



Fact Sheet: Findings about Girls from the 2004 Boston Youth Survey

The Boston Youth Survey (BYS), the product of a partnership between Boston's Office of Human Services and the Harvard Youth Violence Prevention Center, is an in-depth examination of the lives of youth attending public high schools in Boston. This survey is conducted every two years. The following are findings from the 2004 BYB, the first year the survey was designed to draw a representative sample of Boston youth. The 2004 survey was taken by 1079 students. For more information, including limitations, or to download a copy of the 2004 BYB report, visit our website at <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hyvp/>.

School Performance and Education Plans

- A greater percentage of girls than boys reporting getting mostly As and Bs in school the previous year (38% vs. 23%).
- Girls were more likely than boys to report spending more than an hour per day on homework (50% vs. 35%), and to believe they will finish college (93% vs. 90%).
- While girls were no more likely than boys to report being truant, a greater percent of girls (36%) than boys (29%) were truant due to oversleeping or being too tired. Girls were also more likely than boys to cite personal/family responsibilities as a reason for truancy (22% vs. 16%).

Feelings about Self and Future

- Boys had higher scores than girls on aggression (15% vs. 11%); girls had higher scores on depression (49% vs. 31%).
- More girls (52%) than boys (44%) reported having trouble getting along with other students in the past month.
- Girls were less likely than boys to feel hopeful about the future (57% vs. 67%).

Out-of-School Time

- Girls were less likely than boys to report that they had played on a sports team (37% vs. 59%) or that they worked after school (29% vs. 35%). They were more likely than boys to report that they did volunteer work (42% vs. 29%).
- When asked about physical activity, girls were less likely than boys to indicate they had the equipment they needed (57% vs. 72%) or a convenient location available (62% vs. 77%) to exercise or play sports. They were also less likely than boys to report that there were programs near their home (45% vs. 56%) or at school (62% vs. 74%) for the types of sports or activities that interested them.
- When asked why they did not participate in any after-school programs, boys were more likely than girls to report no programs interested them (30% vs. 25%). Girls were more likely to report they had to take care of younger siblings (10% vs. 6%), which may in part explain why they were also more likely to report their parents wanted them to go right home after school (10% vs. 5%).

Health and Physical Activity

- A significantly smaller percentage of girls than boys reported exercising four or more days per week (28% vs. 54%).
- Girls were less likely than boys to be overweight or at-risk-for-overweight (45% vs. 52%).



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Violence, Victimization, and Safety

- Boys were more likely than girls to report being victimized by violence in the past year (53% vs. 36%); over half of boys were victimized by violence. They were also more likely than girls to witness two or more types of violence in the past year (75% vs. 67%).
- Girls were less likely than boys to be victimized on the MBTA, in their neighborhood, on their street, on their way to/from school, and at their youth center. They were more likely than boys to be victimized at home (19% vs. 15%).
- There was no difference by gender in victimization at school, but boys were more likely than girls to feel unsafe there (23% vs. 18%).
- While one-quarter of girls reported being assaulted in the past year, nearly one-third (32%) of boys reported being assaulted. Eight percent of girls were assaulted by a boyfriend in the past year.
- Girls were more likely than boys to report ever being forced to have sex by someone other than a dating partner (9% vs. 5%). Seven percent of girls report ever being forced by a dating partner to have sex.
- Girls were more likely than boys to have confidence in their ability to avoid fights (85% vs. 73%). They were more likely than boys to agree or strongly agree that “I don’t need to fight because there are other ways to deal with anger” (79% vs. 69%).
- Girls were no more or less likely than boys to perpetrate violence, or to think gang activity in their neighborhood or school was dangerous.
- Boys were more likely than girls to believe that getting a gun would be *very* or *fairly easy* (50% vs. 33%). They were also more likely than girls to have carried a gun in the past year (14% vs. 3%).

Resources for Youth

- A higher percentage of girls than boys indicated they would use at least 1 of 14 resources listed if they experienced discrimination (79% vs. 66%), experienced violence (85% vs. 73%), or felt stressed or upset (82% vs. 69%).
- Girls were less likely than boys to have contact with the police (39% vs. 53%). Of those who did have contact, girls were more likely than boys to have interacted with the police as witnesses to a crime (63% vs. 33%), whereas boys were more likely to have been questioned by the police about their own behavior (68% vs. 37%).

Relationships with Others

- Girls were more likely than boys to believe that in general people would try to take advantage of them if they could (50% vs. 37%).
- While girls and boys were equally likely to confide in a parent or guardian about most things, girls were less likely than boys to trust their teachers (51% vs. 58%) or neighbors (26% vs. 36%).