

**BOYS &
GIRLS
CLUBS**



**IMPACT OF
CLUBS**

WHAT WE DID TO SEE THE IMPACT OF CLUBS

During 2019, leadership teams from four Boys and Girls Clubs -- South Coast, Okanagan, Calgary, and Wetaskiwin -- designed and implemented a mixed-method approach to data collection about the impact of Clubs. For the qualitative inquiry, the team designed an interview protocol, identified a sample of interviewees using a purposeful stratified sampling technique, convened 79 in-depth interviews with Club Members, lasting typically between 45-60 minutes, analyzed the data from the interviews, and developed themes from the entire data corpus. For the quantitative inquiry, the team designed a survey that was deployed to Club Members in two different age groups, 8-12 and 13-18-year-olds. The survey yielded data on Boys & Girls Club outcomes from 642 respondents in the 8-12-year-old group and 120 respondents in the 13-18-year-old group.

These are highlights of what they found.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF CLUBS

IMPACT IN POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Being in the Boys and Girls Clubs gives kids the experience of positive relationships that have the potential to fundamentally impact their well-being.

KIDS EXPERIENCE POSITIVE, CARING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ADULTS.

The data reveal that the adult staff at Boys and Girls Clubs have a tremendous impact on the lives of kids in their roles as models and mentors. Through these relationships with staff, kids come to believe that they matter.

"I came to the Club and talked to the staff, and I felt safe. I knew that I had other people in my life who cared about me."

KIDS BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS.

Children and youth experience the powerful influence of healthy friendships in Clubs. They develop friendships that model healthy interaction and that have a positive impact on their lives.

"My friend group has changed since I've been at the Club, and so has the way I see people. I'm open to people now, and it's really cool."

"Club has helped with social skills. I am better at communicating with people and making my voice heard."

81% OF YOUTH AGES 13 AND OLDER AND 86% OF 8-12-YEAR-OLDS REPORT THAT THEY HAVE MORE PEOPLE IN THEIR LIFE WHO CARE ABOUT THEM AFTER BEING IN A CLUB



KIDS DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO CARE FOR OTHERS.

Boys and Girls Clubs expose young people to a diverse population and bring together people of all ages and from all backgrounds in an environment that lets everyone be who they are. This exposure helps youth expand their understanding, empathy, and compassion for others.

KIDS STRENGTHEN THEIR SENSE OF BELONGING WITH OTHERS.

Kids feel accepted for who they are while at the Club. They see Club as a safe space where they can be themselves and thrive in who they are. This sense of belonging translates to their ability to accept others as well.

"I have a place where I know I am accepted. I can talk to people without being judged like I am at school by other people."

"Feeling accepted makes me more likely to accept others."

KIDS IMPROVE THEIR INTERPERSONAL SKILLS.

Young people reported feeling better equipped to navigate their social world because of their experiences in Clubs. Through opportunities to build relationships and practice relational skills, they have developed stronger communication and listening skills, feel more confident working in groups, are better at working through conflict, and are more resilient.

"Club has helped with social skills. The more people I interact with, the more different people I experience, which helps me know how to associate with different people."

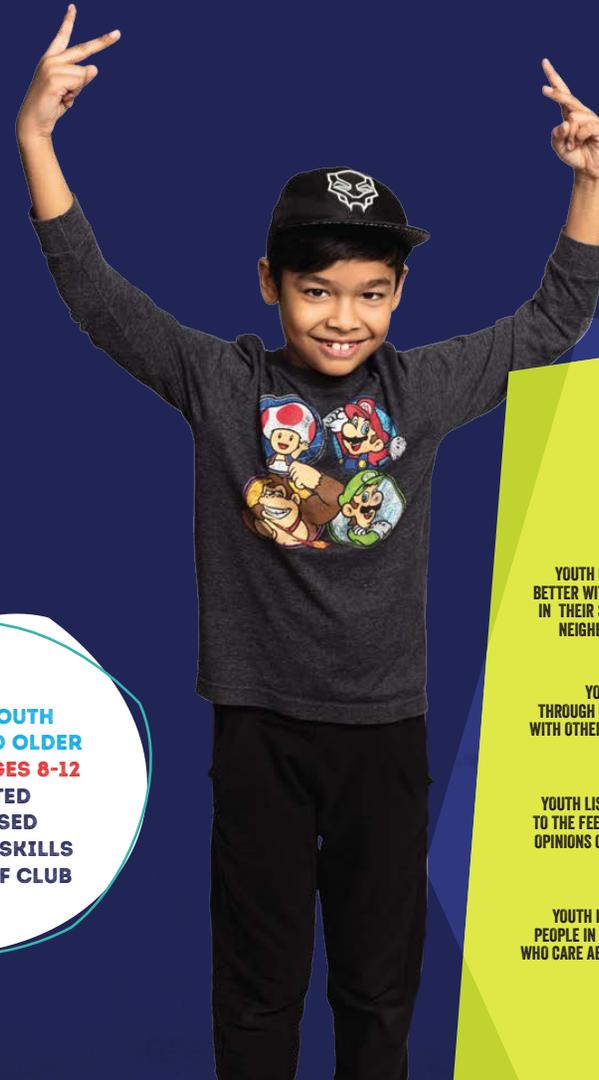
"I learned to care about other people's emotions."

80% OF YOUTH AGES 13 AND OLDER AND 86% AGES 8-12 REPORTED INCREASED LISTENING SKILLS BECAUSE OF CLUB

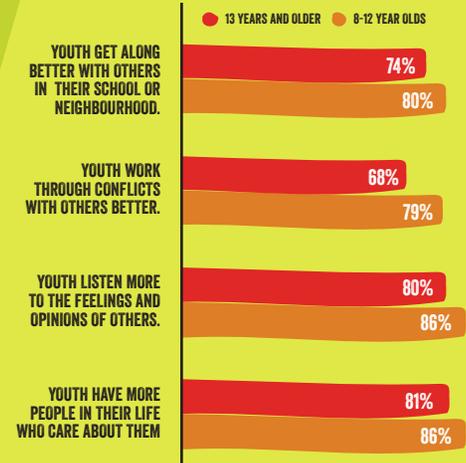
"We take care of each other here."

"Now I will stand up for others when they are being treated wrong at school."

82% OF YOUTH AGES 13 AND OLDER AND 87% AGES 8-12 REPORT FEELING MORE COMFORTABLE BEING THEMSELVES BECAUSE OF CLUB



BY THE NUMBERS: POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS



PERCENT OF YOUTH REPORTING TOP SCORES

IMPACT IN HEALTHY LIVING

This evaluation demonstrates that children and youth learn to make healthy choices through their experience at Boys and Girls Clubs. They discover what it means to take responsibility for the decisions they make and develop capability to pursue a healthy lifestyle through their choices.

KIDS GET BETTER AT MAKING GOOD CHOICES.

Kids are taking more ownership of their lives and striving to make healthy choices for themselves because of Club.

"I'm more aware of the world around me. The Club has helped me grow into me. I take part in my life."

"I'm more conscious of the decisions I am making."

KIDS DEVELOP MORE ACTIVE AND HEALTHY HABITS.

At Clubs, youth are actively involved in building habits of healthy living.

"I've learned that no matter what, you should always take care of yourself. If you help yourself, you can help others and make the world a better place."

"I am more physically active now, not like a sloth anymore. I am happy mentally because being active, I have new friends."

KIDS FORGE RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY.

Young people are developing the courage and capacity to move productively through challenges because of Club.

"Being part of the Club has taught me how to act in certain situations and how to deal with problems."

"The Club helped me to learn healthy ways to deal with problems."

79% OF YOUTH AGES 13 AND OLDER AND 87% OF YOUTH AGES 8-12 REPORT MAKING BETTER CHOICES FOR THEMSELVES BECAUSE OF CLUB

69% OF YOUTH 13 AND OLDER AND 88% OF YOUTH AGES 8-12 ARE MORE ACTIVE BECAUSE OF CLUB

77% OF YOUTH AGES 8 AND OLDER REPORT BEING BETTER ABLE TO BOUNCE BACK AFTER GOING THROUGH A HARD TIME



KIDS MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD HEALING AND RECOVERY.

Being a part of the Clubs has given many young people the ability to heal and recover from difficulty and trauma in their lives. Interviewees report that the Club experience encourages them and helps them navigate the steps of personal recovery.

"I didn't expect to live to 20. I [now] want to be clean and improve my mental health."

KIDS DEVELOP SKILLS OF EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION.

Children and youth can manage their emotions and develop socio-emotional intelligence as a result of Clubs. The Club also fosters strength in their sense of identity and healthy personhood which produces stability for their lives.

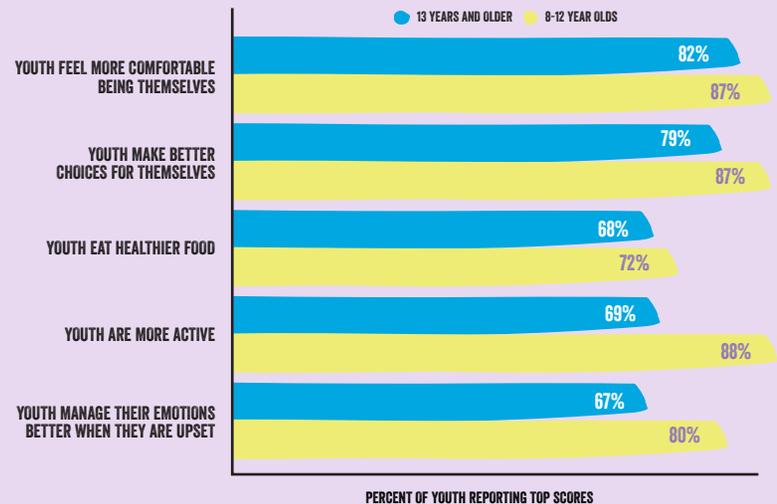
"Being part of the club has taught me how to act in certain situations and how to deal with problems, how to be calmer in a situation I would have been much more emotional before."

KIDS GROW IN THEIR ABILITY FOR SELF-CARE.

Young people develop skills of self-care at the Club. They come to realize their own value in greater ways than many of them have experienced before.

"I respect myself a lot more, and I value myself. I am wanted here, not just needed."

BY THE NUMBERS: HEALTHY LIVING



PERCENT OF YOUTH REPORTING TOP SCORES



IMPACT IN LIFELONG LEARNING

Through Clubs, children and youth develop curiosity and creative expression, learn how to challenge themselves, and achieve goals.

KIDS DISCOVER THEIR POTENTIAL.

Young people are inspired at the Club to embrace new learning and discover their full potential.

"Being around other people and learning the types of stuff that I did at the Club helped me find out who I want to be and figure out who I am."

KIDS ARE MOTIVATED TO TRY NEW THINGS.

When young people achieve success through new experiences at Club, it increases the likelihood that they will engage more frequently in learning experiences. The healthy decision-making skills that kids are learning at the Club lead to increased confidence in themselves and a growing belief that they are capable individuals.

"Feeling safe and like Club is a judgement-free space opened me up to doing things that I wouldn't have before."

"Being around so many different children of differing ages allows me to learn by watching. You just don't get that by just being stuck with your own age. I get to learn this way."

KIDS HAVE AN INCREASED CONFIDENCE IN SELF.

The experience young people have in the Club help them develop a sense of self and a perspective of self that promotes confidence and self-assurance.

"For the first time, I feel more confident being myself."

77% OF YOUTH AGES 8 AND OLDER REPORT THAT THEY LIKE CHALLENGING THEMSELVES AND TRYING NEW THINGS MORE BECAUSE OF CLUB



KIDS DEVELOP DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE.

Youth in Clubs are more aware of the possibilities for their future.

"The Club has helped me be more optimistic about the future. I can step out of my comfort zone and embrace the fear."

KIDS ARE MORE ACCEPTING OF THEMSELVES.

Through the Club, young people come to feel greater comfort with themselves. They experience their value and worth in ways that allow them to relax into their own identity.

"I can be myself and not try to impress people."

"I've learned to be myself."

KIDS EXPLORE MEANING AND PURPOSE IN LIFE THROUGH CLUB

The data show that the Club gives children and youth the opportunity to consider what they value. They find possibility for their lives and discover meaning and purpose.

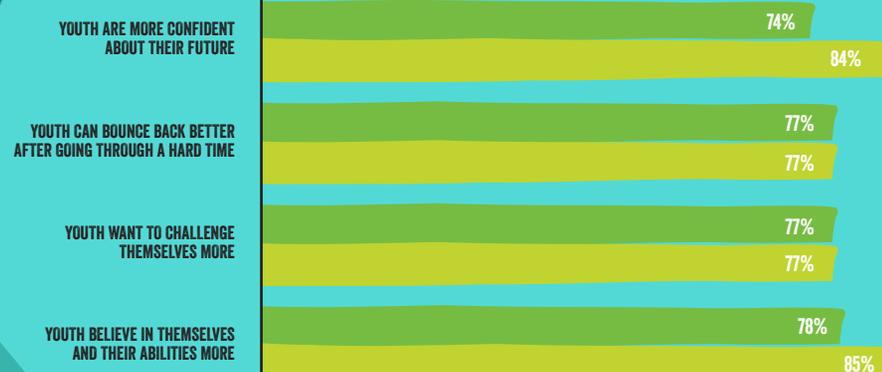
"The Club has taught me to be more caring, to find the importance in things that you may not have considered."

74% OF YOUTH AGES 13 AND OLDER AND 84% OF YOUTH AGES 8-12 REPORT THAT THEY FEEL MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT THEIR FUTURE BECAUSE OF CLUB



BY THE NUMBERS: LIFELONG LEARNING

● 13 YEARS AND OLDER ● 8-12 YEAR OLDS



PERCENT OF YOUTH REPORTING TOP SCORES

IMPACT IN LEADERSHIP

Through Clubs, young people learn how to have a positive influence on others. They build skills of responsibility and cooperation that help them serve others well.

KIDS BUILD NEW SKILLS OF LEADERSHIP.

Clubs are places where positive leaders emerge. Leadership is a difficult competency to acquire, and even more challenging is the acquisition of character traits that make a leader.

"When leading others, you need to have confidence to do it right. When following you need to trust your leader will do what is best for the group."

KIDS EXPERIENCE THE INFLUENCE OF THEIR LIVES ON OTHERS.

Young people are developing empathy and a desire to help their peers through Clubs.

"I desire to be a good role model, like encouraging my younger sister to see the positive things in life."

"I want to be a good leader and mentor young kids."

KIDS DEVELOP A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS.

The data show that young people who have been at Club report being able to adopt an appropriate sense of care and responsibility for the welfare of others.

"Being a leader is being responsible and being kind and nice to people at the same time."

"There are other people out there that have really tough times. They may push people away, but they do want somebody to help them. And I'm hoping that I can do that for somebody one day."

KIDS BECOME MOTIVATED TO SERVE OTHERS.

The Club has helped young people find expressions of service to others. The experience of Club helps them think about others and take actions to benefit others.

"Wherever I am, I can make a positive community."

80% OF YOUTH AGES 13 AND OLDER AND 92% OF YOUTH AGES 8-12 REPORT FEELING MORE CONFIDENT TAKING ON LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES BECAUSE OF CLUB

79% OF YOUTH AGES 13 AND OLDER AND 91% OF YOUTH AGES 8-12 SAY THEY HAVE A MORE POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON OTHERS BECAUSE OF CLUB



BY THE NUMBERS: LEADERSHIP



PERCENT OF YOUTH REPORTING TOP SCORES

WHAT WE CAN IMPROVE

The data reveal some areas to improve in the future. Among the most significant are the following:

VAGUE IDEAS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE SELVES.

When youth articulated thoughts about their future, they tended to be vague and focus on what they would do rather than who they would become. For example, when asked about future goals, a common response was “get a good job” or “go to Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.” Whereas the data showed that young people were growing through Club, they did not have clarity about how they wanted to continue growing and developing into the future.

LACK OF DATA ABOUT EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS.

Even though the data show that youth developed skills of lifelong learning, there was not much data in this study to suggest that being in Club is helping youth achieve educational success at school. Most of the learning was socio-emotional learning, not scholastic learning. This reveals an area for consideration for Club programming going forward.

UNCLEAR SELF-PERCEPTION AS A LEADER.

Many of the youth who were interviewed reported they had not developed leadership skills while at Club even when they discussed in depth the positive influence they were having on others. Some youth resisted taking the label of a leader. Others, even though they defined themselves as leaders, attributed their leadership development to sports and other activities outside of Club. One said, “I don’t really think I was leading; I am more of a lone wolf.” Another said, “Personally, I haven’t [developed leadership skills].” Whereas youth were exhibiting progress in leadership skills, they were not widely adopting the mantle of leadership among their peers.

UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN SOME AREAS OF HEALTHY LIVING.

Most notably, the data revealed some gaps in the impact of healthy living having to do with healthy habits of eating. For some youth, the data show evidence of progress, but the data revealed gaps for other youth in this area. This could be a consequence of the inability of young people to manage food access and preparation, a reality of being young and a dependent. But it also warrants consideration for greater attention going forward.

WHAT CREATES THE IMPACT

The evaluation revealed four causal factors contributing to the impact of Clubs on children and youth.

PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT.

The data show that when young people have a safe space for self-expression and self-discovery, they build confidence and feel more comfortable being themselves.

“I always feel welcome and supported here. I can always talk to the staff. I feel better about myself because staff are welcoming, here for us and I can always tell them what’s going on.”

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISCOVERY.

The data show that through new experiences, young people are discovering strengths and weaknesses, growing their confidence, and seeing possibilities for the future.

“[I have grown] to be a guy that is sure of himself, can think for himself. Being around other people and learning the types of stuff that I did at the Club, it helped me find who I want to be and figure out who I am.”

BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.

Providing opportunities for young people to interact with others and practice their interpersonal skills leads to strengthened communication skills, a sense of belonging, and resilience.

“Club has helped with social skills. The more people I interact with, the more different people I experience, which helps me know how to associate with different people.”

STRONG MENTORS AND ROLE MODELS.

The data reveal that through the relationships young people build with staff and older peers in Club, they experience a sense of belonging, are motivated to learn, and believe that they matter.

“Being around so many different children of differing ages allows me to learn by watching. You just don’t get that by just being stuck with your own age. I get to learn this way.”

WHAT WE WILL DO IN RESPONSE

To respond to the discoveries of the evaluation, the four Boys and Girls Clubs represented in this study will be working on numerous ways to expand, amplify, and deepen the impact of Clubs. These are some of the most significant responses:

1 CLUB STAFF RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

- Develop and integrate training specifically to support youth with self-confidence, acceptance, and relationships to further the effects of building resiliency.
- Provide ongoing “relationship-focused” training opportunities.
- Broaden diversity training to amplify the personal experience of belonging among youth.
- Ensure that the diversity of the youth served is matched within staff diversity.
- Consider hiring more Club graduates as employees to further their development in leadership.

2 PROGRAMMING

- Continue to ensure that a wide variety of experiential learning opportunities can abundantly be provided as part of Club programming.
- Design more intentional and creative ways to develop decision-making ability among children and youth.
- Create programs to teach youth how to advocate for themselves and each other in positive ways.
- Continue to expand youth physical wellness programs.
- Make health promotion more explicit and integrated into all programming.
- Create more community volunteer opportunities as a means of further developing social skills and empathy.
- Expand peer mentoring and one-to-one programs to help youth build resiliency.

3 NEXT LEVEL / FUTURE WORK

- Develop a program that defines and teaches youth what leadership skills are and how they can develop these skills inside and outside of Club.
- Develop more opportunities for youth to be the leaders and facilitators.
- Build strategies to help children and youth envision and pursue their desired futures.

