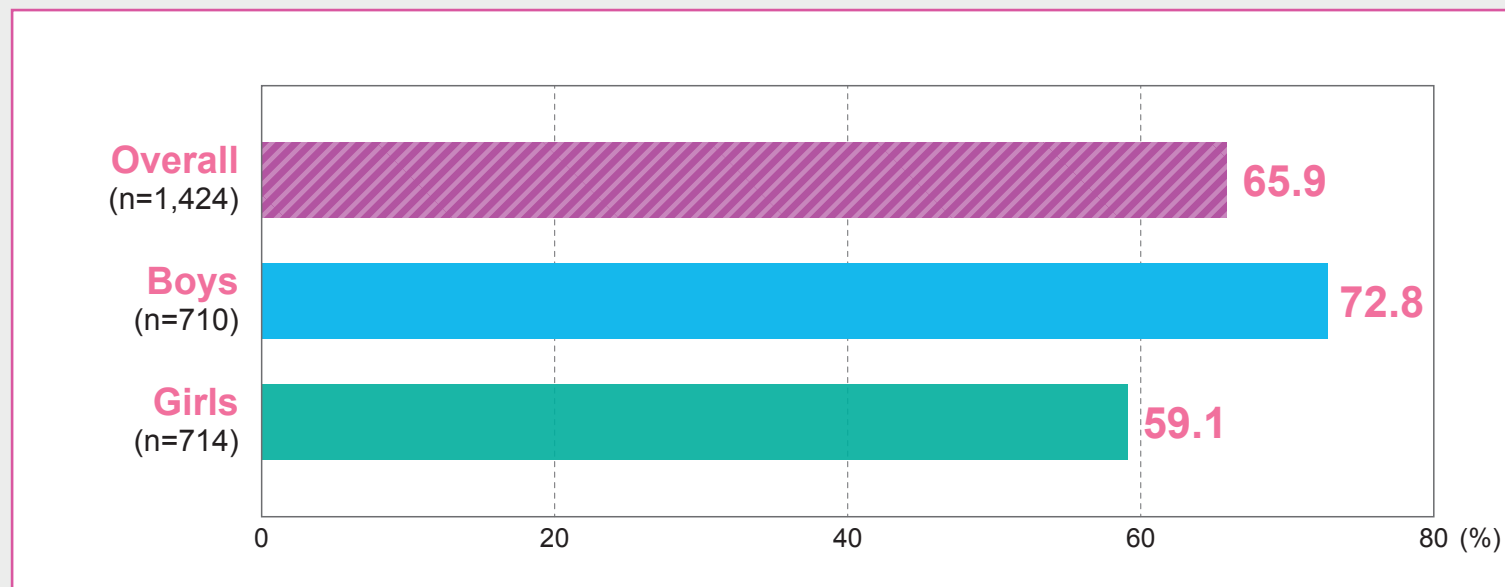
Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

Table 4 reveals the types of sports that were viewed live at the venue by the 12-21 age group.

Overall, “Professional baseball (Nippon Professional Baseball)” had the highest viewing rate at **11.3%**, followed by “High school baseball” at **7.4%**, “Japan Professional Football League (J1, J2, and J3 Leagues)” at **4.7%**, “Professional basketball (B.LEAGUE)” at **4.0%**, and “Basketball (high school, university, W LEAGUE)” at **3.0%**.

Regarding rates by gender, “Professional baseball (Nippon

Professional Baseball)” had the highest viewing rate for both boys and girls, **15.3%** for boys and **7.3%** for girls, followed by “High school baseball” at **8.9%** for boys and at **5.9%** for girls. The type of sports that came in third place was “Japanese Professional Football League (J1, J2, and J3 Leagues)” at **7.3%** for boys, whereas “Professional basketball (B.LEAGUE)” and “Basketball (high school, university, W LEAGUE)” both at **3.7%** for girls.

12-21 year olds**[Fig.7]** Rates of sports viewing via media (12-21 year olds)

*1) Including sports viewing through media such as television, smartphones, tablets, PCs, etc.

Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

The rates of sports viewing via media for ages 12-21 are indicated in **Figure 7**.

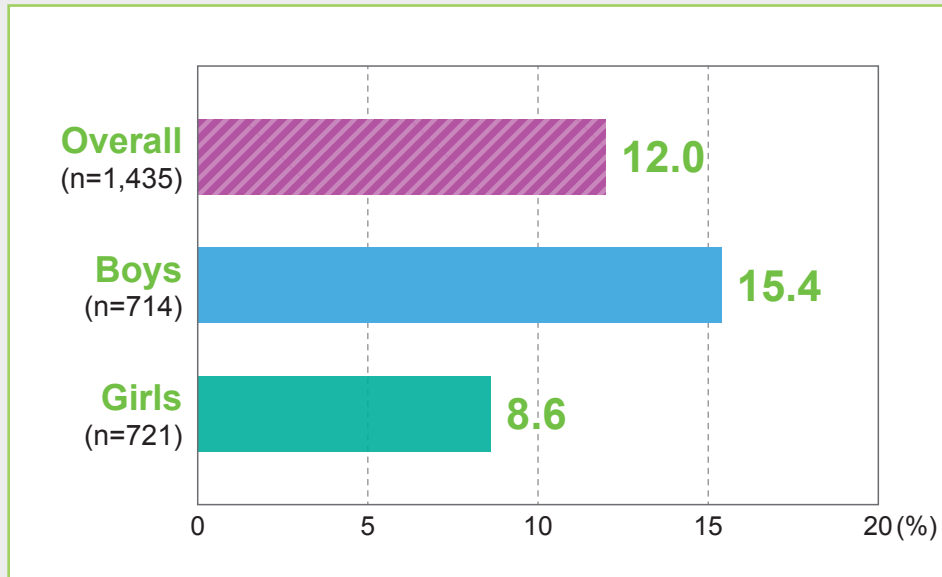
Overall, **65.9%** of survey respondents watched a sports match on a television or smartphone or other forms of media

in the past year. Regarding the rates by gender, **72.8%** of boys and **59.1%** of girls watched a sports match, with boys outnumbering girls by 13.7 points. This trend has not changed since the question was added in 2013.

Sports volunteering

12-21 year olds

【Fig.8】 Sports volunteering rates (12-21 year olds)

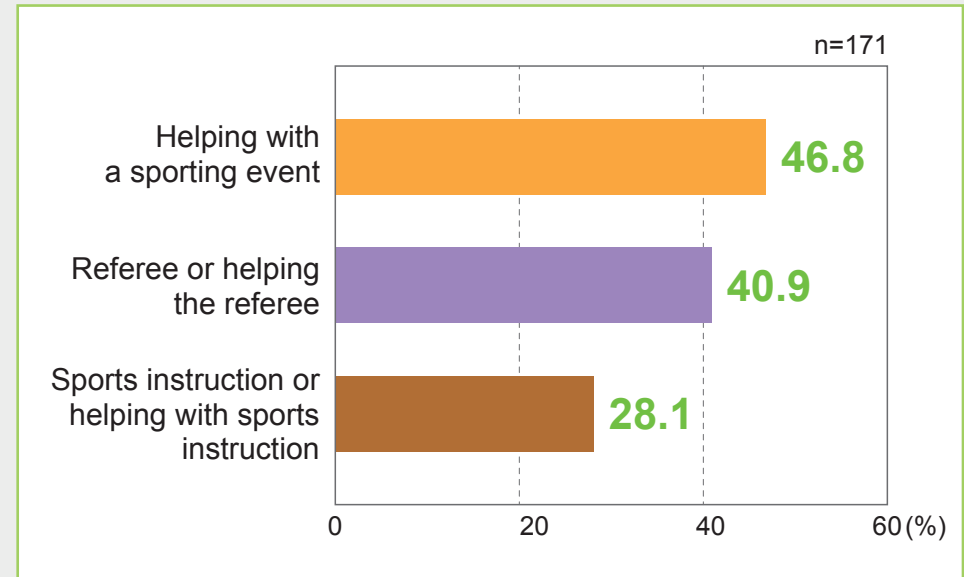


Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

Figure 8 shows the sports volunteering rates for ages 12-21.

Overall, **12.0%** of the survey respondents participated in sports volunteering in the past year. In terms of the rates by gender, **15.4%** of boys participated in sports volunteering, which was 6.8 points higher than **8.6%** for girls. This trend of the rate for boys exceeding the rate for girls has continued since the question was added in 2005.

【Fig.9】 Sports volunteer activities (12-21 year olds) (multiple answers were allowed.)



Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

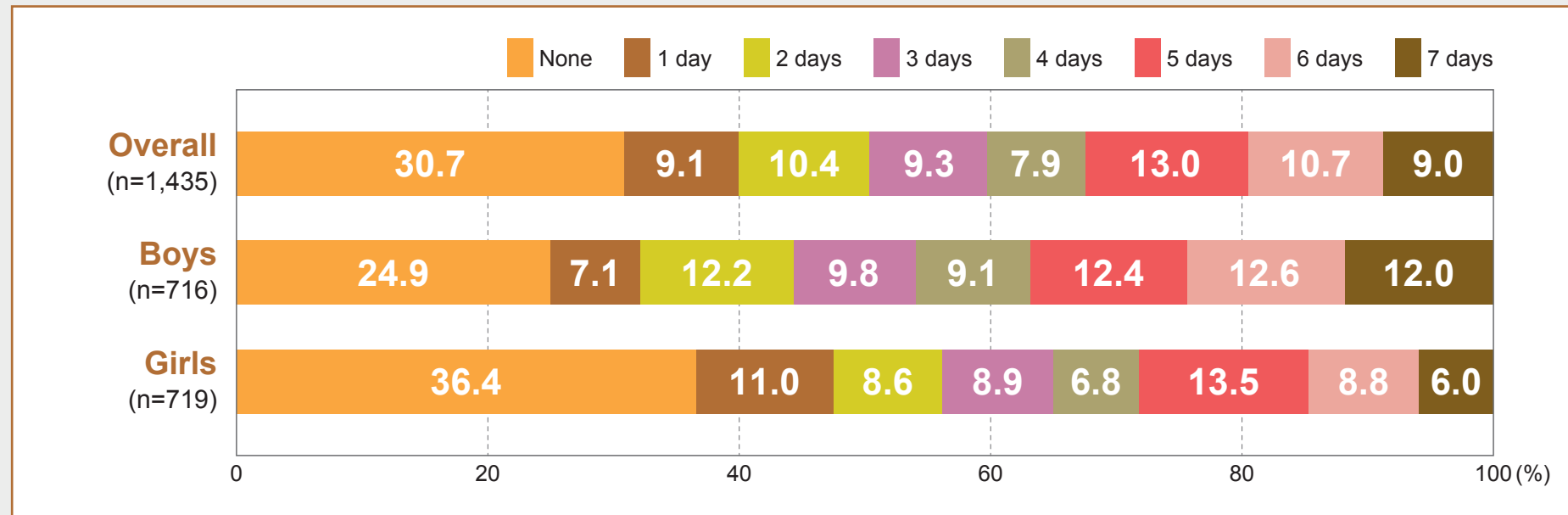
The 12-21 age group was also asked about the types of sports volunteer activities they participated in.

As indicated in Figure 9, “Helping with a sporting event” was the highest participated volunteer activity at **46.8%**, followed by “Referee or helping the referee” at **40.9%**, and “Sports instruction or helping with sports instruction” at **28.1%**.

Status of physical activities of daily living

■ 12-21 year olds

[Fig.10] Number of days with at least 60 min/day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activities in the past 7 days (12-21 year olds)



*1) Number of days in the last 7 days doing physical activity equivalent in intensity to heart pounding or large increases in heart rate for a total of at least 60 minutes per day.

Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

Figure 10 reveals the number of days in the last 7 days respondents engaged in moderate-to-vigorous physical activities for at least 60 minutes a day. Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity is any activity that increases heart rate and makes get out of breath some of the time, and can be done in sports, school activities, playing with friends, or walking to school.

Overall, **30.7%** of survey respondents answered “None”, followed by “5 days” at **13.0%**. The rate of respondents engaging in moderate-

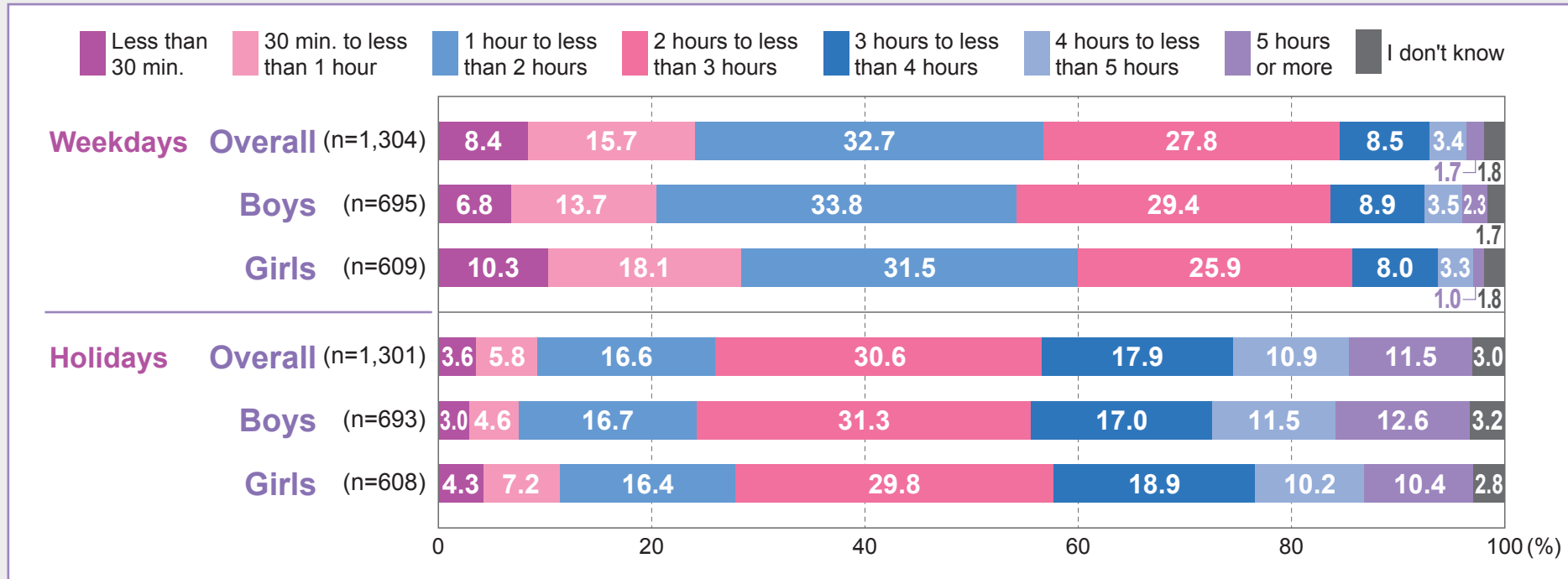
to-vigorous physical activities 5 or more days a week was **32.7%**.

The results by gender showed that “None” was the highest percentage for both boys and girls, at **24.9%** and **36.4%** respectively, with girls outnumbering boys by 11.5 points. Regarding the rate of “5 or more days a week”, boys showed **37.0%** and girls **28.3%**, with boys outnumbering girls by 8.7 points.

Media usage time (screen time)

4-11 year olds

[Fig.11] Media usage time (4-11 year olds)



*1) Number of hours watching TV or DVD, using PCs, video games (including TV, PCs, cellular device games, etc.) or using smartphone per day outside of school class (including kindergarten and pre-school).

Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 4 to 11

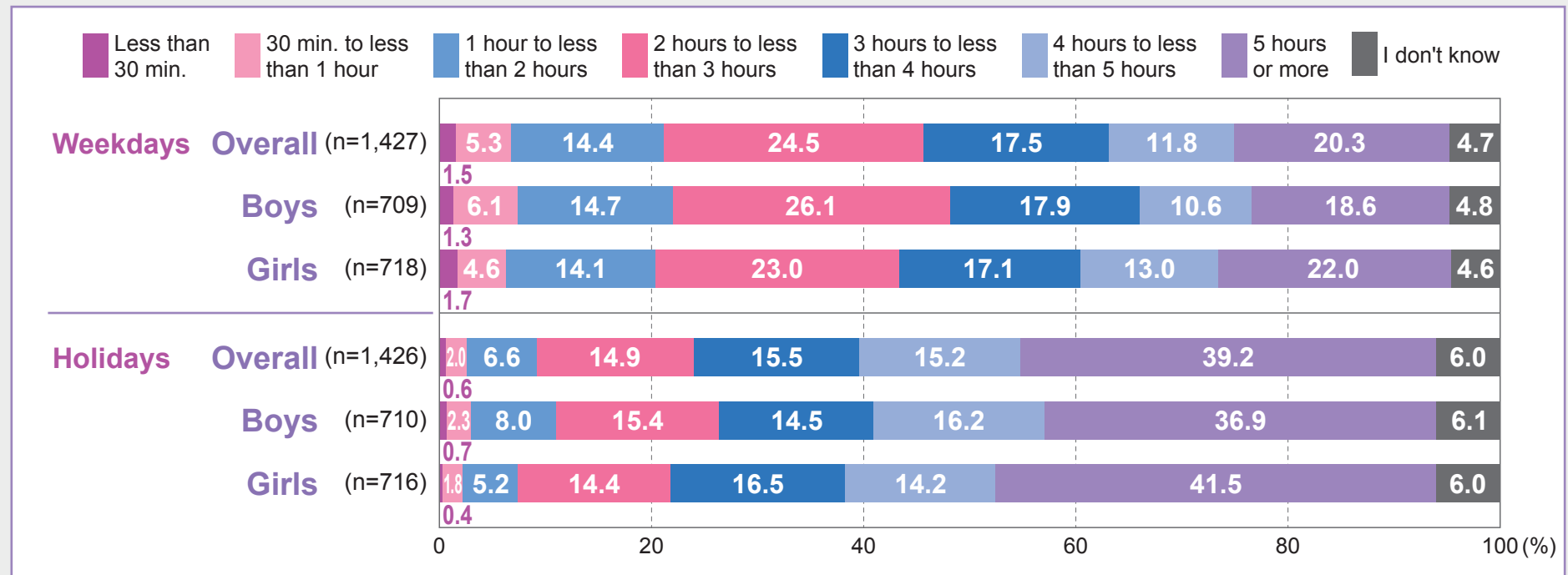
Figure 11 indicates media usage time (screen time) for the 4-11 age group on weekdays and holidays.

In terms of the media usage time per day (outside of lessons at kindergarten, preschool or school), the highest reported answer for weekdays was “1 hour to less than 2 hours” at 32.7%, followed by “2 hours

to less than 3 hours” at 27.8%. For holidays, the most frequent response was “2 hours to less than 3 hours” at 30.6%, followed by “3 hours to less than 4 hours” at 17.9%. The percentage of media usage time of 2 hours or more was higher for boys than for girls by 5.9 points on weekdays and by 3.1 points on holidays.

12-21 year olds

[Fig.12] Media usage time (12-21 year olds)



*1) Number of hours watching TV or DVD, using PCs, video games (including TV, PCs, cellular device games, etc.) or using smartphone per day outside of school and/or work.

Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 12 to 21

Figure 12 shows the media usage time (screen time) for the 12-21 age group on weekdays and holidays.

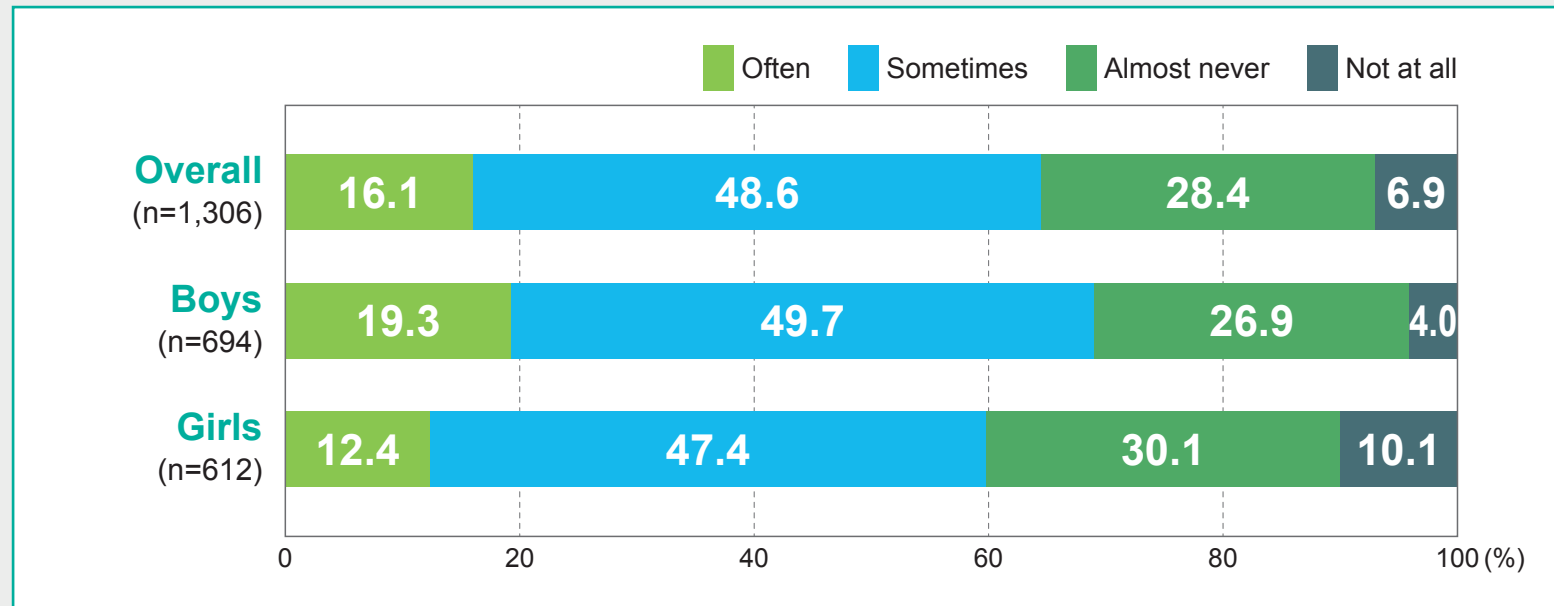
Regarding the media usage time per day (outside of school or work), the highest reported answer for weekdays was “2 hours to less than 3 hours” at **24.5%**, followed by “5 hours or more” at **20.3%**. For holidays, the most

frequent response was “5 hours or more” at **39.2%**. The percentage of media usage time of “5 hours or more” for girls on weekdays was **22.0%**, which was 3.4 points higher than **18.6%** for boys, whereas that on holidays was **41.5%**, which was 4.6 points higher than **36.9%** for boys. This indicates that girls spend more time using media than boys.

Frequencies of exercise, sports, and physical play with family

4-11 year olds

[Fig.13] Exercise, sports, and physical play with family (4-11 year olds)



*1) Family indicates parents and guardians.

Source: 2025 Sasakawa Sports Foundation National Sports-Life Survey of Ages 4 to 11

Figure 13 shows the frequency of engaging in exercise, sports, and physical play together with family for the 4-11 age group.

Their parents or guardians were asked: “Do you or another family member engage in exercise, sports, or physical play together with your child participating in the survey?”

Overall, **16.1%** responded with “Often”; **48.6%** with “Sometimes”; **28.4%** with “Almost never”; and **6.9%** with “Not at all.” Of all the children aged 4-11 years, **64.7%** engaged in exercise, sports, or physical play together with a family member “Often” or “Sometimes”; the rates by gender were **69.0%** for boys and **59.8%** for girls.

A think tank whose every dream and action is taken with the future in mind.

The activities of the Sasakawa Sports Foundation (SSF) are aimed at creating a “Sport for Everyone society” in which everyone enjoys sports in a manner that fits their own lifestyle and interests. Sports not only have the power to maintain and improve mental and physical health, but also the unique potential to contribute to individual development and social cohesion that helps people grow and encourages the formation of society.

The role of the community in people’s lives has been shrinking over the years, and children are growing up with fewer opportunities to interact with those in different age groups. The rapid population ageing is pushing up health- and nursing-care costs, exacerbating already strained fiscal resources. These are issues confronting not just Japan but also an increasing number of countries around the world.

We at the SSF believe that one way of tackling these issues is to utilize the power of sports to build a healthier, more vibrant, and more inclusive society.

Sports can lead to better physical and mental health and can also be used as a communication tool to bridge differences in age, language, and gender. Our task at the SSF is to help provide an environment where everyone can participate in sports and expand opportunities for interpersonal contact, thereby energizing and invigorating both individuals and communities. Such initiatives can not only encourage greater “self-help” efforts toward better health but also deepen understanding of others, fostering an altruistic desire for “mutual aid” and prompting the government to enhance “public assistance.”

And as people’s engagement with sports and the community increases, they will experience three aspects of sports: “participate,” “spectate,” and “volunteer.”

To achieve these goals, we undertake research activities to obtain the data needed to develop concrete, effective policy solutions. We then work with individual and organizational partners to implement those policies, actively engaging with the community to gauge their effectiveness and feeding the results back to our research team. The two pillars of our activities thus act as a feedback mechanism, enabling us to develop even better, more practical solutions confronting society.

One initiative that supports this reinforcing cycle is the Active City Promotion Project led by the SSF. This project aims to utilize sports not only as a mere competition or event, but also as a solution to various issues facing the community, such as health, education, social inclusion, environment, tourism, and community development. The project also aims to create a sustainable system by rooting sports-based practices in the community in cooperation with municipalities and various local leaders.

The knowledge gained from implementing the project in the field is then reflected in surveys and research, leading to the next policy proposal and the formation of public opinion. Through this cycle, SSF enhances the effectiveness of community development through sports and builds a role model that can be implemented by municipalities nationwide.

It is our strong hope that our efforts to address social challenges through the power of sports will trigger similar initiatives abroad, and we intend to actively offer our insights to organizations sharing the Sports for All philosophy. At the same time, we seek to incorporate many innovative, promising practices from other countries, working closely with researchers and professionals around the globe to create a better world for all.

Kazutoshi Watanabe, President
Sasakawa Sports Foundation

Outline of activities

1

Research and Surveys

Sasakawa Sports Foundation's (SSF's) mission is to realize a society where everyone can find happiness by enjoying sports that fit their lifestyles (Sport for Everyone), and conducts research and survey activities both domestically and internationally with a focus on the following main research themes: health and sports, sports and community development, sports for children, sports for people with disabilities, sports volunteering, sports governance, sports life surveys, and white papers on sport.

Research and survey staff take the lead in forming research units together with other researchers and external experts to promote research activities using a multifaceted approach that also incorporates external knowledge.

The collected and analyzed results obtained through surveys and research are used in formulating sports policies at the national and local level and designing projects for sports promotion organizations.

2

Collaboration with Local Governments

SSF actively provides its research results based on the evidence obtained through its research activities to society. SSF has concluded comprehensive cooperation agreements with local governments and sports promotion organizations to solve local issues and create a better society through sports.

Utilizing its knowledge on survey and research activities accumulated to date and its experience in implementation at municipalities and elsewhere, in 2024, SSF launched a new project called the Active City Promotion Project as an initiative to support solutions to sports issues and social challenges faced by municipalities utilizing the diverse values of sports.

In this project, SSF builds partnerships with municipalities and supports them in their efforts to create active cities by forming public-private partnership platforms, developing co-creation programs, and providing opportunities to participate in human resource development programs.

3

Public relations

In addition to disseminating information on the aforementioned initiatives, SSF widely disseminates the latest domestic and international trends and knowledge that contribute to sports policy research through its official website, social media, symposiums, seminars, and international conferences.

As part of its public relations activities, SSF also publishes the results of its biennial survey on sports life as the SSF National Sports-Life Survey in order to ascertain the status of sports activities and involvement in sports among the Japanese population.

In addition, SSF publishes a White Paper on Sport that contains the latest domestic and international data and analysis, and makes it widely available to society.

SPORT FOR
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SASAKAWA SPORTS FOUNDATION

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