
“THE CREDIT CARD OR THE TAXI...”: AN INVESTIGATION OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH SPORT

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USA

CLIMBING

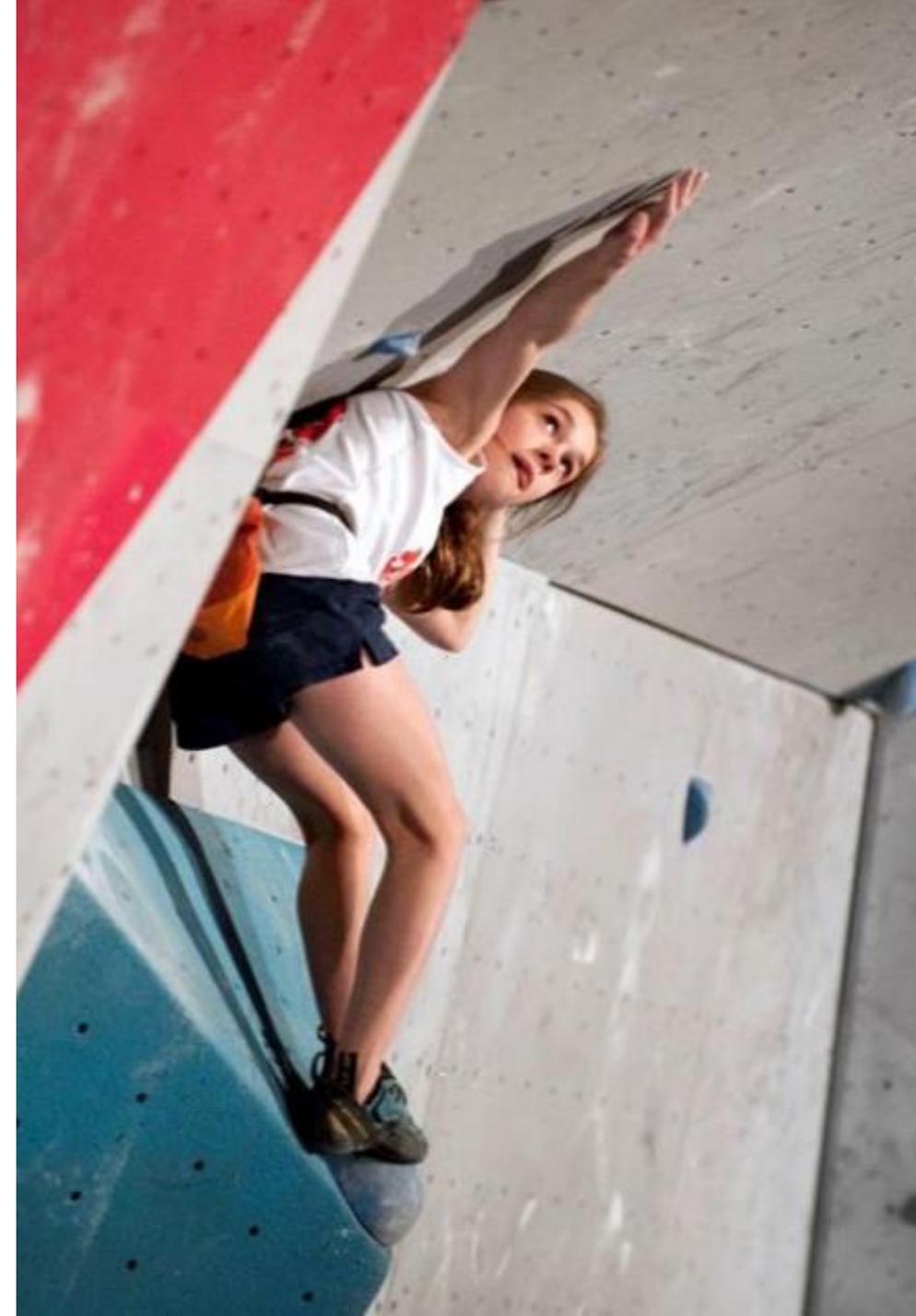
SPECIAL THANKS



INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS COMPETITION CLIMBING?

- Climbing facilities with purpose built indoor walls
 - Speed
 - Sport (Lead Climbing)
 - Speed Climbing
- Dramatic growth in sport since 2000
 - Climbing walls opening once every 3 weeks
 - Inclusion in the Olympics (Tokyo 2020)
 - 2 Sport (Paris)



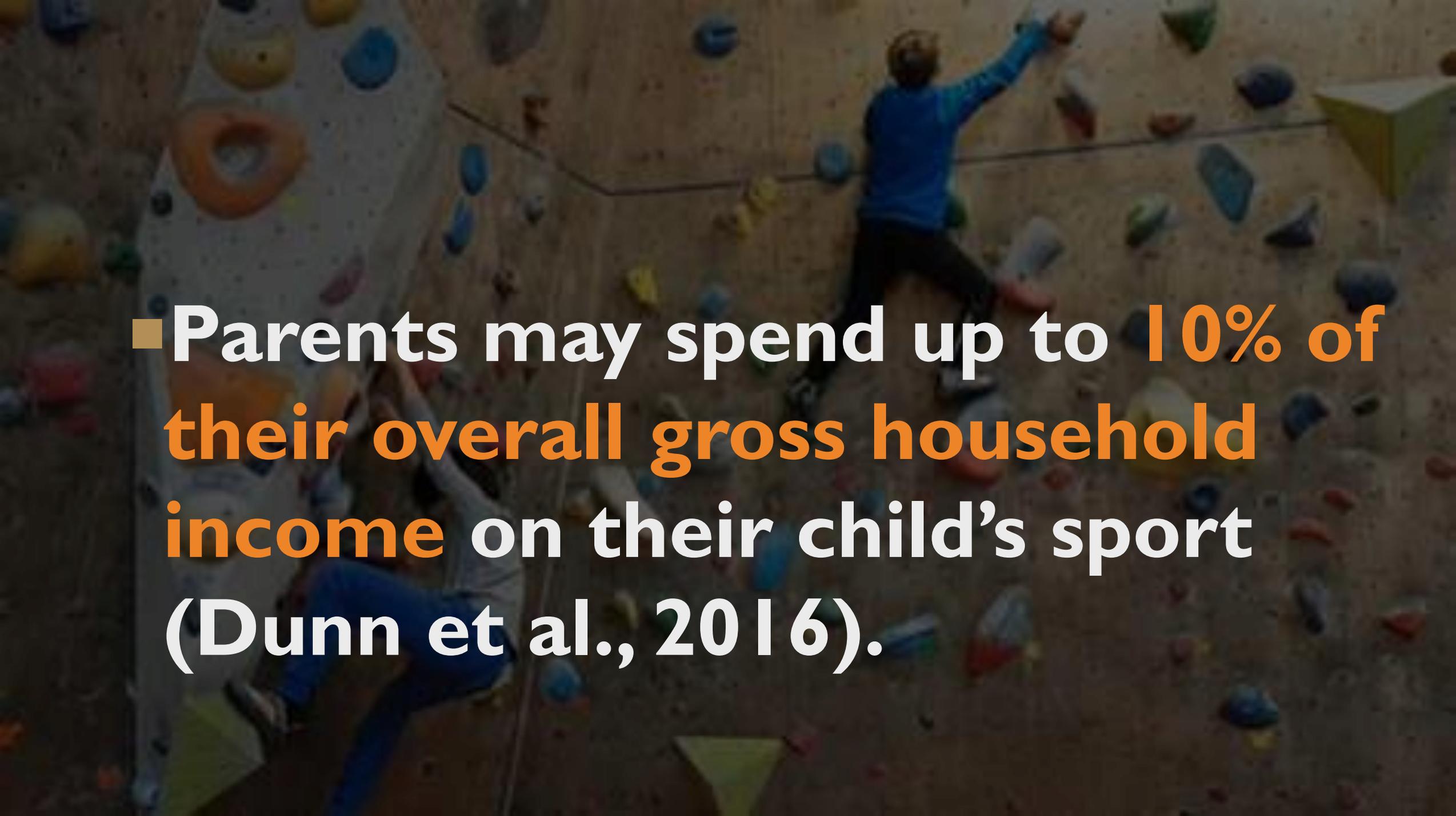
Parent involvement provides one lens through which the emotional, physical, and financial benefits of youth sport may be understood (Warner, Dixon, & Leierer, 2015; Wiersma & Fifer, 2008).

A robust literature has explored parent involvement in youth sport (Elliott & Drummond, 2017; Knight & Holt, 2013; Thrower, Harwood, & Spray, 2016; Trussell & Shaw, 2012; Wheeler & Green, 2014).

Most studies of parent involvement in youth sport have been conducted within “traditional” sport contexts (Dorsch, Smith, & McDonough, 2009; Holt, Tamminen, Black, Sehn, & Wall, 2008)

There is a need to better understand parental perceptions and behaviors within emergent and alternative youth sports (Schöffl, Hoffmann, & Küpper, 2013).

BACKGROUND

- 
- A photograph of children climbing a rock wall. The wall is covered in colorful climbing holds (blue, orange, yellow, green). A child in a blue shirt is visible in the upper right, reaching for a hold. Another child is partially visible in the lower left. The background is a light-colored wall with a grid pattern.
- Parents may spend up to **10%** of their overall gross household income on their child's sport (Dunn et al., 2016).

USAC's organizational structure employs **few paid staff and relies on engaged volunteers** to fill roles such as competition judges and regional coordinators, with **many volunteer positions filled by the parents** of youth athletes.

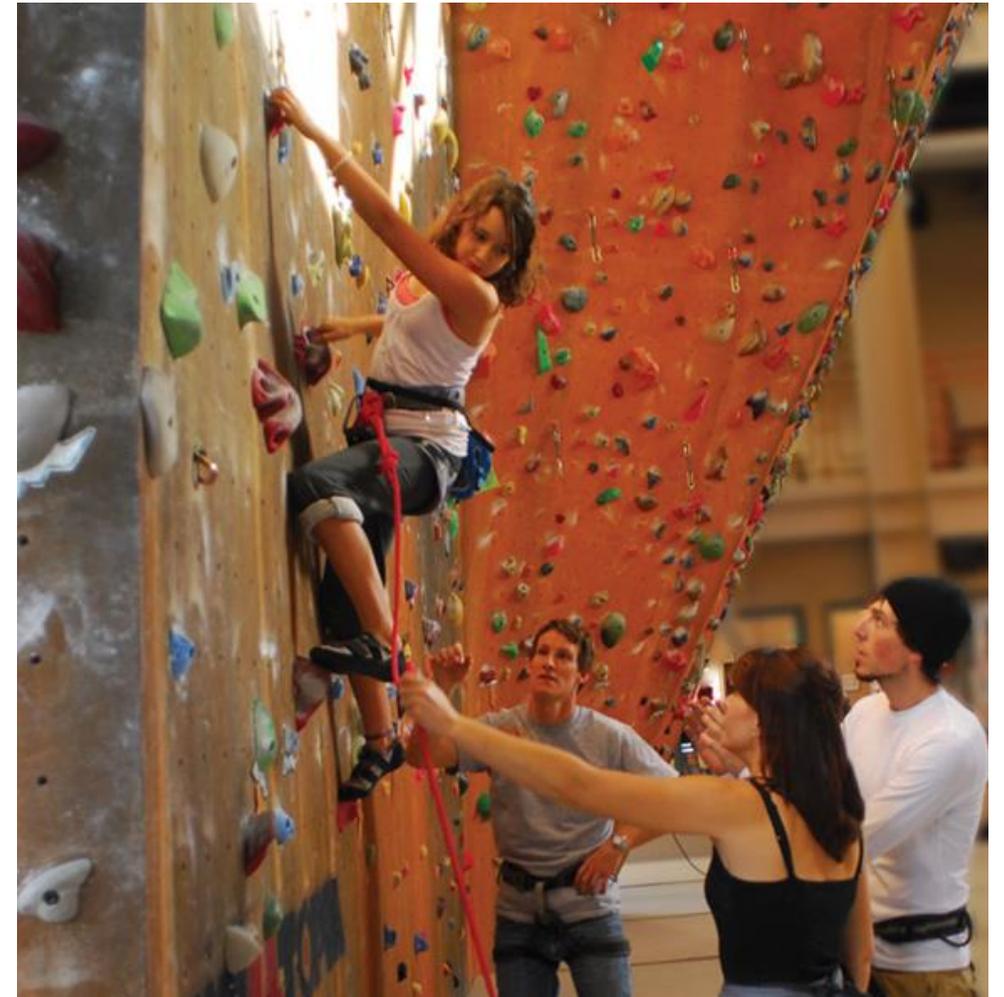


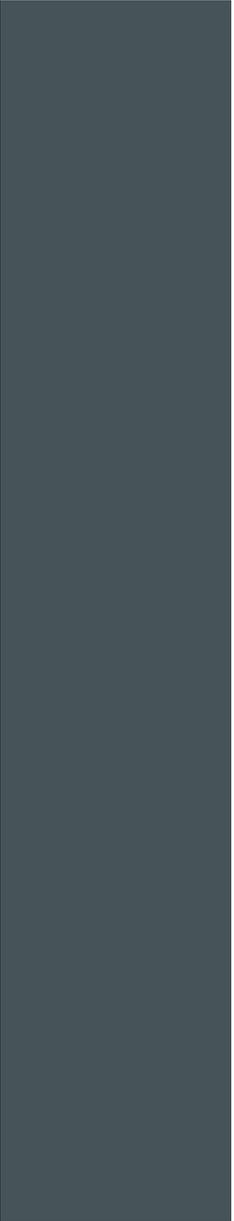
Rapid growth of ICC and the accompanying increase in parent involvement over the past decade has outpaced our understanding of the sport from the perspective of parents and other stakeholders

BACKGROUND

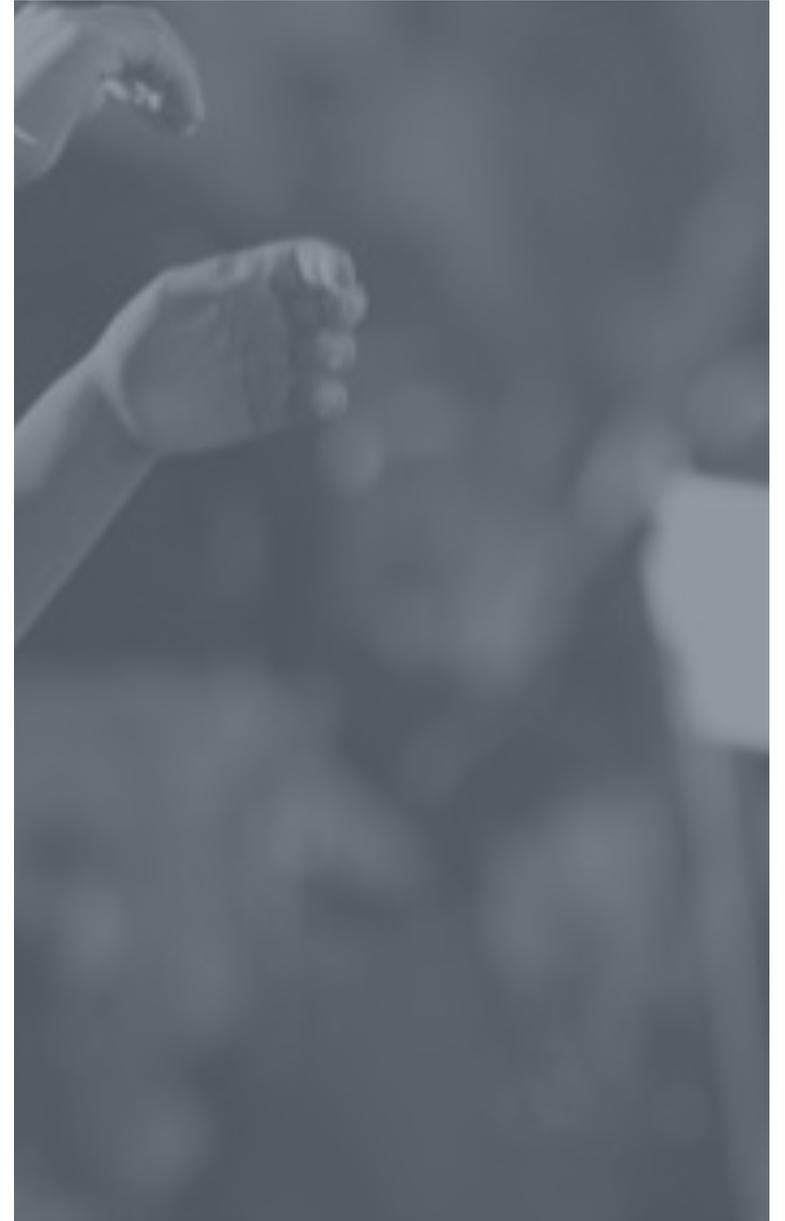
PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- **PURPOSE:** To better understand features of parent involvement in an emergent youth sport as well as factors that facilitate or constrain parent involvement.
- **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**
 - **(RQ1)** How is parental involvement in indoor competition climbing (ICC) expressed by parents?
 - **(RQ2)** What factors facilitate or constrain parental involvement in ICC?



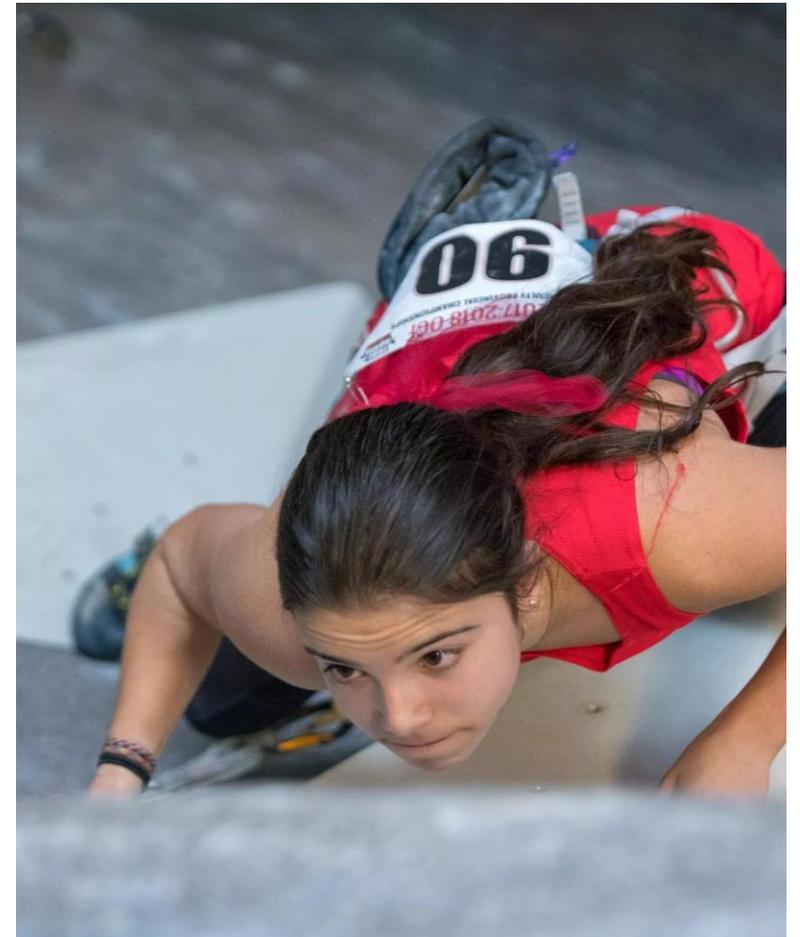


METHOD



PARTICIPANTS

- Criterion-based purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) used to identify 40 parents whose children were competing in an ICC national championship-level event and who were available to participate.
- 27 parents (of the 40 sampled) participated in the study
- Primarily female (55.6%), White (85.2%), college degree (51.9%), income between \$125,000-149,000 (15%),
- Average of 4-6 years of prior ICC experience (33.3%) and previous ICC volunteerism (66%).



POSTPOSITIVIST ASSUMPTIONS



- Contextualized, plausible reality (Yin, 2016)
- Rigorous methods and systematic inquiry (Creswell & Miller, 2000)
- Value-laden analyses (Patton, 2002)

DATA COLLECTION



- Four parent focus groups conducted during a national USAC youth competition event
- 6-10 parents per focus group (Yin, 2016)
- Random assignment to groups
- Semi-structured script
 - What does parent involvement in ICC look like?
 - What does your involvement require in terms of time, money, resources?
 - What deliberate changes, if any, have you made in your life or the life of your child to help your child be successful?

DATA ANALYSIS



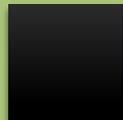
Focus groups recorded and transcribed verbatim



Transcripts independently coded by research team members through a blended inductive-deductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)



Sensitizing concepts informed the coding process (Patton, 2002)



Data saturation (Saunders et al., 2018)

TRUSTWORTHINESS



- Triangulation using multiple coders (Creswell & Miller, 2000)
- Synthesized member checking (Birt et al., 2016) as a respondent validation technique (Cho & Trent, 2006)
- Mindful of disconfirming evidence (Maxwell, 2005)

Does the information presented in this table adequately reflect your perspective as a parent of a competition climber?

Yes, Strongly Agree

Agree

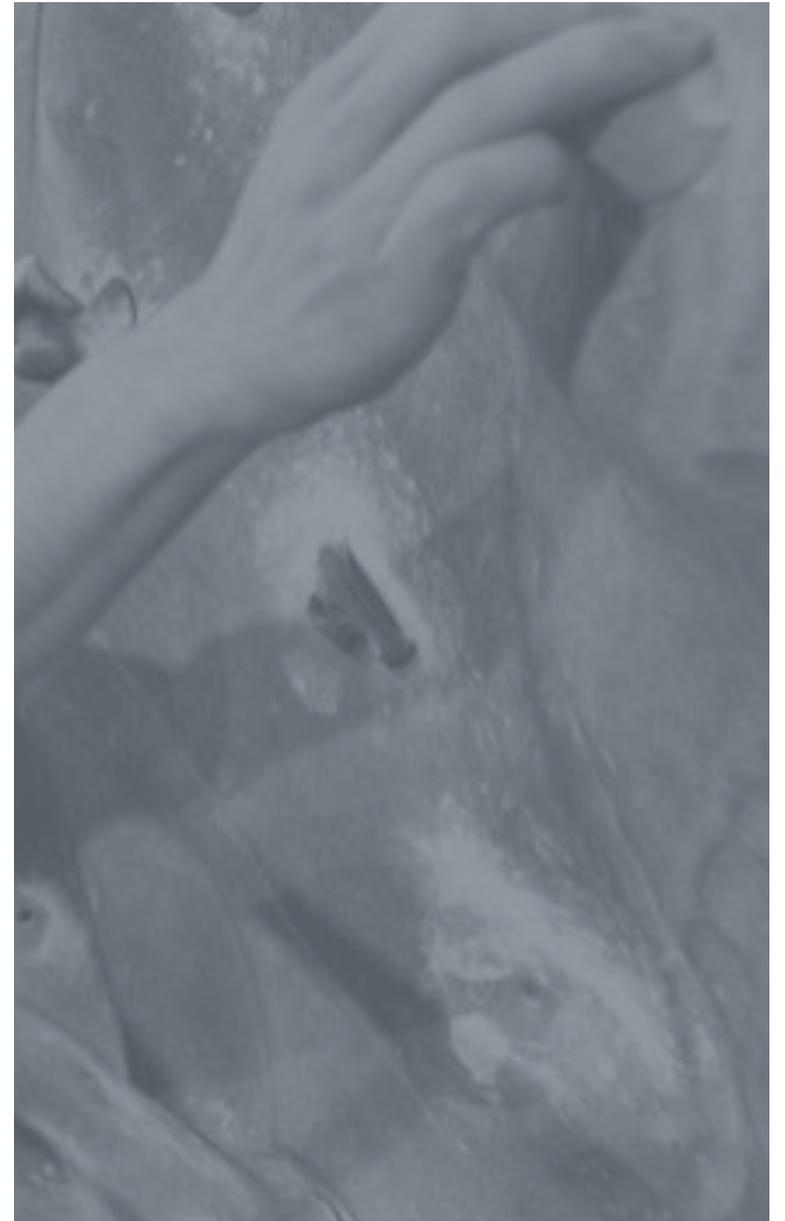
Disagree

No, Strongly Disagree

Would you like to change, remove, or modify anything relating to this theme? If so, please share below.

SYNTHESIZED MEMBER CHECKING

RESULTS



THEMES

Characteristics of parent involvement in indoor competition climbing



Factors prompting parent engagement in indoor competition climbing



Constraints influencing parent involvement in indoor competition climbing



THEME I: CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN INDOOR COMPETITION CLIMBING

- **Subthemes**
 - Parents' primary role involves the provision of logistical and financial support
 - Parent involvement evolves over time and often includes some form of volunteerism
 - An "ideal" form of parent volunteer does not exist
 - Parental over-involvement and overprotection behaviors are associated w/competitiveness while managed through competition structure and rules

“I think the sweet spot is when the parent leaves the instruction and the coaching up to the coach...but the parents support the organization and the environment.”



“We have a joke on our team. That [parents] are the credit card or the taxi.”

THEME 2: FACTORS PROMPTING PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN INDOOR COMPETITION CLIMBING

- **Subthemes**
 - Family, friends, and involvement in community-based programs or activities provide youth with initial exposure
 - Youth and parents attracted to ICC because of sense of community within ICC.
 - Involvement catalyzed by youth dissatisfaction with traditional team sports as well as those dealing with physical or behavioral needs.

“...there is a defined sense of accomplishment that [my son] doesn't get with other sports...”



“...there's a new level of excitement for [our daughter,” there's a new puzzle. With gymnastics...soccer...tennis, it was too monotonous...it was the same thing over and over.”



“My daughter has [health challenges]. [Climbing] made a difference...made her much more open and able to deal with her [challenges].”

THEME 3: CONSTRAINTS INFLUENCING PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN INDOOR COMPETITION CLIMBING

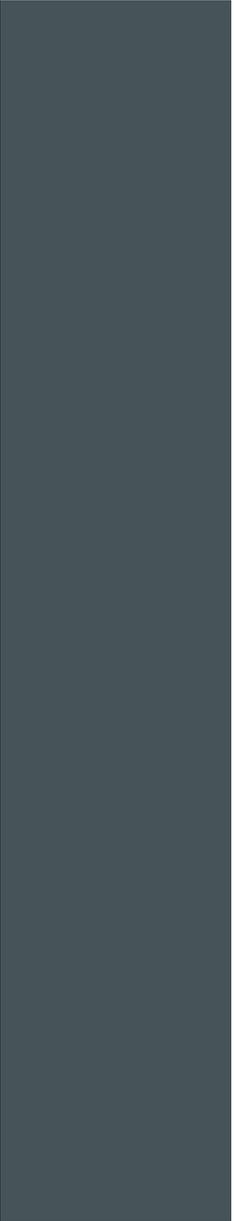
- **Subthemes**
 - Financial limitations (most common)
 - Distance
 - Parental lack of awareness or understanding of ICC
 - Constraints vary across families based on US region
 - Youth athlete excessive training or competing

“...[there are] financial limits...it’s an expensive sport...”



“What is...prohibitive to lower income families is that [ICC] is not connected with schools...it’s more expensive than any other sport at this level.”





DISCUSSION



REFLECTION AND CONTRIBUTION



- This exploratory study provided **insight into parent involvement in ICC**, an underexamined topic within the youth sport literature.
- The study provided evidence that parent involvement in ICC reflects previously conceptualized parent involvement models viewing **parent involvement as both multi-dimensional** (Hellstadt, 1987) **as well as evolving** (Dorsch et al., 2014; Thrower et al., 2016).
- Findings suggested **overparenting behaviors emerge within ICC contexts**, which adds to the growing body of literature related to overparenting among early adolescents in out-of-school time settings including youth sport (Gagnon & Garst, 2018; Hong et al., 2015).

REFLECTION AND CONTRIBUTION

- **No gendered effects** were noted in parent responses; Parents may not perceive such stereotypical roles based on gender within ICC, at least in the identified sample of parents.
- Sheds light on parental perceptions of **sport specialization-related burnout and injury** as a constraint to involvement, which has received little attention within the literature on emergent and alternative youth sports.
- The finding that **ICC is a sport often pursued by youth dissatisfied with traditional team sports** suggests how ICC may provide an alternative path for sport involvement, and may explain the sport's dramatic growth.



LIMITATIONS

- Focus groups relied on self-report rather than observations of parent behaviors (Baker & Soden, 2012). Parents may not have been entirely forthcoming or accurate due to social desirability bias (Hollander, 2004).
 - *Research team members were on-site at the event where they could also observe parents firsthand.*
- Investigators who analyzed the data may have been influenced by personal bias during the analysis process
 - *Multiple coders and synthesized member checking mitigated that limitation (Maxwell, 2013).*
- Time between end of the study and the member check could have impacted parent recall, as participants may have been “in a different phase of their life...when they receive[d] the document” (Birt et al., 2016, p. 1805).
 - *High response rate to the synthesized member check, as well as the quality of feedback affirming the study findings and interpretations, strengthens the interpretations.*

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- ICC as an alternative to traditional sports
- Family negotiation of constraints
- Influence of excessive youth athlete training
- Overparenting within the context of ICC

