

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA)
Response to Request for Public Comment on the
National Youth Sports Strategy

Chapter 5: Benefits & Barriers to Youth Sports

Page 22 Line 502-511 “Inequities in Sports Participation”

Page 22 Lines 520-523 “Barriers to Entry”

Page 23 Lines 528-531 “Cost”

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) has been tracking youth sports participation for over 40 years. In 2008, SFIA was one of the founding members of the Physical Activity Council (PAC). The PAC finances an annual participation survey that tracks participation for 120 different activities. In 2018, the survey had a sample size of 20,069.

The data shows that cost is increasingly becoming a factor for people to participate in sports. Figures 1-3 show that income has a direct affect on participation. The more income a family has the more likely they are to participate in sports. Figure 4 provides a clear picture that inactivity (not participating at least once in any of the 120 activities that we survey) is decreasing for families with a greater income while it is increases for families with less. This data demonstrates the effects of the current pay-to-play model in youth sports.

Sport specialization is something that is becoming part of the norm in youth sports. We see that at an earlier age, children are required to specialize or select only one sport to participate in. This leads to children becoming disinterested and ‘burning out’ of these sports. In 2015, the sports per participant for people aged 6 to 17 dropped below two (figure 5). This is the first time this has happened since we started tracking this figure.

Figure 1

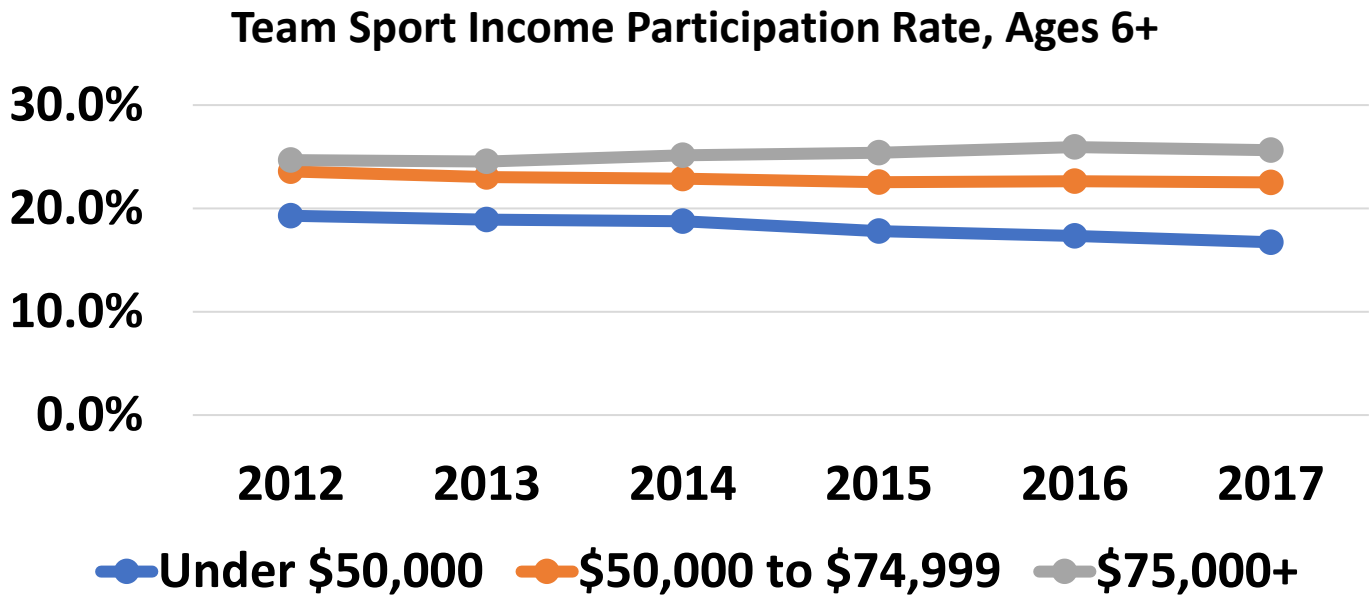


Figure 2

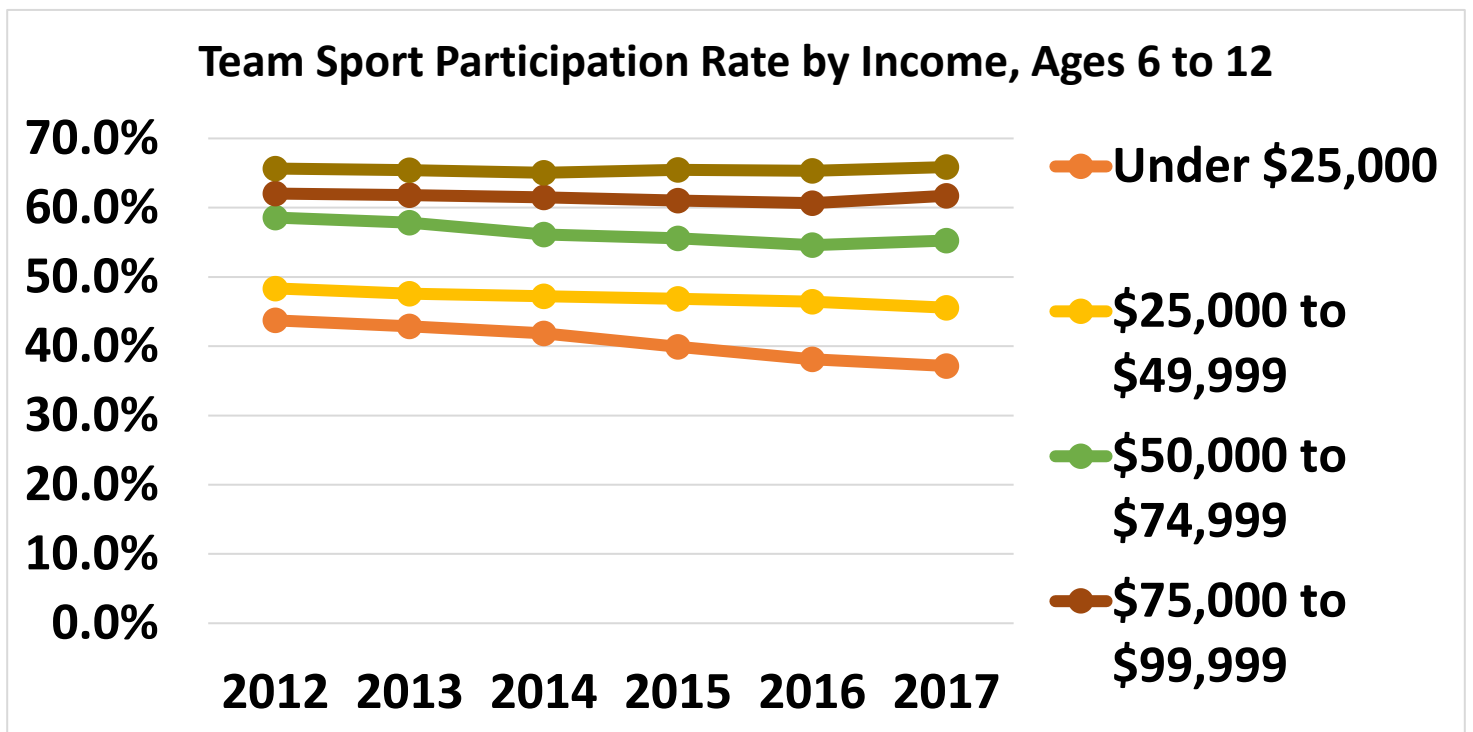


Figure 3

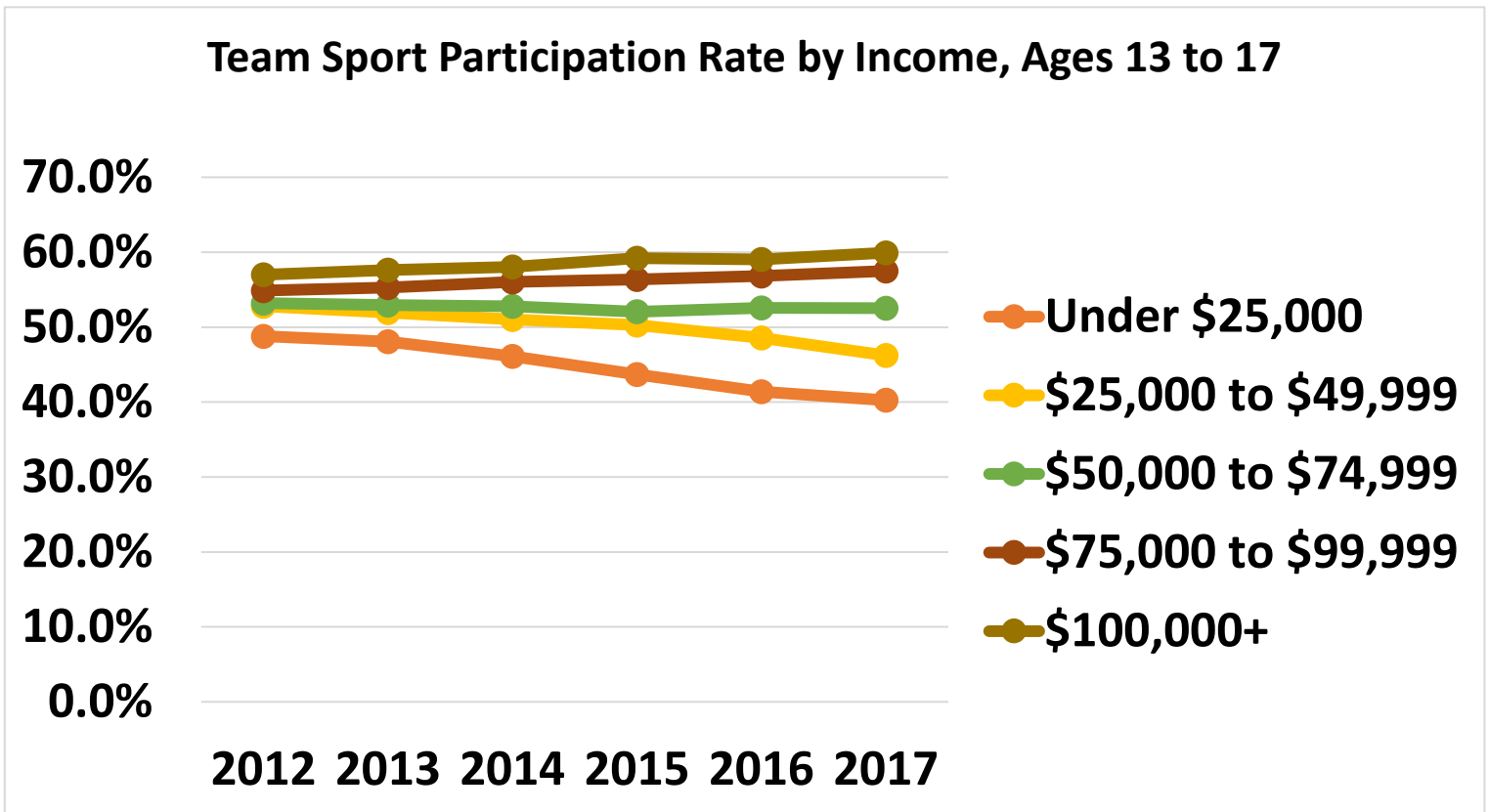


Figure 4

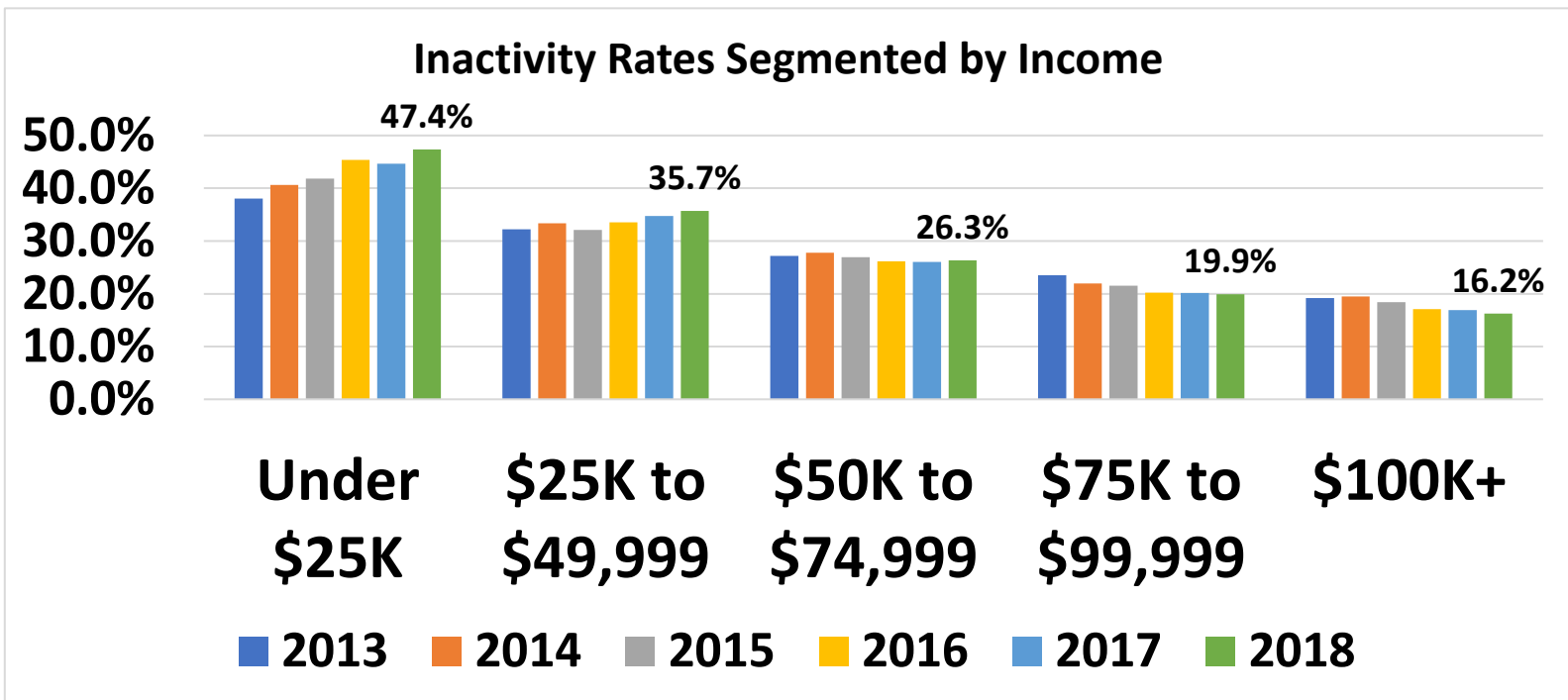


Figure 5

**Team Sports Participants By Sports Per Participant –
Ages 6 to 17**

- Total Team Sport Participants Ages 6 to 17**
- Sports Per Participant Ages 6 to 17**

