Snapshot of Girls’ Well-Being in the United States

The State of Girls 2017

The State of Girls is the first research report to focus on the health and well-being of the 26 million girls living in the United States. The third edition of this report by the Girl Scout Research Institute focuses on economic, physical, and emotional health; education; and extracurricular/out-of-schooltime activities.

This snapshot focuses on two time points: before and after the Great Recession. Overall, more girls are living in poverty and low-income households today, compared to before the Recession. However, there is promising news for girls’ educational achievement, attainment, as well as extracurricular involvement.

Now is the time to invest in girls! Girl Scouts is poised to help bridge the gap for girls in low-income families in order for all girls to live healthy and happy lives.

Economic Well-Being

Top ranked states for girls’ well-being:

1. New Hampshire 6. Massachusetts
2. Utah 7. Nebraska
5. South Dakota 10. North Dakota

The state ranking is based on 13 national measures of girls’ well-being.*

Extracurricular Activities

*More girls participate in extracurricular activities now than in the past.

Girls ages 12-17 not involved in any community service or volunteer work

- 2007: 19%
- 2011-2012: 18%

Girls ages 6-17 who do not participate in any organized activities

- 2007: 19%
- 2011-2012: 18%
Physical and Emotional Health

- **Girls ages 2-19 who are obese**: 16% (2007), 17% (2013-2014)
- **Girls ages 6-17 who exercise less than 4 days a week**: 41% (2007), 38% (2013-2014)
- **Girls ages 14-17 who have seriously considered suicide**: 19% (2007), 23% (2013-2014)
- **Girls ages 6-17 with any emotional, behavioral, or developmental issue**: 7% (2007), 9% (2013-2014)
- **Girls ages 6-17 who do not feel safe at school**: 10% (2007)

More girls today experience threats to their physical and emotional health.

Girls’ Race/Ethnicity

- **White**: 57% (2007), 51% (2016)
- **Latina**: 20% (2007), 25% (2016)
- **Multiracial**: 3% (2007), 4% (2016)
- **American Indian**: 1% (2007), 1% (2016)
- **Asian**: 4% (2007), 5% (2016)
- **Black**: 15% (2007), 14% (2016)

Girls’ Immigrant Status

- **Girls ages 5-17 living in immigrant families**: 23% (2007), 26% (2015)

Source: PRB analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS), U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates, National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH), and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). ACS, NSCH, and NAEP estimates are based on surveys of the population and are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error.

Note that all research measures are presented as deficits that we wish to minimize for girls in the future. These measures represent the most recent data gathered from national and government sources for the period 2012-2015.

*The state ranking for girls’ well-being is a composite measure designed to summarize the well-being of girls in each of the 50 states across the thirteen measures of well-being summarized in this fact sheet in education, economic well-being, extracurricular and out-of-school activities, and physical and emotional health.*