Active NZ

Annual report on the 2025/26 New Zealand participation survey

November 2026

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SPORT NEW ZEALAND IHI AOTEAROA

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Active NZ tracks how New Zealanders participate in sport and physical activity

Introduction

Active NZ is a nationwide survey that shows how New Zealanders aged 5 and over are getting active and how that is changing.

The survey tracks how tamariki, rangatahi and adults participate in physical activity, the activities and settings they take part in and the factors that support or constrain participation.

The results provide a long-term view of participation trends and help identify emerging opportunities and challenges.

This report presents findings from interviews conducted between July 2025 and June 2026. Consistent with Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa strategic priorities, the report focuses on the experiences of tamariki (5 to 11 years) and rangatahi (12 to 17 years), and explores participation levels, pathways into activity, barriers and enablers, inequities in participation, and the role of households in supporting active lives.

What to know before you read this report:

- This report focuses primarily on tamariki (5 to 11 years) and rangatahi (12 to 17 years). Results are reported separately where differences between age groups are important. Findings from the Active NZ adult survey are included to understand and support the findings for young people. More details on adult participation can be found in the data tables on the Sport NZ website.
- Physical activity takes place in different settings, from informal to organised, and includes play, independent, self-directed exercise, physical education (PE) and participation in competitions and tournaments.
- Trend results are shown where sufficient historical data is available. These results provide context for understanding changes over time.
- Some results are shown for particular population groups. These findings help identify differences in participation, experiences and outcomes across young New Zealanders. Participation does not occur in isolation. The report considers the wider factors that shape participation, including pathways into activity, barriers and enablers, experiences of inequity, and the role of households and whānau.
- Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Summary
(1 of 2)

Most young people want to be active, but the ways they participate and the support they need are changing over time.

Although participation in competitions and tournaments remains strong, more young people are choosing independent, self-directed ways to be active. Whānau remain central to helping young people participate. For those facing multiple inequities, access to the right people, places and opportunities can make a significant difference.

1. Informal participation continues to be the most common way young people are active. While participation in competitions and tournaments remains strong, rangatahi are increasingly engaging in activity on their own terms.

How we know this

- Informal activity has the widest reach, engaging 83% of young people, compared with 59% through organised activity outside PE.* These are not mutually exclusive, with many young people participating in both.
- Organised activity remains important: 66% of club members meet the physical activity guidelines for young people, compared with 39% of non-members.
- Independent self-directed activity is growing among rangatahi: 66% participated alone or without a coach, and time spent exercising without a coach has reached a record 1.6 hours a week during 2025/26.
- Among 15- to 17-year-olds, gym membership has risen from 23% to 32% since 2017, and technology use during activity from 28% to 42%.

Considerations for the sector

- Support informal and organised settings as complementary ways to keep young people active.
- Continue to strengthen organised opportunities, given their close association with meeting the guidelines, while making them more flexible, affordable and welcoming.
- Give rangatahi more choice over when, where and how they participate, supported by safe spaces, practical information and appropriate use of technology.

2. Whānau shape whether, where and how young people are active.

How we know this

- Young people living with a very active adult are more likely to meet the physical activity guidelines than those living with an inactive adult: 70% compared with 47%.
- Club membership, gym membership and rates of volunteering are also higher for young people when an adult in the household does these.
- Young people are much more likely to participate in specific sports and activities when an adult in their household also does the same activity.

Considerations for the sector

- Design for whānau, not only for individual young people.
- Make it easier for households to be active together, help adults introduce young people to unfamiliar activities, and provide clear information about what is available locally.
- Reduce the cost, transport and scheduling pressures that can prevent whānau from supporting participation.

*These figures measure **participation in each setting**, not whether young people meet the physical activity guidelines.

Summary
(2 of 2)

3. Tamariki and rangatahi experience different barriers and need different types of support.

How we know this

- Most young people understand the benefits of being active, and 59% of tamariki and 72% of rangatahi would like to do more.
- Practical barriers including things like affordability and difficulty getting to games are more common for tamariki (53%).
- For rangatahi, interest and motivation-related barriers (45%), and social support barriers (32%) rise sharply. Confidence related barriers (21%) also become more common.

Considerations for the sector

- Respond to the barriers that matter at each life stage.
- For tamariki, focus on whānau support, affordable access and connections to nearby places and opportunities.
- For rangatahi, combine flexible options with trusted information, social support and experiences that build the confidence to start and continue.

4. Multiple inequities make it harder for young people to stay active.

How we know this

- Among tamariki, 63% with no identified inequity meet the physical activity guidelines, compared with 33% of those with two or more identified inequities.
- Among rangatahi, participation falls from 64% with no inequity to 37% with three or more identified inequities.
- Yet the desire to do more remains high, reaching 67% among tamariki with two or more inequities and 79% among rangatahi with three or more identified inequities.
- Young people facing multiple inequities are also less likely to participate through play, at school, outdoors and in clubs.

Considerations for the sector

- Target the conditions limiting participation, rather than assuming a lack of interest.
- Work with affected communities to strengthen access to trusted people, local spaces, clubs and affordable opportunities.
- Address overlapping barriers together, because isolated responses are less likely to help young people who are experiencing several types of inequities.

Research approach



Target audience

Young New Zealanders aged 5 to 17 years.

Adult New Zealanders aged 18 years and over.



Interview dates

1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026



Method

The survey is completed online.

Adults are randomly selected from the general and Māori electoral roll and invited by mail to take part.

Adults with rangatahi aged 12 to 17 years are asked to pass on an invitation to up to three young people in the household to complete the survey themselves.

Adults with tamariki aged 5 to 11 years are invited to complete the survey on the child's behalf after finishing their own survey.



Sample size and significance testing

This report is based on responses from 2,089 tamariki aged 5 to 11 years, 2,486 rangatahi aged 12 to 17 years and 14,912 adults aged 18 years and older.

Results are weighted to ensure they are representative of New Zealand's population.

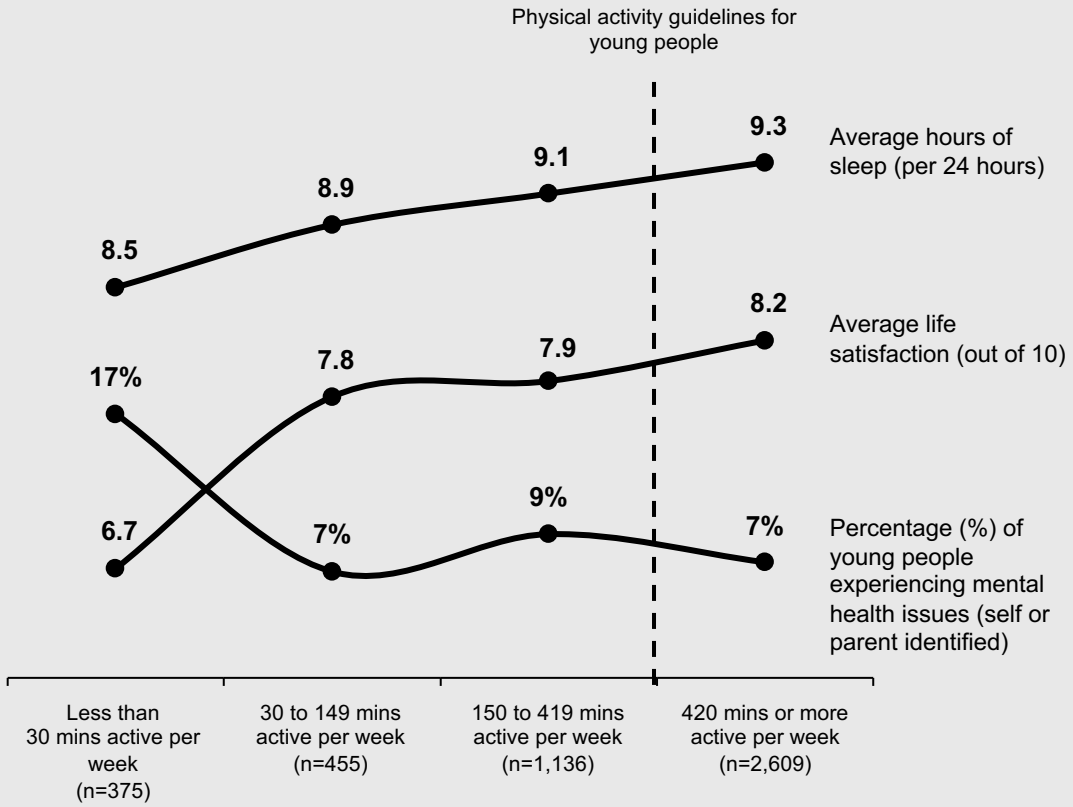
Statistical testing has been used throughout the report to identify meaningful differences between groups and changes over time. Only statistically significant differences are discussed in the commentary. Differences that are not statistically significant reflect normal survey variation rather than a genuine difference within the population.

For a more detailed explanation of the background and research design, please see appendix 4 and the accompanying technical report.



Being active matters

Physical activity supports healthy development



Source: Q16b Time spent being active, Q49 Hours of sleep per night, Q48 Life satisfaction, Q92 Experiences mental health issues.
Base: Young people aged 5 to 17 in 2025/26.

Physical activity is important in helping young people thrive. A substantial body of New Zealand and international research shows that being active supports physical health, mental wellbeing, learning, confidence and social connection.

These benefits are reflected consistently in Active NZ. Year after year, young people who are more physically active report higher levels of wellbeing and positive outcomes than those who are less active. In the 2025/26 survey, young people who met the physical activity guidelines were more likely to report high life satisfaction and healthy sleep patterns, and less likely to experience mental health challenges.

Because the benefits of physical activity extend beyond the activity itself, understanding how young people participate, what supports participation, and what prevents it remains an important focus for Sport NZ and its partners.

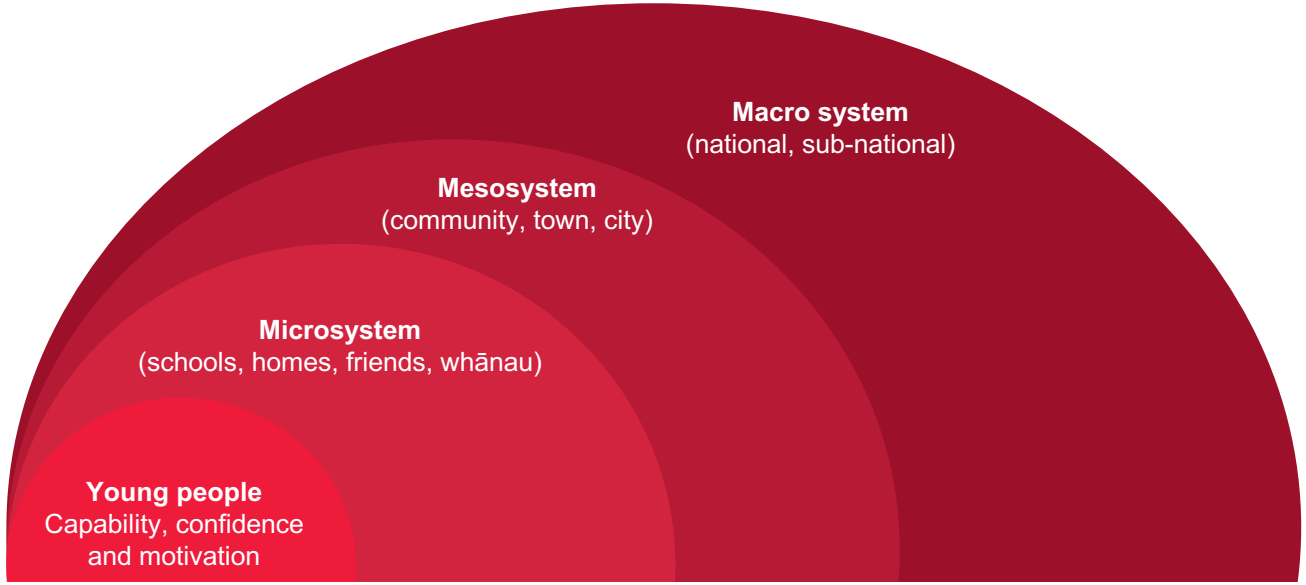
Participation is shaped by many factors

Whether a young person is active or not is influenced by many things. Participation is shaped by a combination of individual factors, such as confidence, skills and interests, and external factors, such as whānau support, access to spaces and facilities, time, cost and opportunities.

These influences work together to shape participation. Some make it easier for young people to be active, while others create barriers that can be difficult to overcome.

I go to the gym with my dad, which I find really cool for accountability and also motivation… and also, because I haven't really seen anyone my age at the gym, sometimes I feel a little bit anxious. So, I think it's cool to have him there.

*Female, Pasifika, 15 years**



Individual factors influence participation in physical activity, such as capability, confidence and personal motivation.

But **opportunities** to be physically active can also be influenced by a broader system, including social norms, role modelling and encouragement from friends and whānau, the spaces or facilities available in the community, school curriculum and priorities, and broader contextual factors.

*Source: Understanding quality experiences of recreational exercise and fitness for rangatahi in Aotearoa New Zealand – Qualitative research undertaken for Sport NZ. Forthcoming November 2026.

This model is adapted from SeCOM-B: An integrated model for understanding human behaviour change in wicked socio-ecological problems. Kien Nguyen-Trung, Alexander K Saeri, Kun Zhao et al. Published September 2025.

The wider environment also matters

The experiences captured in this report do not occur in isolation. The 2025/26 survey period took place amid adverse weather, continued pressure on household budgets and transport costs, and a stronger emphasis on foundational learning in schools. These conditions may have influenced when, where and how young people could be active, particularly where whānau and schools were already balancing competing demands.

Adverse weather events

Severe weather struck repeatedly across the survey period. From winter flooding in Tasman, Nelson and Marlborough in July 2025 to multiple storms in the North Island in January and February 2026, these events closed roads and schools, and disrupted activity nationwide.

More severe weather [and] states of emergencies had been declared by Feb 2026 than in 21 of the past 24 years.

Source: Civil Defence NZ, reported by 1News, Feb 2026.

Rising cost of living

Annual inflation held at 3.1%, and household costs rose 2.2% throughout the survey period. In contrast, home and contents insurance jumped 10% in this period. For already stretched households, spending on club fees, gear and transport would likely have been affected.

41% of New Zealanders expect their disposable income to fall this year.

Source: Stats NZ (HLPI, Mar 2026), reporting by Scoop NZ, Apr 2026.

Fuel scarcity and rising prices

Conflict in the Middle East disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. This pushed New Zealand petrol prices to over $3.30 a litre and increased diesel prices by 87% from the previous year. This significantly raises the cost of getting to training, games and events.

Diesel prices up around 87% year on year as of April 2026.

Source: Gaspy.nz, reported by The Spinoff, Apr 2026.

Changing curriculum priorities

Schools are placing greater emphasis on structured teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. While these changes are intended to strengthen foundational learning, they may also influence how schools balance curriculum time and opportunities for physical activity.

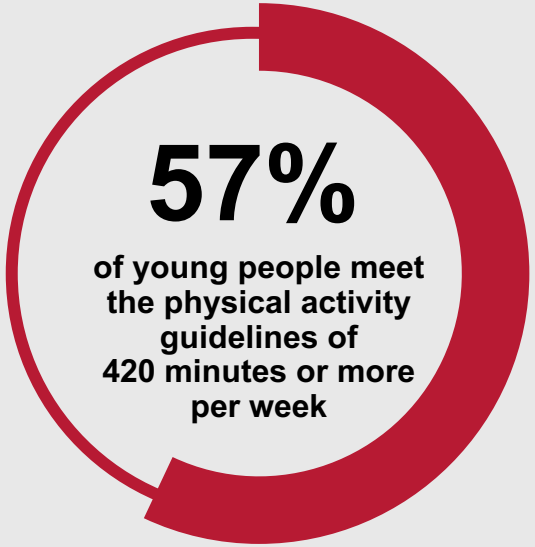
Years 0 to 8 students at state and state-integrated schools spend an average of one hour each day on reading, one hour on writing and one hour on maths.

Source: Ministry of Education, The hour a day initiative for schools.



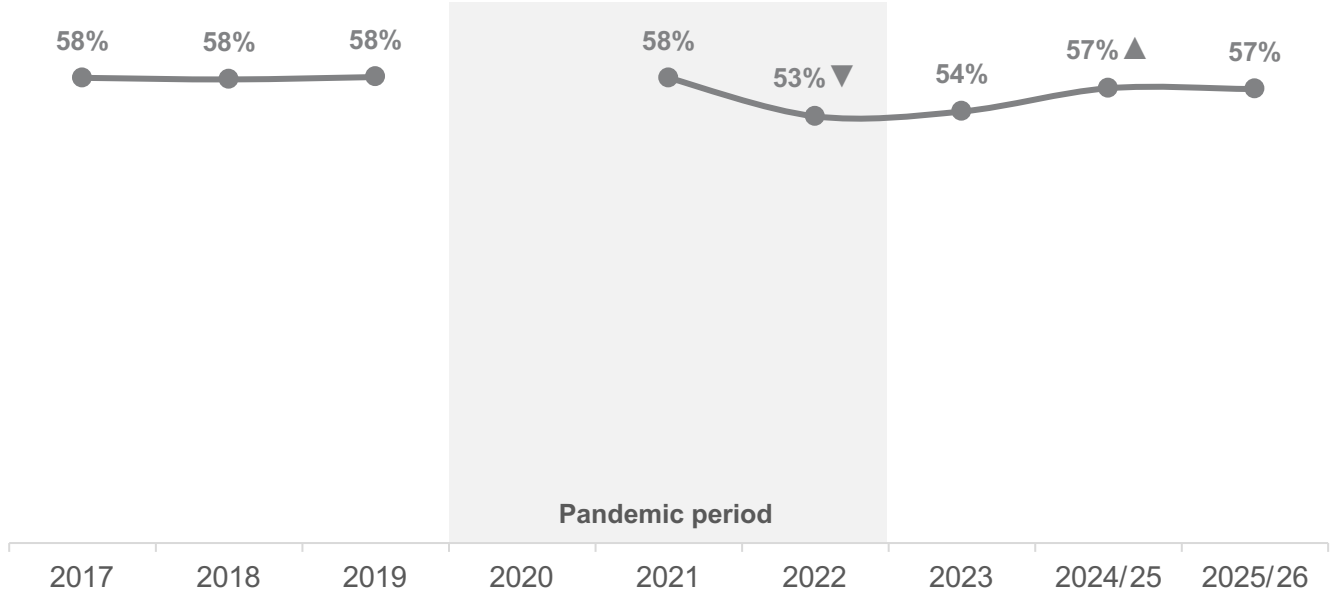
Participation today

Today, nearly 6 in 10 young people meet the physical activity guidelines for young people



After recovering steadily from the post-COVID-19 pandemic low in 2022, young people's participation has now stabilised. In 2025/26, 57% of young people met the physical activity guidelines, a rate comparable to pre-pandemic levels.

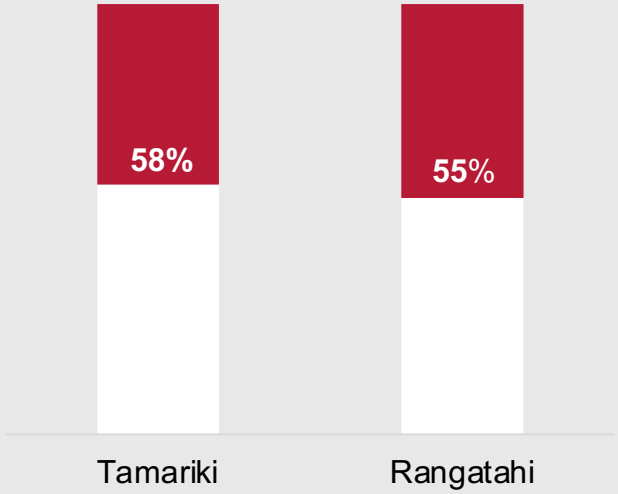
Percentage (%) of young people meeting the physical activity guidelines
(420 minutes or more per week for young people)



Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity.
Base: Young people aged 5 to 17 (2025/26 n=4,549; 2024/25 n=4,549; 2023 n=5,890; 2022 n=4,015; 2021 n=4,824; 2019 n=4,799; 2018 n=5,595; 2017 n=6,004).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

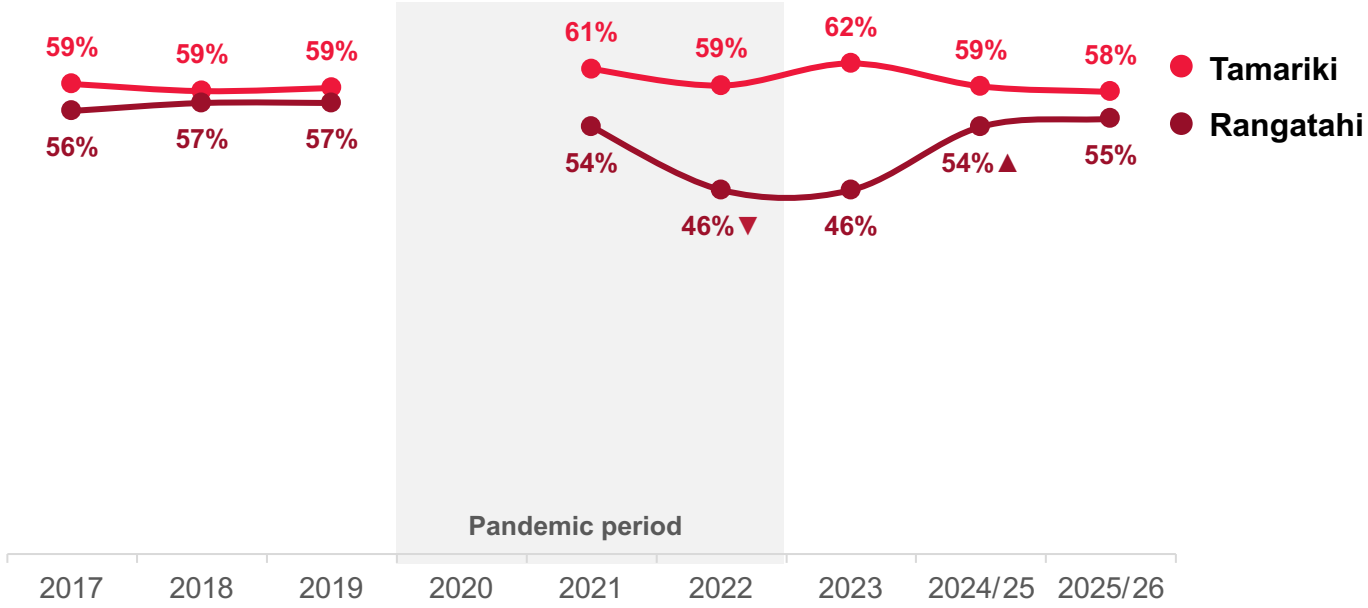
Both tamariki and rangatahi participation levels are now broadly in line with pre-pandemic levels

Percentage (%) meeting the physical activity guidelines
(420 minutes or more per week for young people)



Participation among both tamariki and rangatahi has stabilised following the post-pandemic recovery. Rangatahi have regained much of the ground lost after the pandemic, while tamariki participation has declined slightly over the past three years. As a result, the gap between the two groups is now much smaller than it was in 2022.

Percentage (%) of tamariki and rangatahi meeting the physical activity guidelines (420 minutes or more per week for young people)



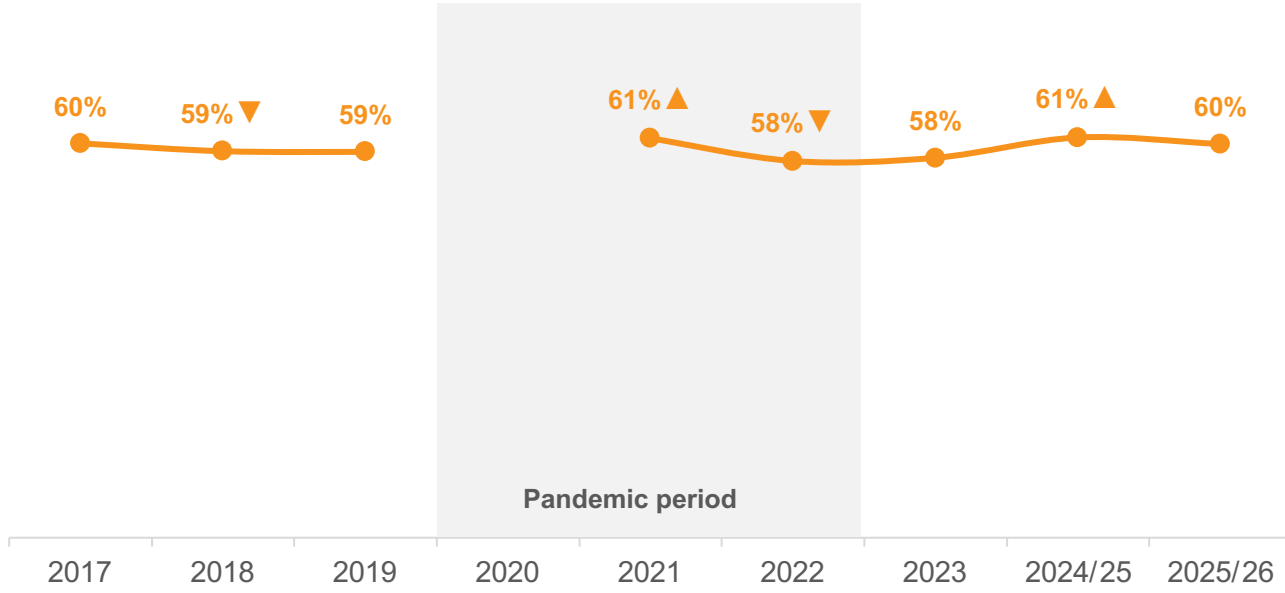
Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n=2,081; 2024/25 n=2,215; 2023 n=1,908; 2022 n=1,691; 2021 n=2,725; 2019 n=3,045; 2018 n=3,690; 2017 n=3,952).
Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,468; 2024/25 n=2,334; 2023 n=3,982; 2022 n=2,324; 2021 n=2,099; 2019 n=1,754; 2018 n=1,905; 2017 n=2,052).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

Adult participation has remained fairly steady over the course of the survey, despite some small variations over time



Three in 5 adults meet the physical activity guidelines of being active for at least 150 minutes a week. This has been stable since 2017, with a small dip during the pandemic, but recovered in 2024/25.

Percentage (%) of adults meeting the physical activity guidelines
(150 minutes or more per week for adults)



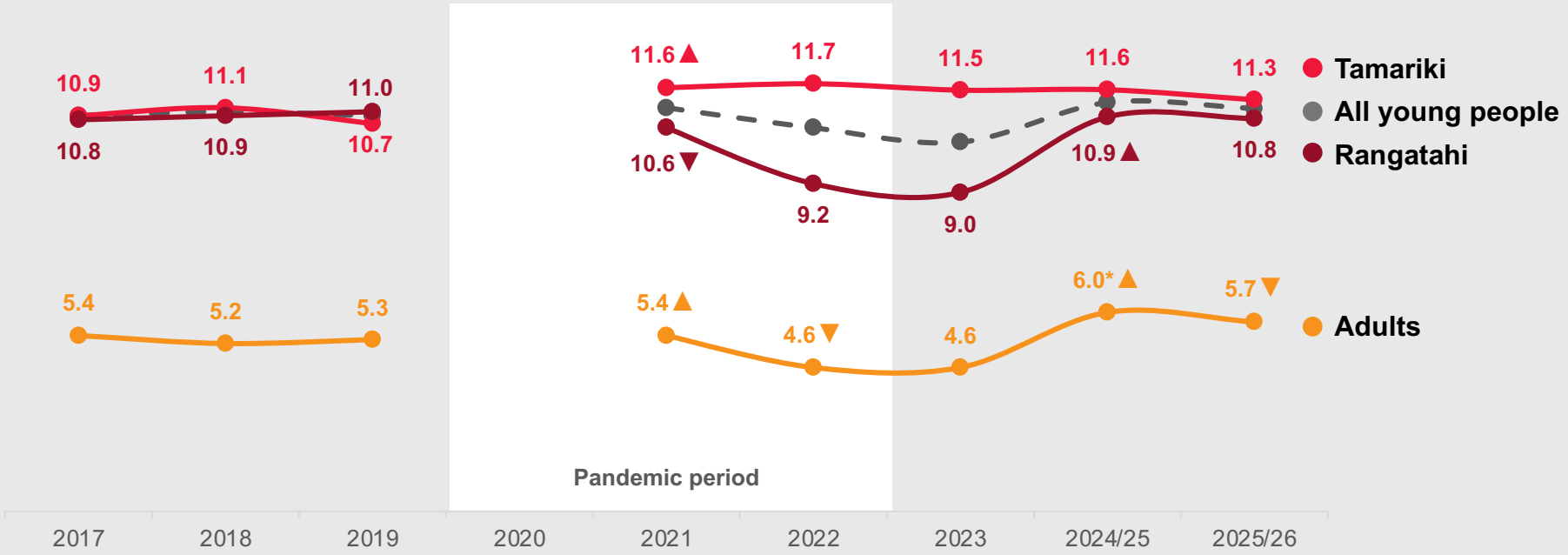
Source: Q8c Time spent doing each activity.
Base: Adults (2025/26 n=14,901; 2024/25 n=14,958; 2023 n=15,836; 2022 n=15,118; 2021 n=23,239; 2019 n=21,972; 2018 n=25,150; 2017 n=27,038).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

The amount of time tamariki and rangatahi spend being active reflects broader participation trends

Rangatahi spent more time being active last year, recovering from the decline seen during the pandemic. However, the amount of time tamariki spent being active has been gradually declining over the past few years.

Adults also recorded a small decline this year, although activity levels remain above those seen during the pandemic period.

Average hours spent being active per week



*Q8c Question for adults changed from being asked for all activities combined to being asked for each single activity in 2024/25. The results may be influenced by this change.

Source: Q8c (adults) and Q16b (young people) Time spent doing each activity.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n=2,081; 2024/25 n=2,215; 2023 n=1,908; 2022 n=1,691; 2021 n=2,725; 2019 n=3,045; 2018 n=3,690; 2017 n=3,952).
Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,468; 2024/25 n=2,334; 2023 n=3,982; 2022 n=2,324; 2021 n=2,099; 2019 n=1,754; 2018 n=1,905; 2017 n=2,052).
Adults 18-plus years (2025/26 n=14,901; 2024/25 n=14,958; 2023 n=15,836; 2022 n=15,118; 2021 n=23,239; 2019 n=21,972; 2018 n=25,150; 2017 n=27,038).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

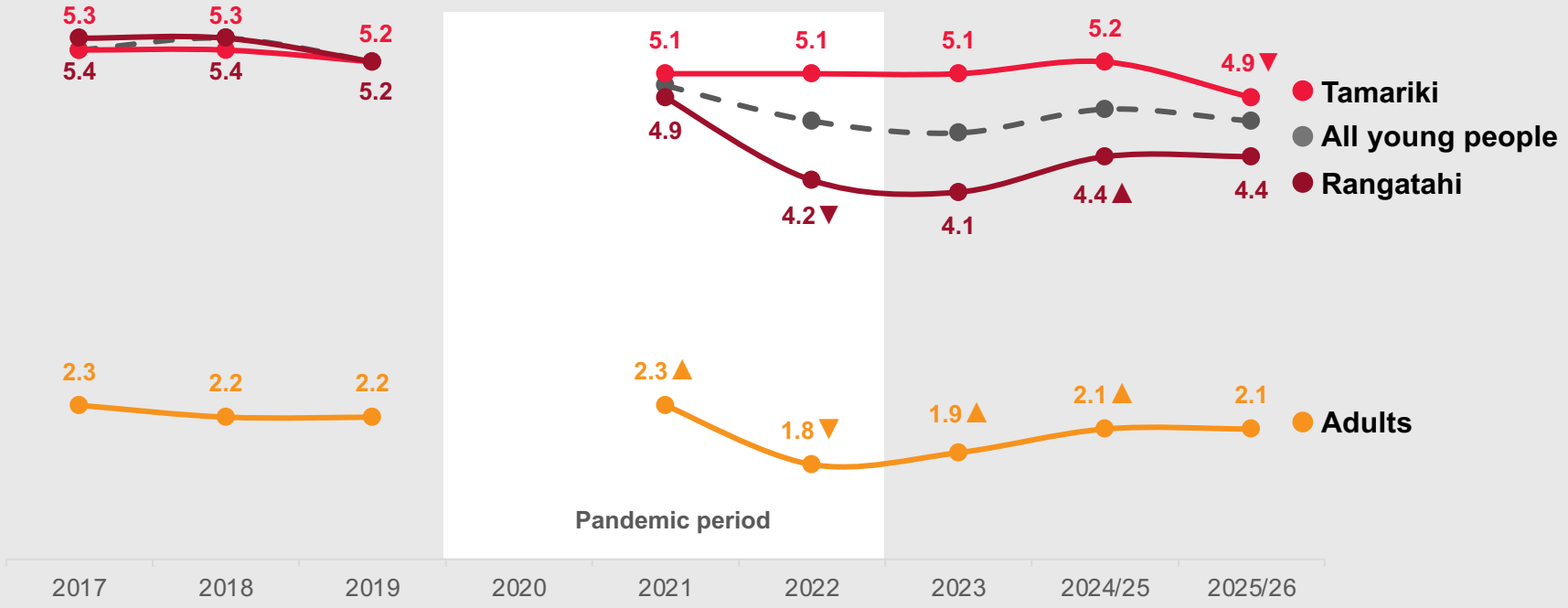
Young people are spending as much time being active as they did before the pandemic, but they are taking part in fewer activities

Young people are taking part in fewer activities than they were before the pandemic.

While participation has stabilised in recent years, the average number of activities young people take part in each week remains lower than it was before 2020.

This is most evident among rangatahi. For tamariki, the average number of activities declined in 2025/26 after relative stability. Adults have seen little change.

Average number physical activities engaged in per week



Source: Q8 (adults) and Q13a (young people) Activities done in last 7 days.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n=2,089; 2024/25 n=2,226; 2023 n=1,908; 2022 n=1,691; 2021 n=2,725; 2019 n=3,045; 2018 n=3,690; 2017 n=3,952).
Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,486; 2024/25 n=2,345; 2023 n=3,982; 2022 n=2,324; 2021 n=2,099; 2019 n=1,754; 2018 n=1,905; 2017 n=2,052).
Adults 18-plus years (2025/26 n=14,912; 2024/25 n=14,971; 2023 n=15,836; 2022 n=15,118; 2021 n=23,169; 2019 n=21,689; 2018 n=24,996; 2017 n=26,806).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

Participation in physical activity has stabilised, although some signs of declining participation are evident among tamariki

Participation rates, hours spent active and the number of activities undertaken by rangatahi have largely stabilised following the post-pandemic recovery.

For tamariki, however, the picture is slightly different. Participation rates and time spent active appear to have stabilised over recent years, while the number of activities done each week declined in 2025/26.

The reasons for this are unlikely to be simple. Participation is shaped by various factors, including the opportunities available to young people, the settings in which activity takes place, and the broader pressures facing whānau and communities.

Factors that may have influenced this year's results are weather-related barriers, the increased cost of living, and schools placing greater emphasis on structured teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.

Fewer young people are getting active through school-based activities

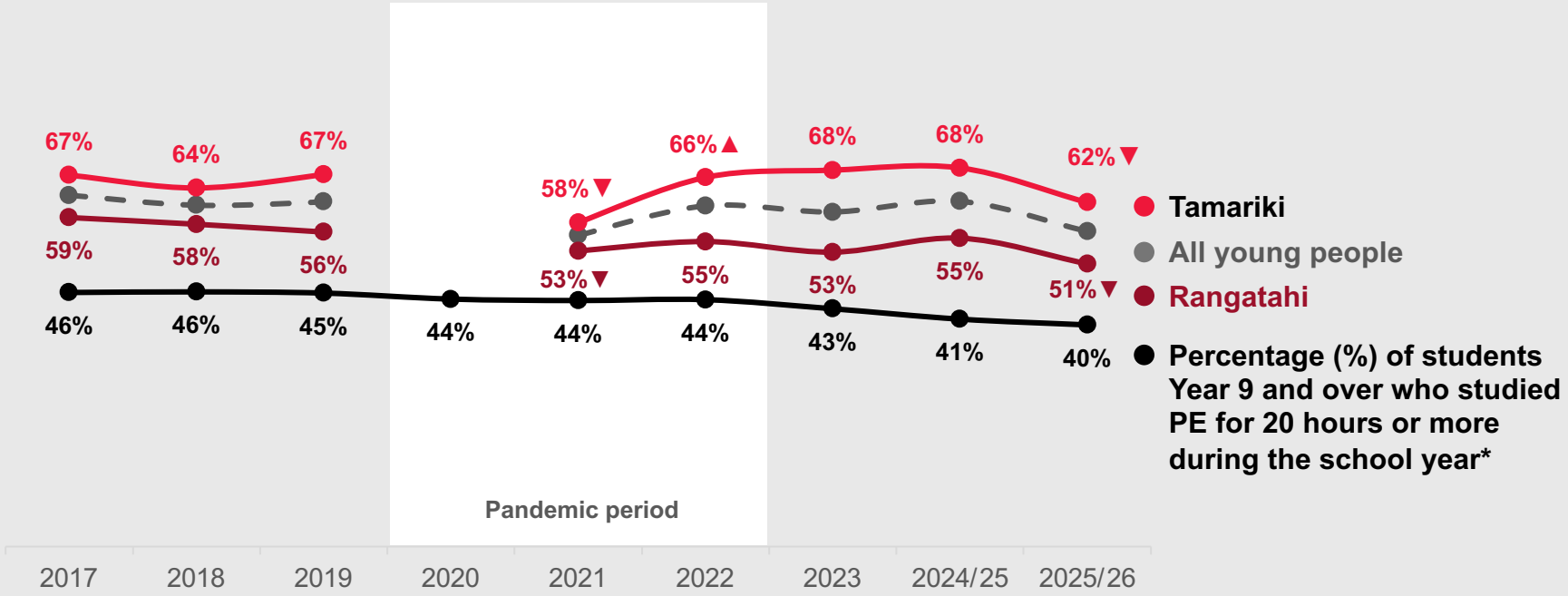
Participation through PE and other school-based activities declined this year for both tamariki and rangatahi.

While school remains an important pathway into physical activity, fewer young people reported being active at school than in 2024/25.

This change coincides with both a gradual decline in the proportion of secondary students enrolled in PE, and a slight decline across several participation measures for tamariki.

This change also coincides with schools placing greater emphasis on structured teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, mentioned earlier on page 10.

Percentage (%) who are physically active in PE or class at school

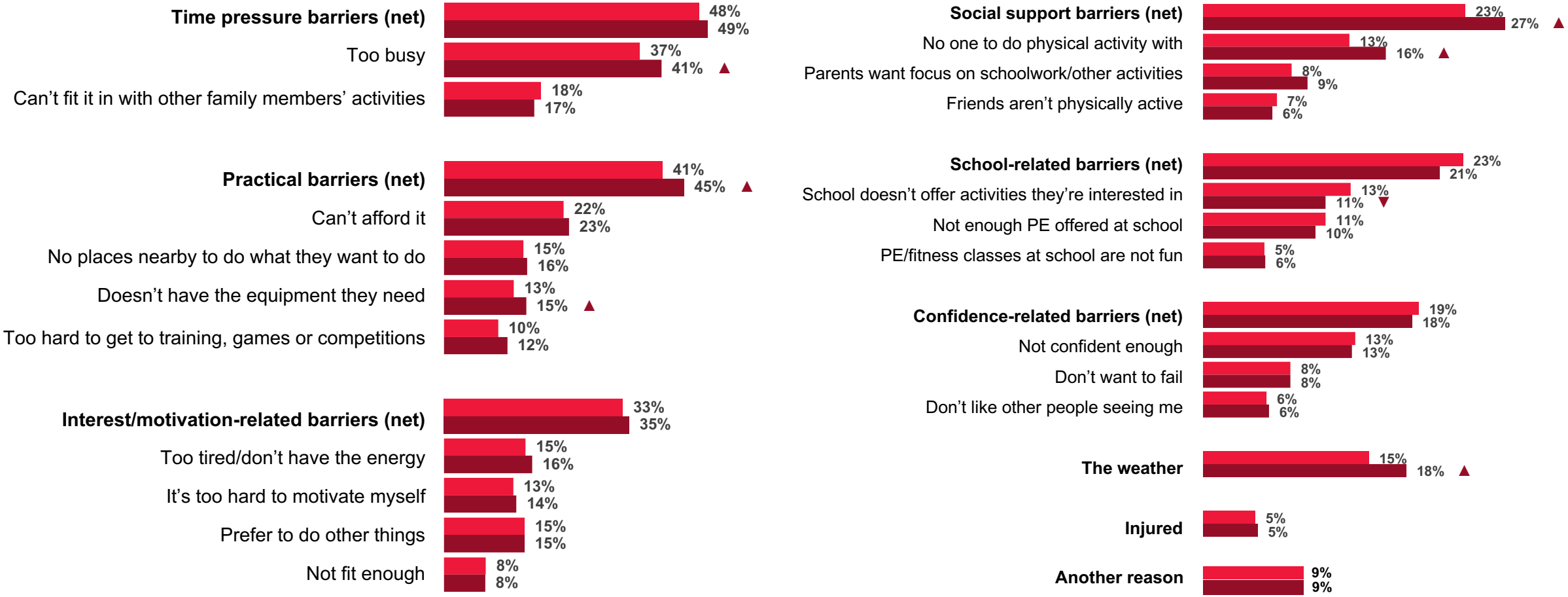


*Data sourced from Education Counts (% = all PE enrolments Year 9 and over, total school roll Year 9 and over).

Source: Q16 Where or how respondents participated.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n=2,089; 2024/25 n=2,226; 2023 n=1,902; 2022 n=1,686; 2021 n=2,724; 2019 n=3,042; 2018 n=3,677; 2017 =3,944).
Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,486; 2024/25 n=2,345; 2023 n=3,964; 2022 n=2,319; 2021 n=2,095; 2019 n=1,748; 2018 n=1,900; 2017 n=2,046).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

Practical barriers, adverse weather and a lack of support from others make it harder to be active

While participation in PE has declined, school-related barriers did not become more common among those wanting to do more physical activity. Instead, young people wanting to be more active were more likely than last year to report weather-related disruption, having no one to be active with, and lacking the equipment they need. This suggests that changes in participation may reflect broader environmental and social pressures rather than challenges within schools themselves.



Source: Q23 Barriers to participation.
Base: Young people who want to do more physical activity (2025/26 n=2,972; 2024/25 n=2,977).
Note: Net percentages represent the proportion of respondents who selected at least one of the more specific categories within that theme.
▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

See the section on page 33 for a deeper exploration of barriers to physical activity.

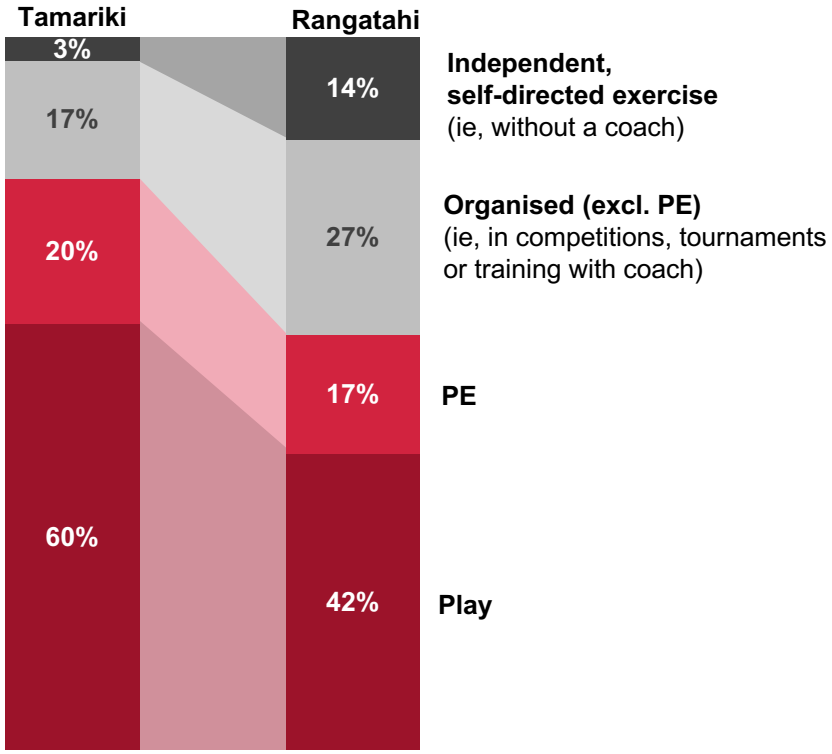


How young people are active today

The types of activities young people take part in change as they grow older

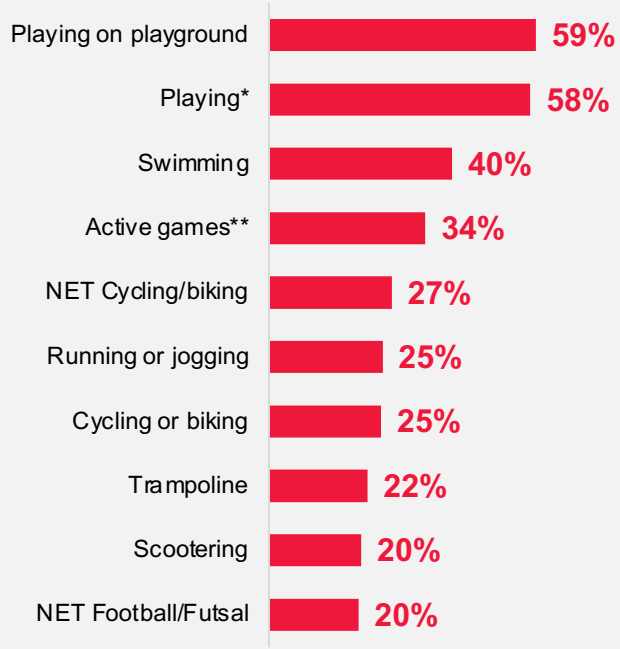
Competitions, tournaments, training with a coach and independent, self-directed exercise become increasingly popular as young people grow older.

Share of active time spent in each setting

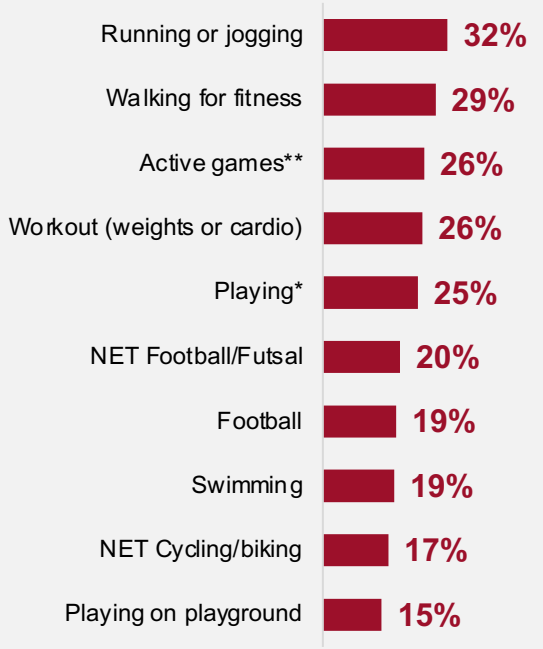


Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n=2,081), rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,468).

Top 10 tamariki activities



Top 10 rangatahi activities

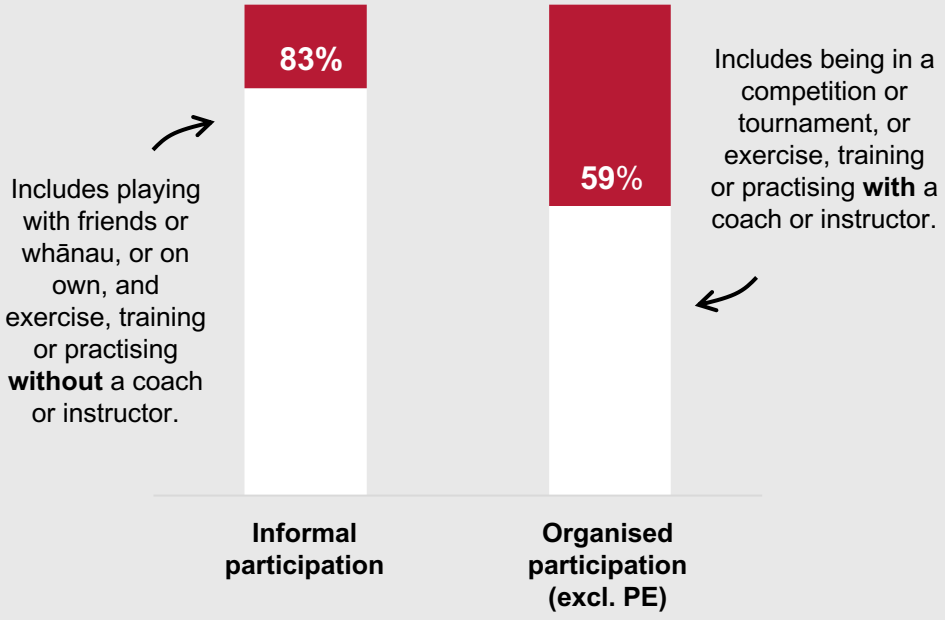


Source: Q12 Physical activity in the last 7 days.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n=2,089); Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,486).
Note: Multiple activities can be selected.
*Playing includes running around, climbing trees, and make-believe.
**Active games includes four square, tag, bull rush, dodgeball.

See appendix 1, pages 53–54, for a deeper exploration of activities in the past 7 days.

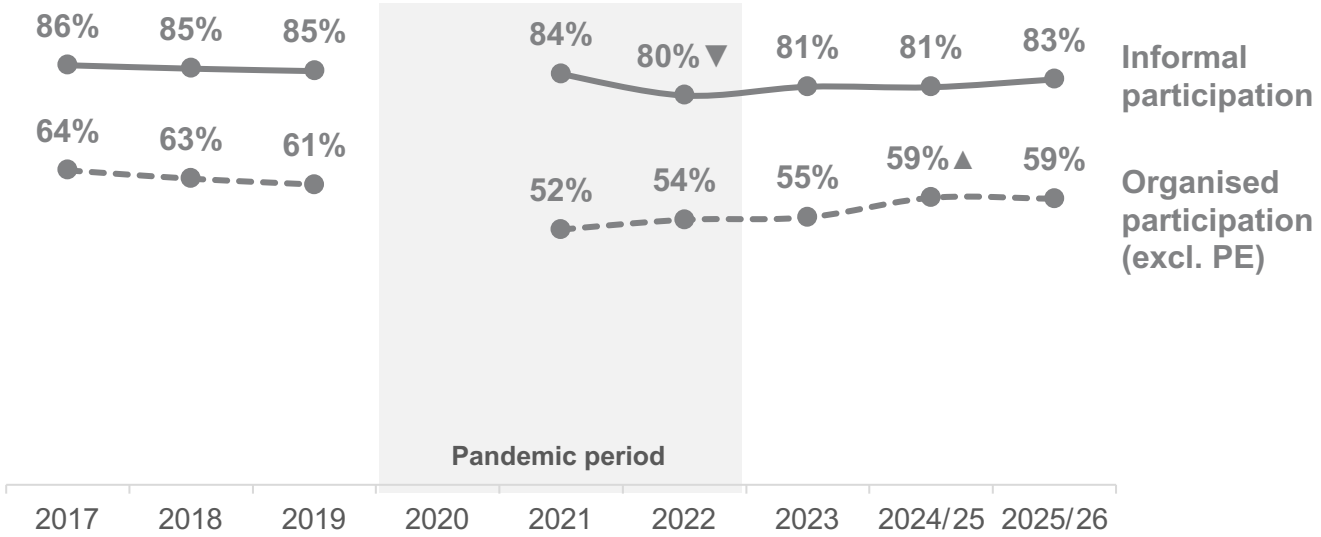
Organised participation remains important, but informal participation is how most young people are active

% young people participated in 2025/26
(in the previous 7 days)



Most young people stay active through a mix of organised and informal activities. Informal activities remain popular, while participation in organised activities outside PE has recovered since the pandemic but is still below pre-pandemic levels.

Percentage (%) of young people participated
(in the previous 7 days)

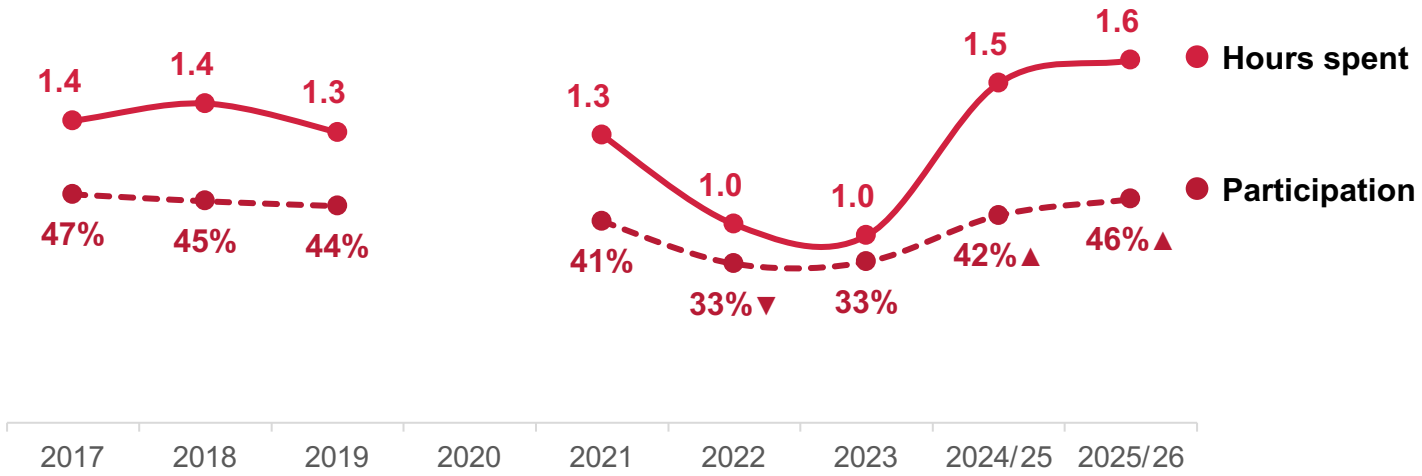


Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity.
Base: Young people aged 5 to 17 (2025/26 n=4,575; 2024/25 n=4,571; 2023 n=5,866; 2022 n=4,005; 2021 n=4,819; 2019 n=4,790; 2018 n=5,577; 2017 n=5,990).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

Independent, self-directed exercise is becoming more important for rangatahi

Rangatahi are increasing their participation in independent, self-directed exercise. Time spent doing independent exercise has reached its highest level.

Participation and hours rangatahi spent exercising, training or practising *without* a coach or instructor over the previous 7 days



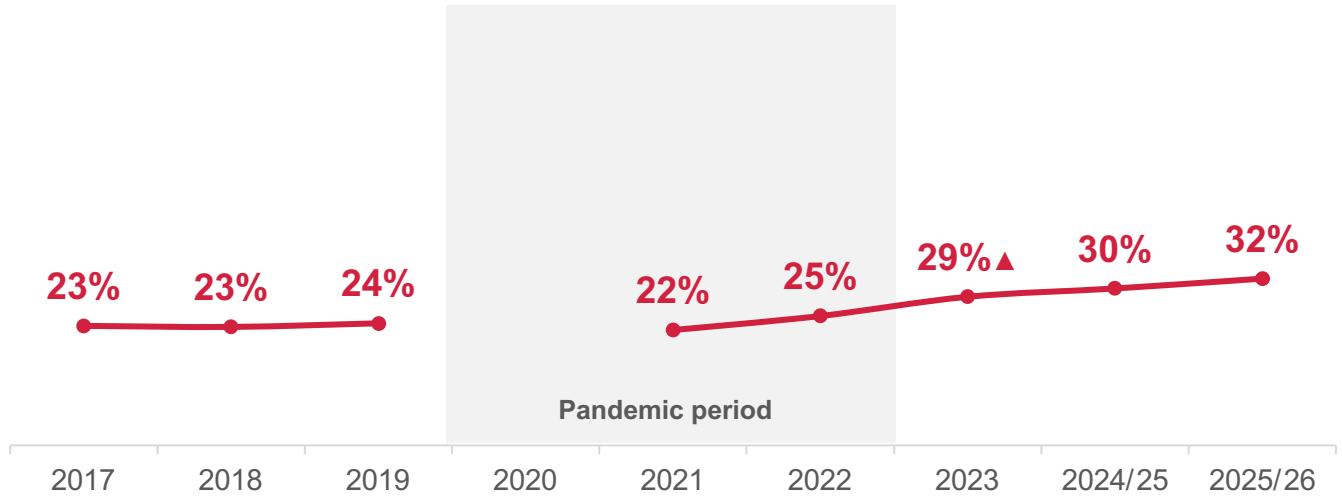
Source: Q12 Activities in the last 7 days and Q16b time spent in each activity.
Base: Rangatahi participation (2025/26 n=2,486; 2024/25 n=2,345; 2023 n=3,964; 2022 n=2,319; 2021 n=2,095; 2019 n=1,748; 2018 n=1,900; 2017 n=2,046).
Rangatahi time spent (2025/26 n=2,468; 2024/25 n=2,334; 2023 n=3,982; 2022 n=2,324; 2021 n=2,099; 2019 n=1,754; 2018 n=1,905; 2017 n=2,052).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

The growth in independent, self-directed exercise is reflected in rising gym participation

The upward trend in independent, self- directed exercise is being accompanied by a growth in gym membership among older rangatahi. While organised sport remains important, independent exercise is becoming a more common way for older rangatahi to be active.

As older rangatahi (aged 15 to 17) gain more autonomy and participate in more self-directed exercise, we are seeing a steady increase in the number who hold a gym membership.

Percentage (%) of rangatahi aged 15 to 17 who have a gym membership



Source: Q77 Whether respondent currently belongs to a gym or fitness centre.
Base: Young people aged 15 to 17 (2025/26 n=1,138; 2024/25 n=1,021; 2023 n=1,665; 2022 n=1,046; 2021 n=823; 2019 n=717; 2018 n=818; 2017 n=800).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

Exercise and fitness appeal because they build confidence, while offering greater flexibility and autonomy

Last year's Active NZ report identified confidence as a critical factor in rangatahi participation. Opportunities and support can create interest, but confidence often determines whether rangatahi take part and stay involved. Recent qualitative research suggests that exercise and fitness may appeal because they provide a flexible, self-directed way to build confidence, pursue personally meaningful goals, and allow rangatahi to participate in environments that can feel less structured or judgemental than traditional sports settings.

1

Exercise gives rangatahi more control

Compared with organised sport, exercise can often be adapted around individual goals, schedules and interests. Rangatahi can choose when, where, how and with whom they participate.

"I really like going to the gym actually, because it's quite nice because you get to decide what you do, you get to decide when you go. So it's quite your decision versus sports teams being like this is the set time, this is when your game is."

Female, Asian, 15 years

2

Exercise helps rangatahi build confidence

Many rangatahi described exercise as a way to become stronger, fitter, more capable or more confident in themselves. The appeal often lies as much in personal growth as in the activity itself.

"Apart from the physical benefits that it brings, I definitely see a change in my mindset. I'm a lot more ready to like tackle challenging things."

Female, Pasifika, 15 years

3

Exercise feels socially normal and accessible

Friends, whānau and social media can make exercise feel more familiar and achievable. Trusted people often provide the confidence and encouragement needed to get started.

"A lot of my friends were doing sports or they also started going to the gym. I think just hearing what they're talking about, it was motivating me. I really felt compelled to do that as well because I wanted to be part of what they're doing."

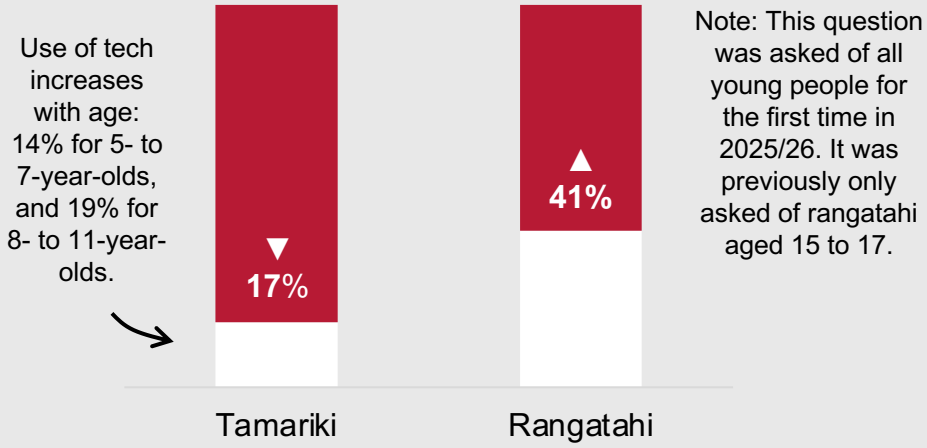
Male, Pasifika, 15 years

Source: Understanding quality experiences of recreational exercise and fitness for rangatahi in Aotearoa New Zealand – Qualitative research undertaken for Sport NZ. Forthcoming November 2026.

Technology is becoming increasingly embedded in how rangatahi are active

As participation becomes more self-directed, technology has become a common companion to physical activity. Use of technology while being active has increased steadily among older rangatahi, reflecting changing ways of planning, monitoring and engaging with physical activity.

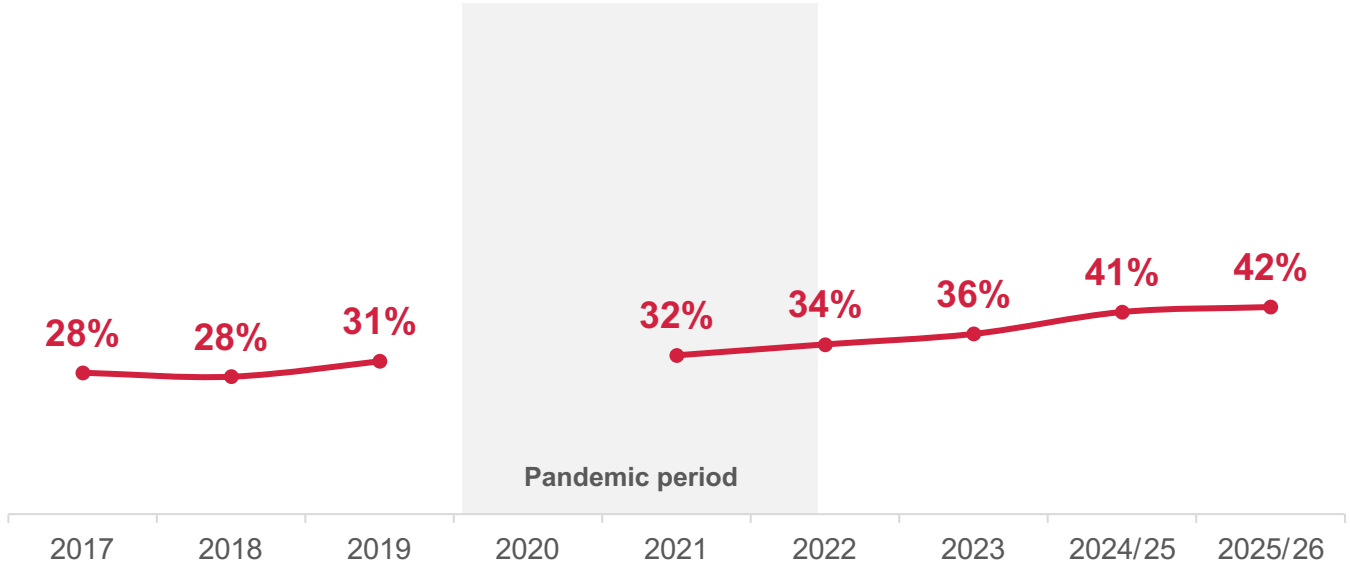
Percentage (%) using technology during physical activity in 2025/26



Note: This question was asked of all young people for the first time in 2025/26. It was previously only asked of rangatahi aged 15 to 17.

Source: Q28 Technology usage.
Base: All tamariki aged 5 to 11 (n=1,976) and rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (n=2,220) who were active over the previous 7 days.

Percentage (%) of rangatahi (15 to 17 years) who use technology during physical activity



Source: Q28 Technology usage.
Base: Rangatahi aged 15 to 17 who were active over the previous 7 days (2025/26 n=944; 2024/25 n=850; 2023 n=1,661; 2022 n=1,045; 2021 n=823; 2019 n=715; 2018 n=814; 2017 n=798).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

New pathways are emerging alongside traditional ones

Traditional pathways



Emerging pathways

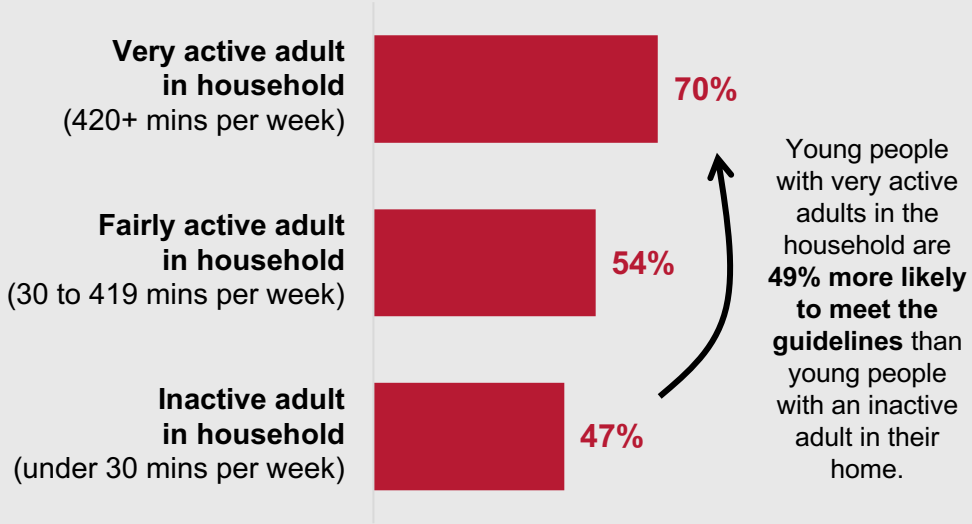
Young people are not moving away from participation in competitive sports and activities. Instead, different settings and enablers are providing opportunities and choice in ways to be active.This highlights the importance of supporting participation across a range of settings, rather than through any single form of activity.



The importance of whānau to young people's participation

Whānau remain a powerful influence on a child's physical activity

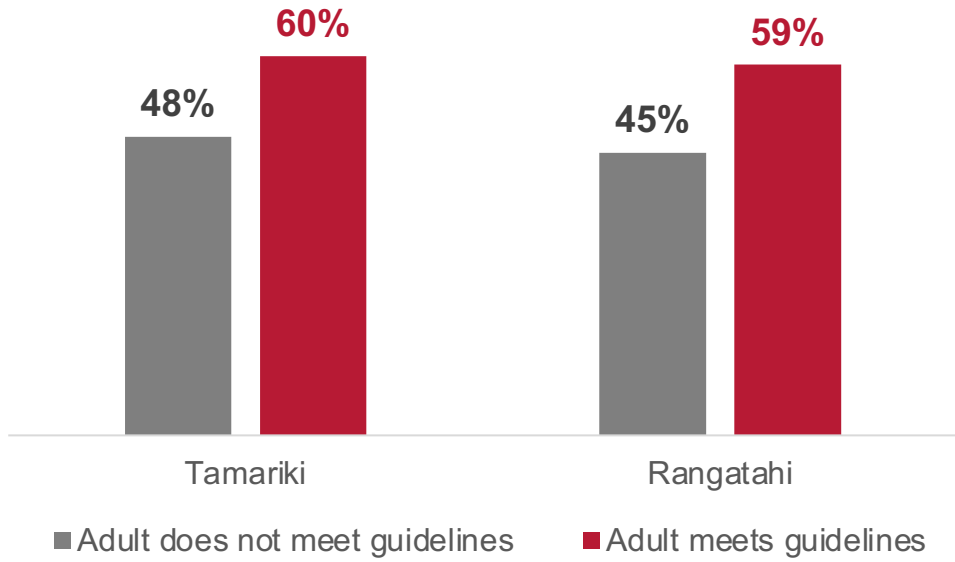
Percentage (%) of young people meeting physical activity guidelines by the activity level of an adult living in the same household



Source: Q16b Physical activity participation in last 7 days (Child survey), Q8c Physical activity participation in last 7 days (Adult survey).
Base: All young people living with adult who completed the survey (n=2,916).

Physical activity is often a shared household behaviour. Young people living with active adults are considerably more likely to meet the physical activity guidelines, suggesting that whānau play an important role in shaping attitudes towards activity, creating opportunities to participate and modelling active lifestyles. The impact is similar for both tamariki and rangatahi.

Percentage (%) of young people meeting the physical activity guidelines, by activity level of an adult in the same household



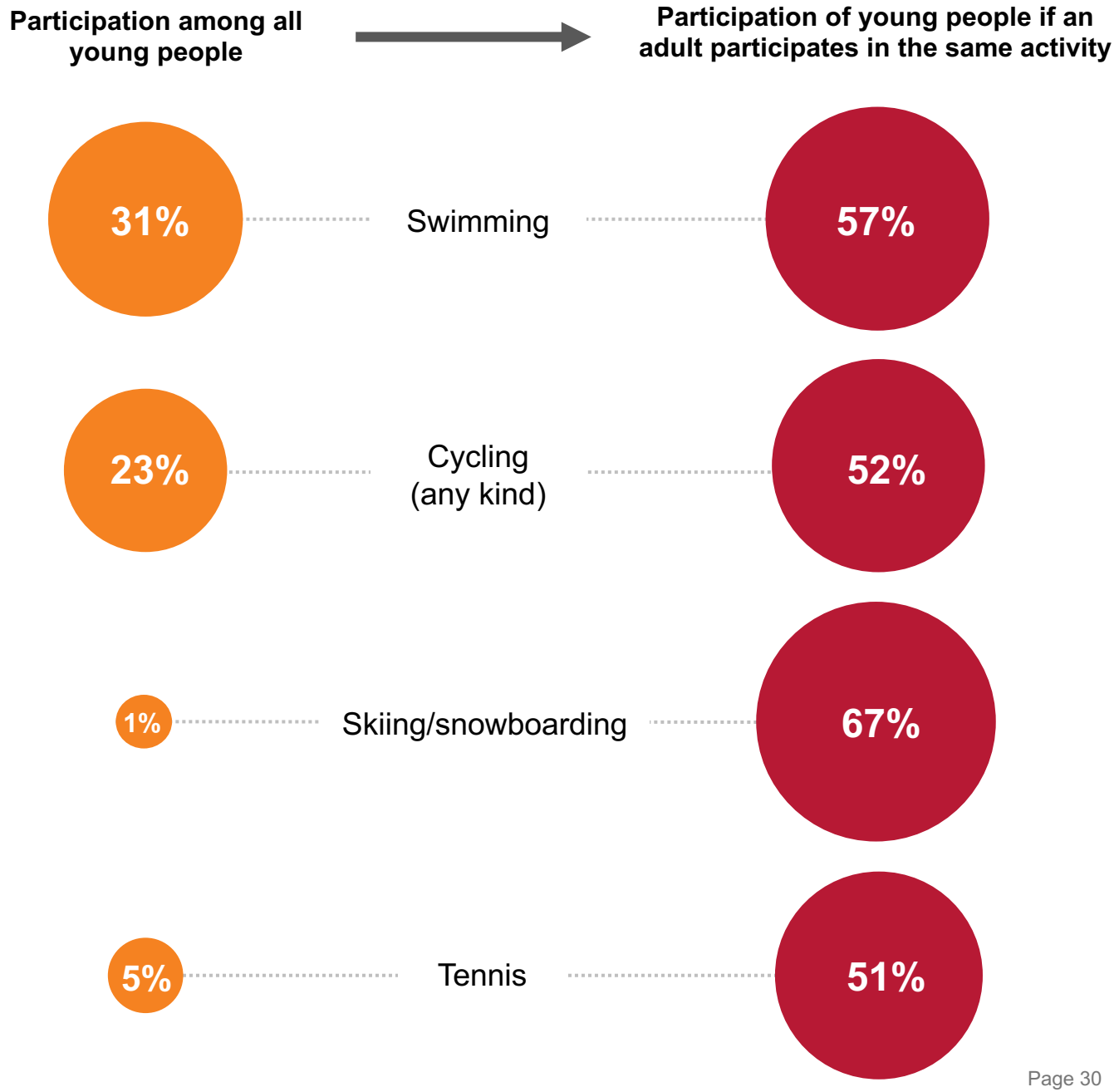
Source: Q16b Physical activity participation in last 7 days (Child survey), Q8c Physical activity participation in last 7 days (Adult survey).
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 living with an adult who completed the survey (2025/26 n=1,659), rangatahi aged 12 to 17 living with an adult who completed the survey (2025/26 n=1,257).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

The activities young people do often reflect those of adults in their household

Whānau influence extends beyond how active young people are. Whānau also influence the activities young people choose to take part in. Young people are often much more likely to participate in specific sports and activities when an adult in their household also participates.

The four examples opposite show that whānau can provide an important introduction to many different activities. This pattern exists for many of the activities included in Active NZ.

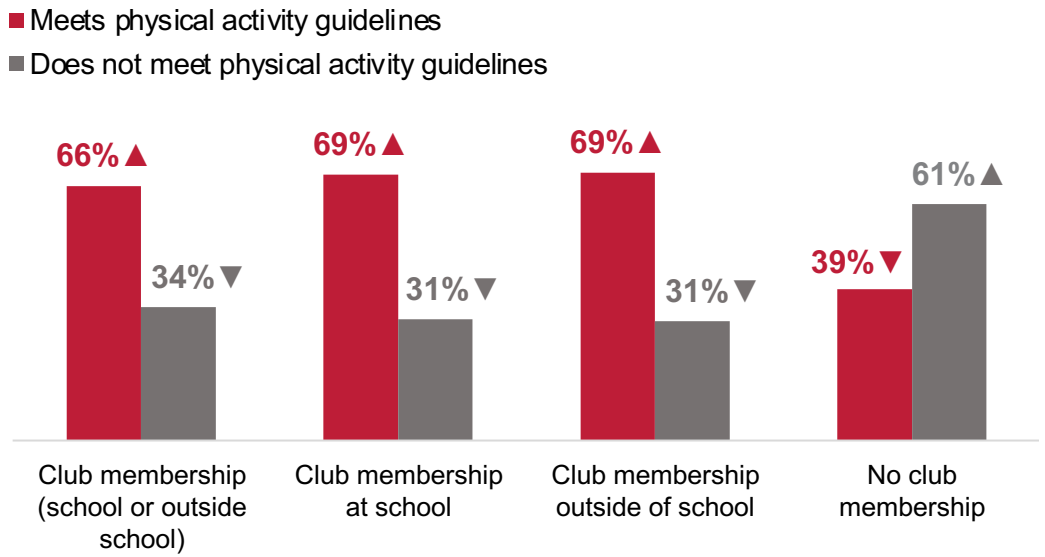
Source: Q16b Physical activity participation in last 7 days (Child survey), Q8c Physical activity participation in last 7 days (Adult survey).
Base: All young people (n=4,575). Household activity-matched bases: swimming n=563, cycling (any kind) n=654, skiing/snowboarding n=47, tennis n=132.



Whānau and caregivers can influence how young people engage in clubs

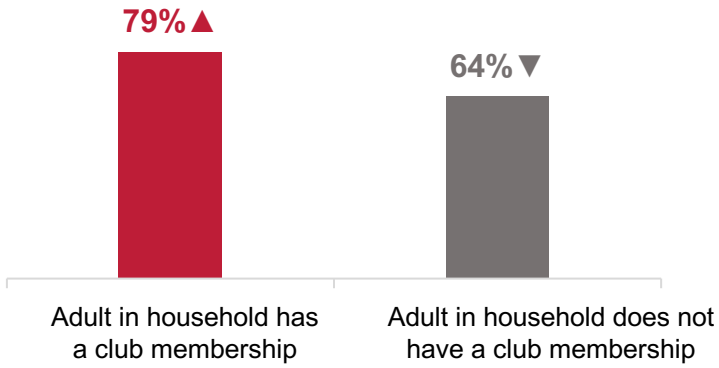
Young people are considerably more likely to belong to a sports or recreation club when an adult in their household is also involved. This suggests that households can help young people discover, access and remain engaged in organised opportunities to be active.

Incidence of club membership between young people who do and do not meet the physical activity guidelines



Source: Q39 Membership for sports teams or recreation groups and clubs (other than a gym or fitness centre).
Base: All young people who meet the physical activity guidelines (2025/26 n=2,609) and those who do not meet the guidelines (2025/26 n=1,966).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with other subgroups.

Percentage (%) of young people holding a club membership, by whether an adult in the household also holds a club membership

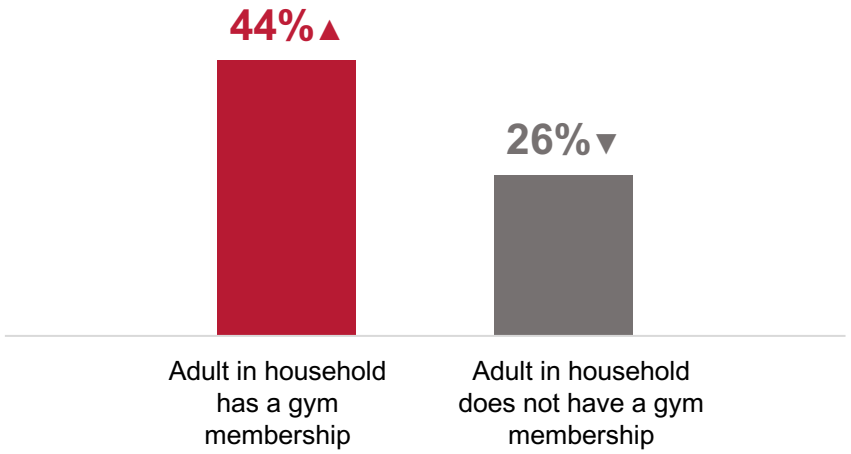


Source: Q39 Membership for sports teams or recreation groups and clubs (other than a gym or fitness centre).
Base: Young people aged 5 to 17 living with an adult who has a club membership (2025/26 n=754) and those without a club membership (2025/26 n=2,162).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with other subgroups.

Whānau influence is also seen in gym membership and volunteering

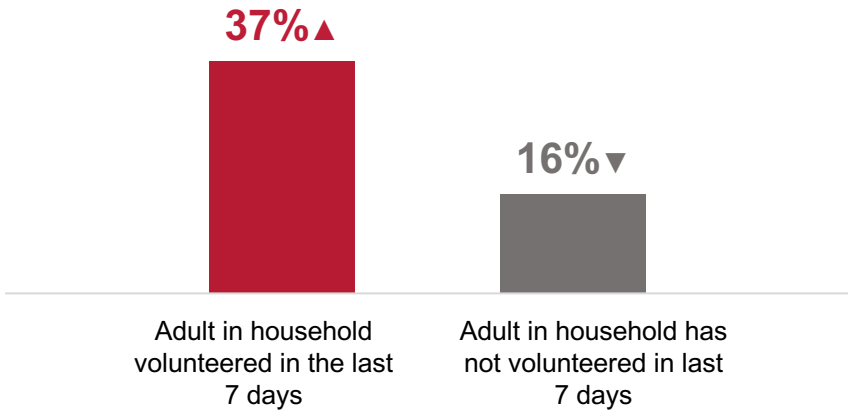
Young people are also more likely to join gyms and volunteer when adults in their household do the same. This suggests that households play an important role in exposing young people to opportunities, experiences and behaviours that encourage an active lifestyle.

Percentage (%) of rangatahi aged 15 to 17 years with a gym membership



Source: Q77 Whether respondent currently belongs to a gym or fitness centre, Q37 Gym membership.
Base: Rangatahi aged 15 to 17 living with an adult who also has a gym membership (2025/26 n=154) and living with an adult without a gym membership (2025/26 n=396).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with other subgroups.

Percentage (%) of rangatahi who have volunteered for sport, exercise or recreational activity in last 7 days



Source: Q36b Volunteering outside of school in last 7 days, Q43a Volunteering in the last 7 days.
Base: Young people aged 12 to 17 living with an adult who also has volunteered in last 7 days (2025/26 n=235) and living with an adult who has not volunteered in last 7 days (2025/26 n=893).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with other subgroups.



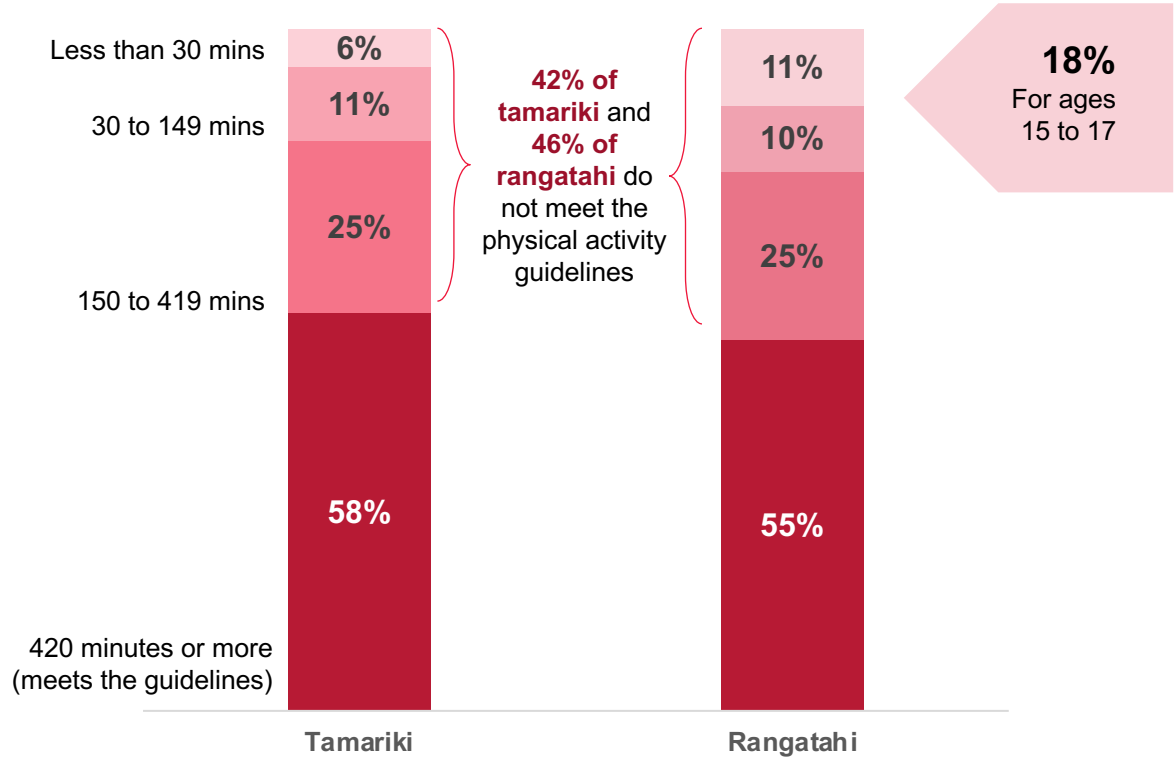
What is holding young people back from participating more?

Nearly half of young people still do not meet the physical activity guidelines

While overall participation has largely rebounded from the lows observed during the pandemic, a substantial proportion of young people still remain below the recommended physical activity level of 420 minutes or more per week.

The challenge is particularly acute for **older rangatahi**, where activity levels remain considerably lower than among tamariki.

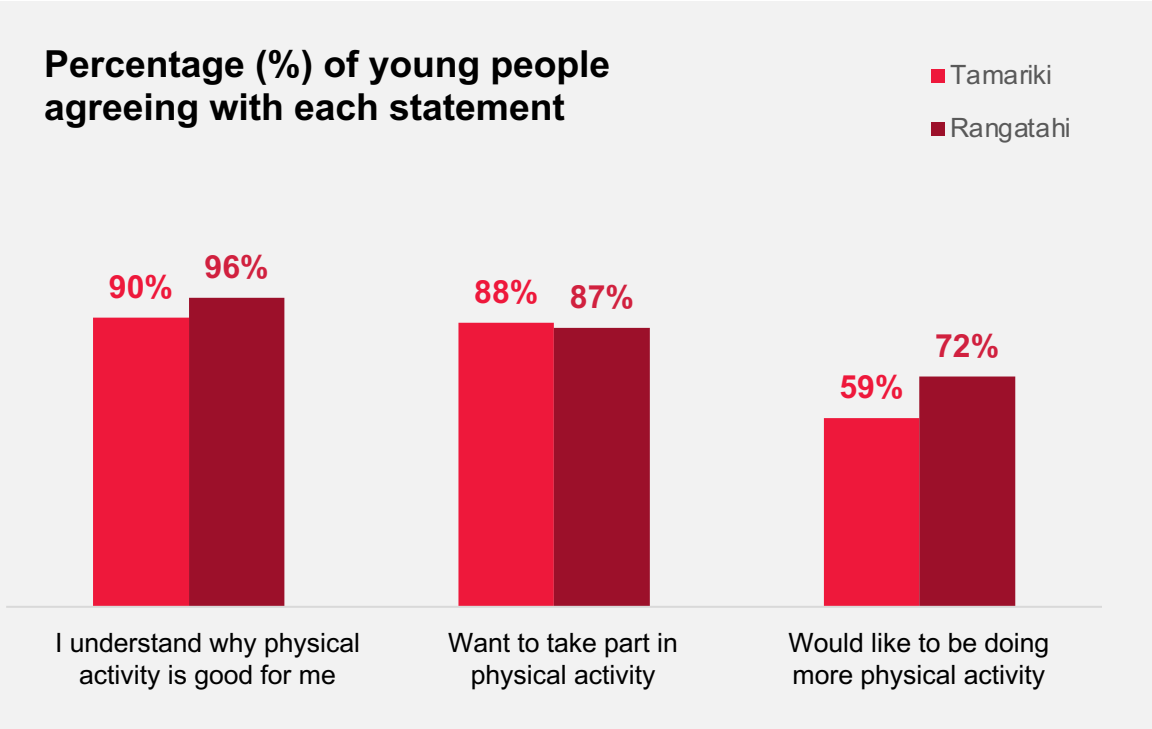
Minutes spent being active in the last 7 days



Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n= 2,081), rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,468).

Most young people understand the value of being active and would like to do more

Young people overwhelmingly recognise the benefits of physical activity and want to participate more. However, wanting to be active is not the same as acting on that intention. Converting awareness and aspiration into regular participation often depends on factors such as confidence, opportunity, social support and the practical barriers explored in the following pages.



These findings are consistent with last year's conclusion that participation depends on more than wanting to be active. Most young people understand the benefits of physical activity, and many say they would like to do more.

Previous analysis showed that tamariki participation is supported through connection to spaces and places, whānau involvement and access to opportunities, while confidence is critical in helping rangatahi turn opportunity into participation. Together, these findings suggest the challenge is not in creating interest in physical activity, but in helping young people act on it.

Source: Q39a Attitudes toward physical activity, Q22 Would like to be doing more physical activity.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n= 2,089), rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,486).

Practical, social support and cost barriers are becoming more common

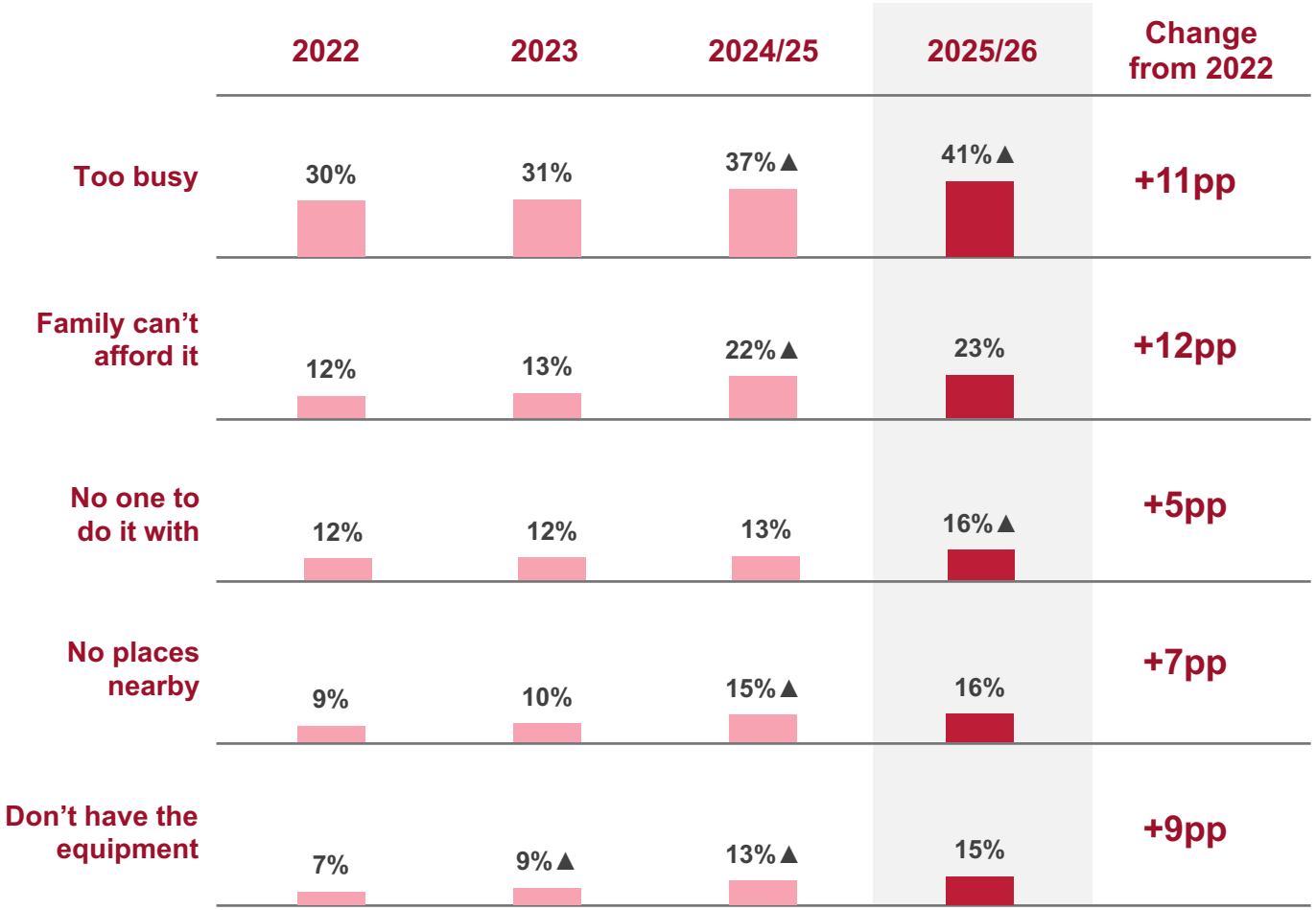
Young people who would like to be more active are increasingly reporting barriers that sit outside their direct control.

Affordability pressures, limited social support and a lack of equipment have become more common over recent years.

Time pressures have also increased, although being “too busy” can sometimes reflect physical activity being deprioritised amongst competing commitments rather than a simple lack of available time.

Together, these findings suggest that translating a desire to be more physically active into participation is becoming more challenging for some young people.

Barriers to participating in more physical activity



Source: Q23 Barriers to participation for those who do want to be doing more physical activity.
Base: Young people who want to do more physical activity (2025/26 n= 2,972; 2024/25 n=2,977; 2023 n=3,886; 2022 n=2,488).
Notes: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

The barriers to participation become more personal as young people grow older

The barriers facing tamariki and rangatahi look quite different.

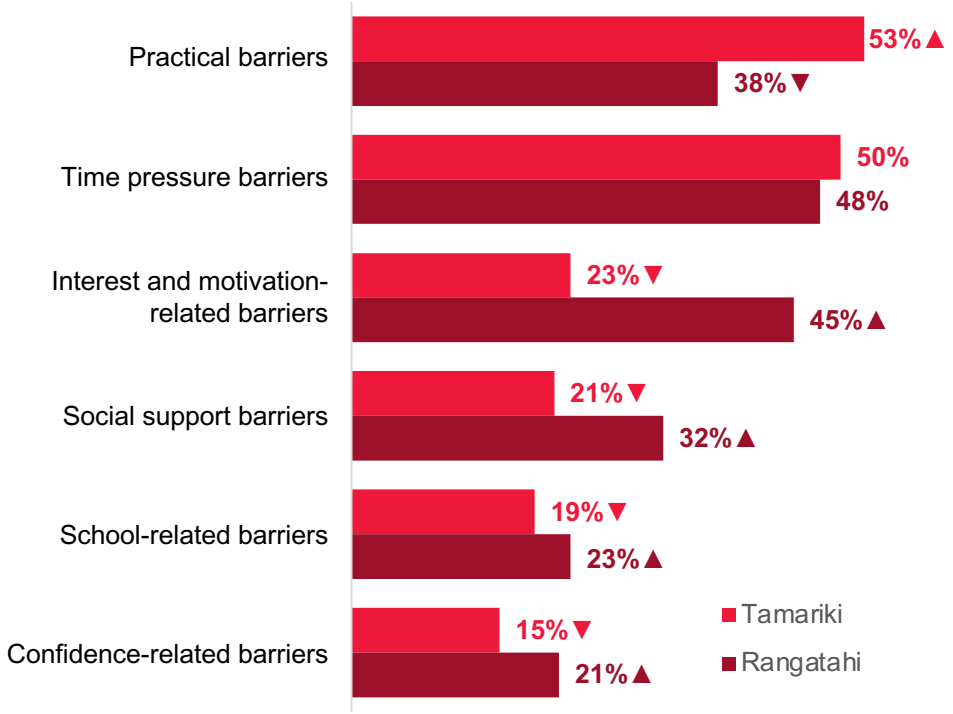
For tamariki, whose responses were reported by parents and caregivers, the most common barriers relate to practical constraints, family circumstances and competing demands on time. While many parents report that their child is "too busy", this may partly reflect physical activity being deprioritised alongside other family or school commitments and activities.

Consistent with last year's findings, these barriers highlight the importance of whānau support, access to opportunities, and connection to spaces and places in supporting participation.

Among rangatahi, motivation-related, social support and confidence barriers become much more common. This aligns with last year's finding that confidence plays an important role in helping rangatahi turn opportunities into participation.

Together, the results suggest that while access remains important, participation increasingly depends on whether young people feel motivated, supported and confident enough to take part.

Barriers among young people who would like to be doing more physical activity



Note: Barriers have been grouped into broader categories to provide a clearer view of the main challenges facing young people.

Each net category combines related individual barriers.

The specific individual barriers included within each category are shown on page 19 and broken down by age groups in appendix 2.

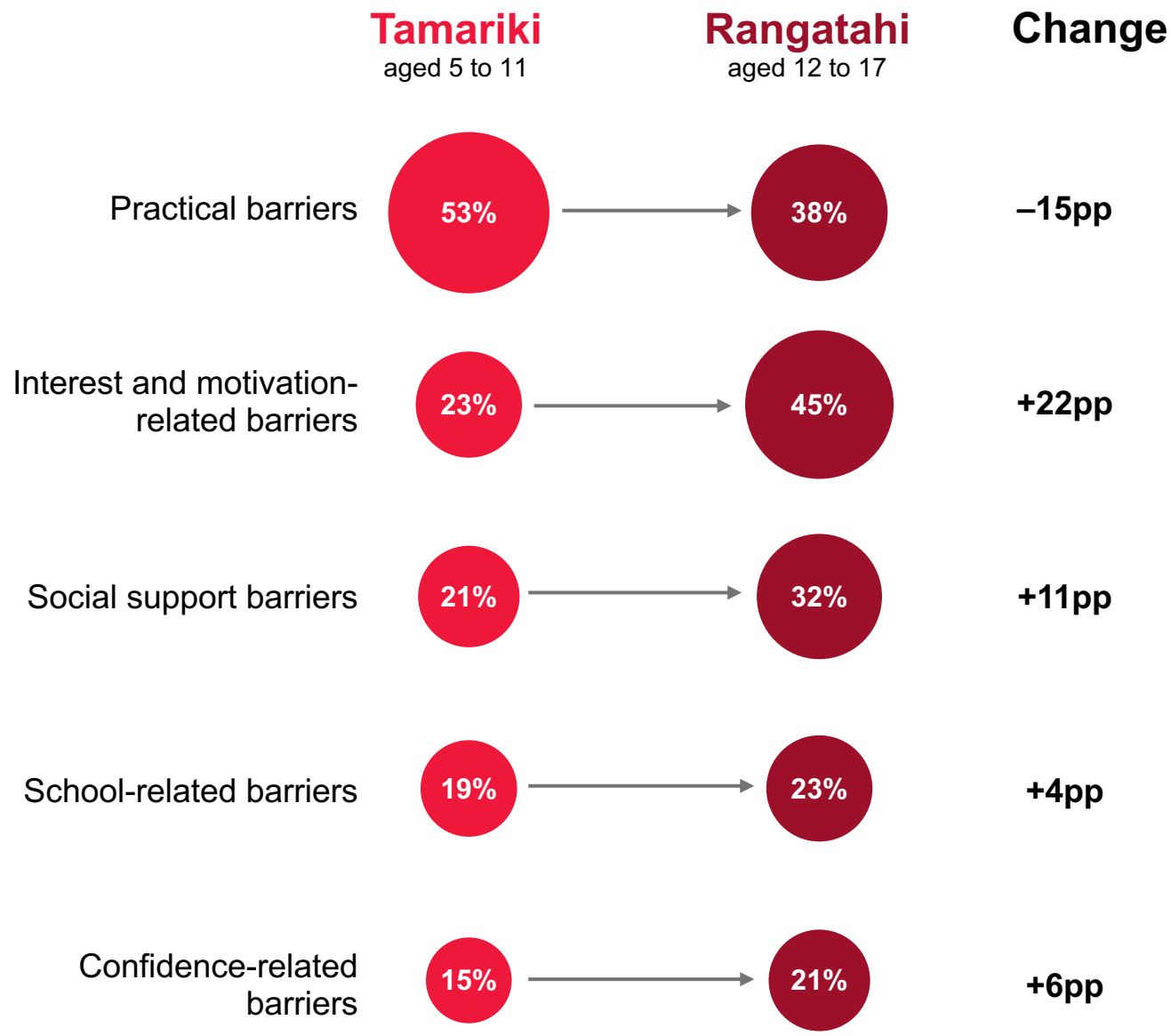
Source: Q23. Barriers to participation for those who do want to be doing more physical activity.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n= 1,189), rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=1,783).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with other subgroups.

Barriers to being active change as young people get older

Time pressure barriers are consistent by age for around 1 in 2 tamariki and rangatahi. What changes is everything else.

Interest, motivation and social support barriers rise sharply, and confidence barriers become more common.

Access still matters, but participation increasingly depends on whether young people feel motivated, supported and confident enough to take part.



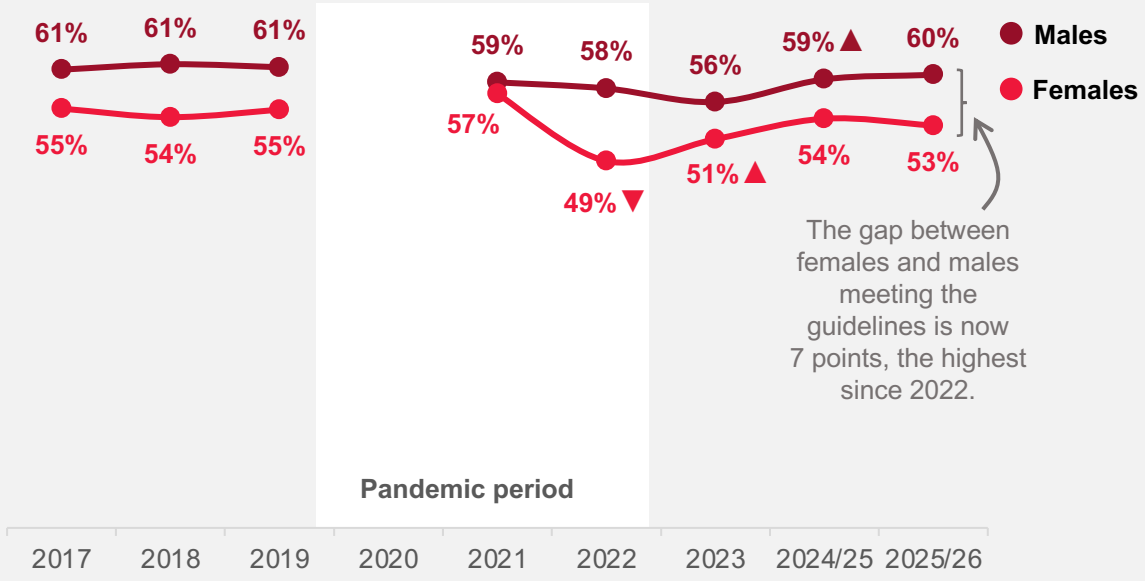
Source: Q23. Barriers to participation for those who do want to be doing more physical activity.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n= 1,189), rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=1,783).


Not everybody has
the same opportunities

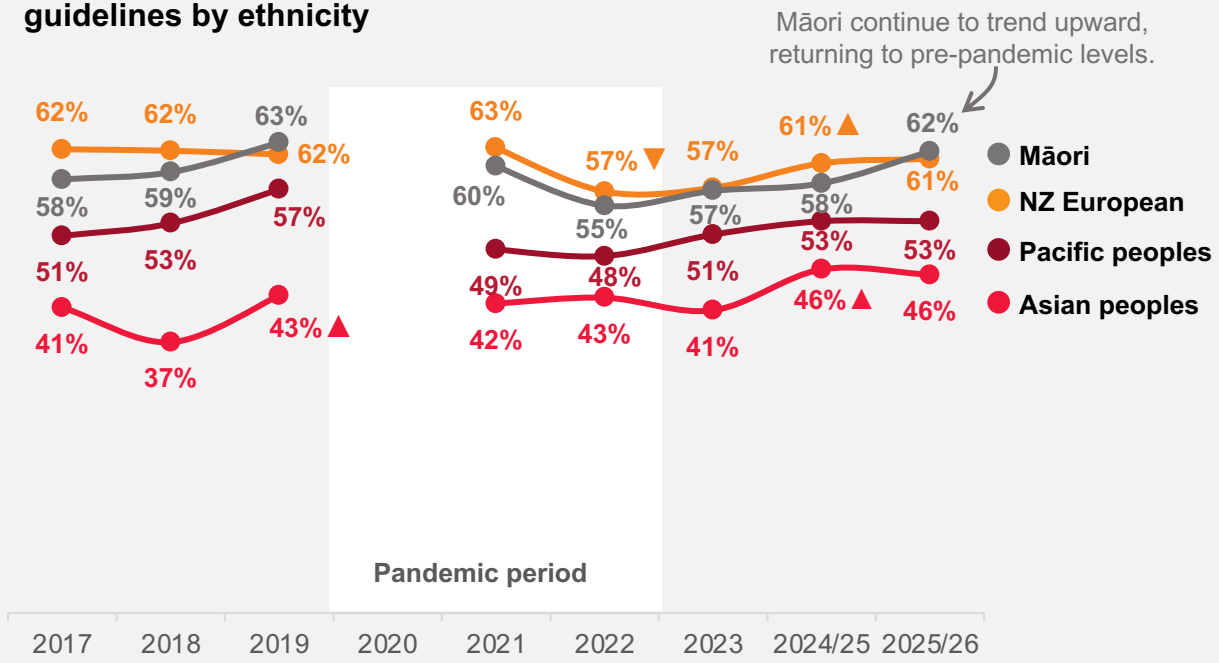
Some young people continue to face greater challenges to participation

The recovery in participation has not been experienced equally across all groups. Females remain less likely than males to meet the physical activity guidelines, while participation among Asian young people continues to lag behind other ethnic groups. These differences highlight that some young people continue to face greater barriers to participation than others.

Percentage (%) of young people meeting the physical activity guidelines by gender



Percentage (%) of young people meeting the physical activity guidelines by ethnicity



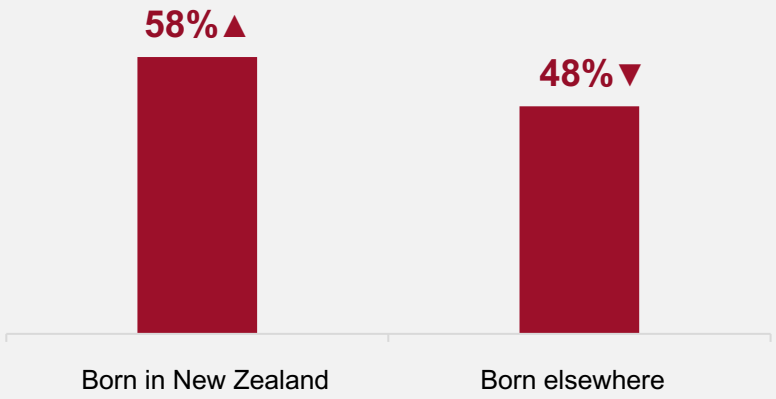
Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity and Q9 Gender.
Base: Girls aged 5 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,208; 2024/25 n=2,217; 2023 n=2,887; 2022 n=1,948; 2021 n=2,480; 2019 n=2,519; 2018 n=2,764; 2017 n=3,095).
Boys aged 5 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,302; 2024/25 n=2,305; 2023 n=2,940; 2022 n=2,024; 2021 n=2,307; 2019 n=2,269; 2018 n=2,820; 2017 n=2,894).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity and Q75 Ethnicity.
Base: NZ European (2025/26 n=3,605; 2024/25 n=3,597; 2023 n=4,827; 2022 n=3,322; 2021 n=4,042; 2019 n=4,051; 2018 n=4,641; 2017 n=5,118).
Māori (2025/26 n=860; 2024/25 n=779; 2023 n=1,002; 2022 n=591; 2021 n=767; 2019 n=768; 2018 n=914; 2017 n=1,041).
Pacific peoples (2025/26 n=333; 2024/25 n=339; 2023 n=360; 2022 n=231; 2021 n=239; 2019 n=232; 2018 n=272; 2017 n=302).
Asian peoples (2025/26 n=683; 2024/25 n=765; 2023 n=664; 2022 n=467; 2021 n=555; 2019 n=551; 2018 n=678; 2017 n=549).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

Young migrants also face additional challenges to participation

Differences in participation are also evident among young migrants. Lower activity levels, lower club membership and lower household activity levels point to a broader participation gap. The findings suggest that some groups may face additional challenges in accessing the opportunities, support and networks that encourage participation.

Percentage (%) meeting the physical activity guidelines by country of birth



Other differences related to young New Zealand migrants

Fewer activities per week

Young migrants participate in an average of 4.1 physical activities per week, compared with 4.7 activities per week among New Zealand-born young people.

Lower club membership

Young migrants are significantly less likely to be a member of a sports team, recreation group or club (59% are club or team members, compared to 68% of New Zealand-born young people).

Less active adult in the household

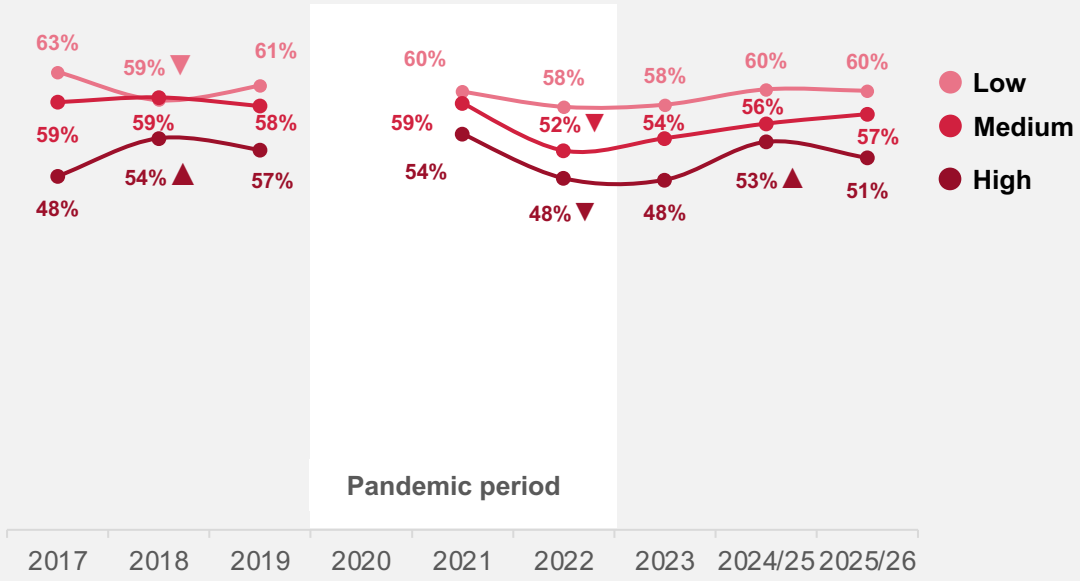
The adult in their household who completed the survey is significantly less likely to meet the adult activity guidelines (55% meet the adult physical activity guidelines, compared to 62% of adults in households with New Zealand-born young people).

Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity, Q74 Country of birth, Q39 Club membership, Q8c Physical activity participation in last 7 days (Adult survey).
Base: Young people aged 5 to 17 born in NZ (2025/26 n=3,956), and not born in NZ (2025/26 n=593).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate significantly higher or lower results compared with other subgroups.

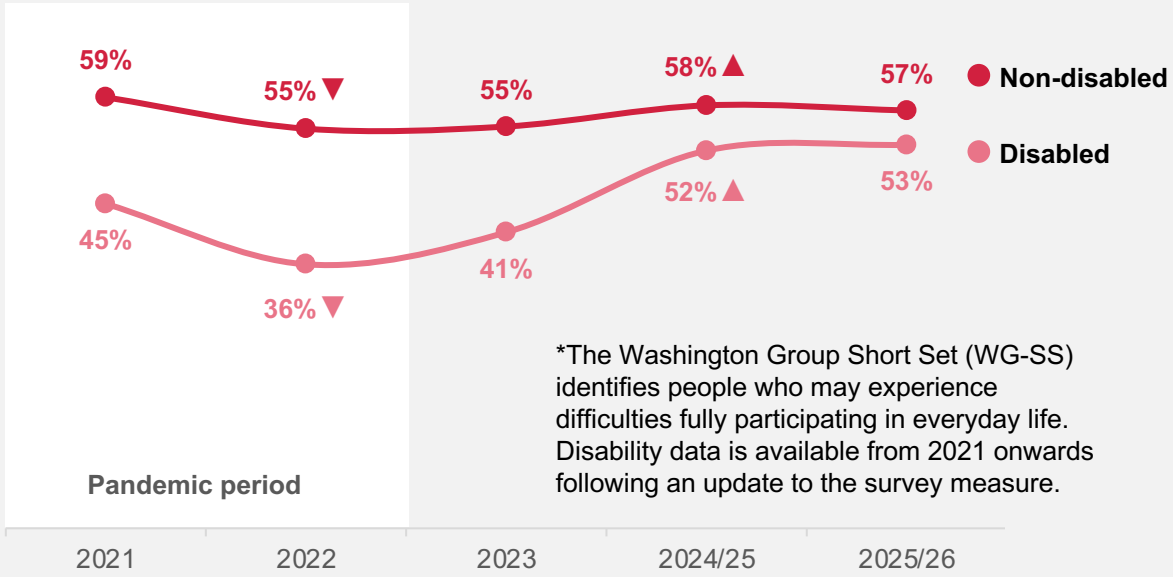
Participation gaps linked to deprivation remain, while disability gaps have narrowed

While some participation gaps can narrow over time, inequitable access to participation opportunities remains an ongoing challenge for some communities. Participation has improved among disabled young people since 2023, narrowing what had previously been a substantial gap. In contrast, differences by area deprivation remain persistent, with young people living in high deprivation communities continuing to be less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines than those living in more advantaged areas.

Percentage (%) of young people meeting physical activity guidelines by area deprivation



Percentage (%) of young people meeting physical activity guidelines by disability (WG-SS)*



*The Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS) identifies people who may experience difficulties fully participating in everyday life. Disability data is available from 2021 onwards following an update to the survey measure.

Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity. Deprivation index is allocated based on physical address.
Base: Young people aged 5 to 17 in low-deprivation areas (2025/26 n=1,727; 2024/25 n=1,711; 2023 n=2,256; 2022 n=1,622; 2021 n=1,821; 2019 n=1,550; 2018 n=1,961; 2017 n=2,317), in medium-deprivation areas (2025/26 n=1,835; 2024/25 n=1,804; 2023 n=2,358; 2022 n=1,545; 2021 n=1,996; 2019 n=1,445; 2018 n=1,775; 2017 n=2,194), in high-deprivation areas (2025/26 n=987; 2024/25 n=1,034; 2023 n=1,276; 2022 n=846; 2,021 n=995; 2019 n=639; 2018 n=873; 2017 n=1,129).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

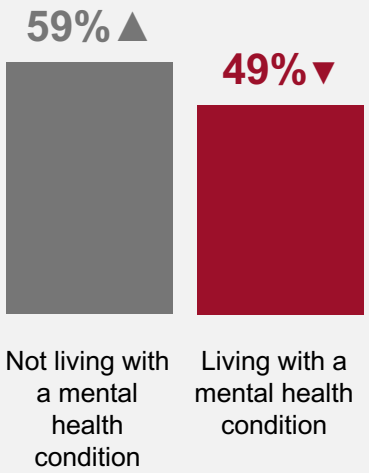
Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity and Q50N Disability (WSS, self-identified).
Base: Young people aged 5 to 17 identifying as disabled (2025/26 n=426; 2024/25 n=501; 2023 n=593; 2022 n=370; 2021 n=336), identifying as non-disabled (2025/26 n=4,019; 2024/25 n=3,904; 2023 n=5,292; 2022 n=3,642; 2021 =4,488).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

Young people with mental health struggles are less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines, while neurodivergent young people are more likely to be inactive

Mental health

Young people who report a mental health condition are significantly less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines than those who do not.

Percentage (%) of young people meeting the physical activity guidelines

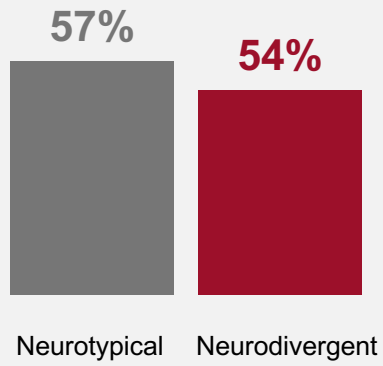


Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity, Q92 Mental health.
Base: Young people aged 5 to 17, excluding those who do not know and prefer not to say.
Has no mental health condition (2025/26 n=3,651). Has a mental health condition (2025/26 n=410).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with other subgroups.

Neurodiversity

While there is no significant difference for meeting guidelines, neurodivergent young people are significantly more likely to be inactive than neurotypical young people.

Percentage (%) of young people meeting the physical activity guidelines



Inactivity rate (less than 30 mins)

14%▲ Neurodivergent

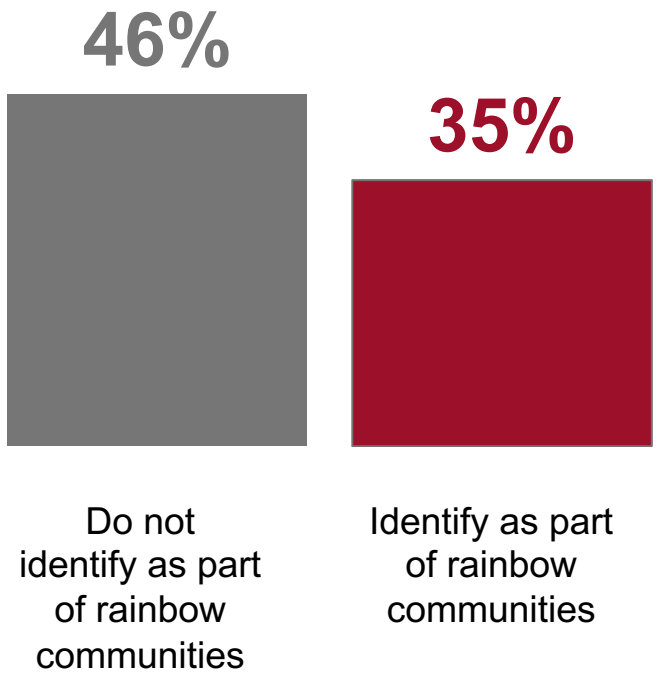
6%▼ Neurotypical

Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity, Q91 Neurodiversity.
Base: Young people aged 5 to 17, excluding those who do not know and prefer not to say.
Neurotypical (2025/26 n=3,218). Neurodivergent (2025/26 n=665).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with other subgroups.

We also explored whether participation differs among rangatahi who identify as part of rainbow communities

Young people who identified as being part of rainbow communities appear less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines. However, the number surveyed was too small to be certain that a statistically significant difference exists, so this finding should be treated with caution.

Percentage (%) meeting the physical activity guidelines



Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity, Q94 Rainbow community.
Base: Young people aged 16 to 17 who do not identify as part of the rainbow community (2025/26 n=605); those who identify as part of the rainbow community (2025/26 n=69).

How inequities accumulate

This year, Active NZ introduced an inequity analysis based on an approach developed by Sport England.

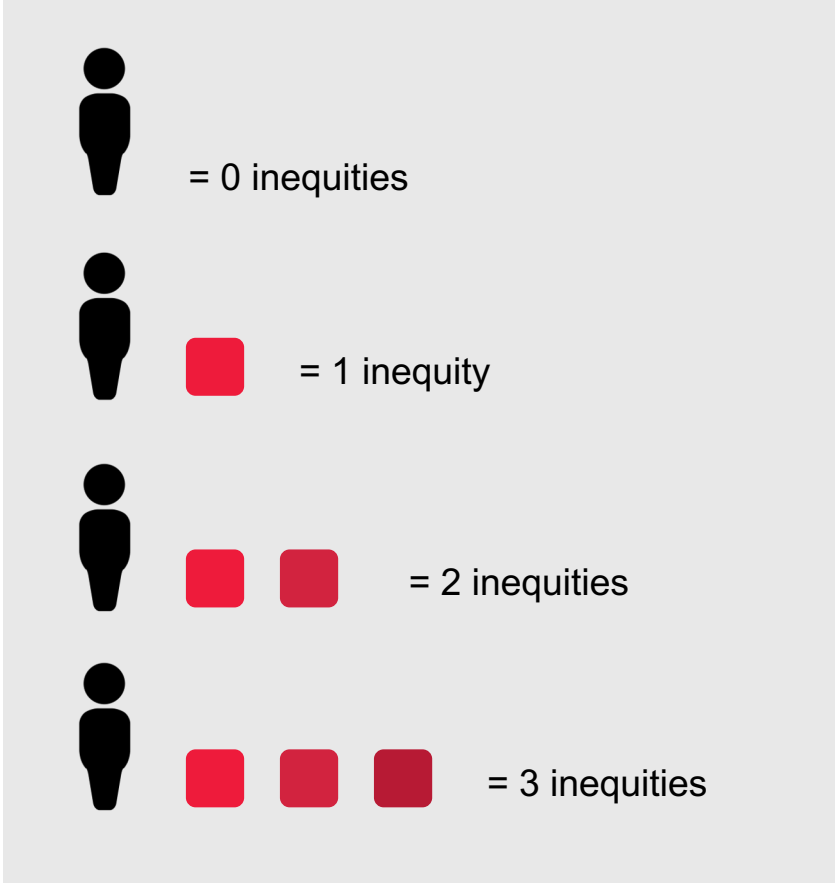
Rather than examining characteristics such as ethnicity, disability or migrant status only in isolation, the analysis considers how multiple forms of inequities can combine to influence participation.

The approach identifies groups of young people who are less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines and examines what happens when these inequities accumulate.

This helps us move beyond asking who is missing out, and towards understanding how unequal opportunities and barriers may compound over time.

How it works

The inequity score is calculated based on counting how many identified characteristics each young person experiences, reflecting the intersection of multiple inequities which affect physical activity levels. Characteristics were only included where the group was significantly less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines. Higher scores indicate that multiple inequities are occurring together.



Groups found to be significantly less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines are as follows.

For **tamariki**:
- Asian peoples
- migrants to New Zealand
- disabled (self-reported*).

For **rangatahi**:
- females
- Asian peoples
- migrants to New Zealand
- those living in high-deprivation areas
- rangatahi experiencing mental health conditions.

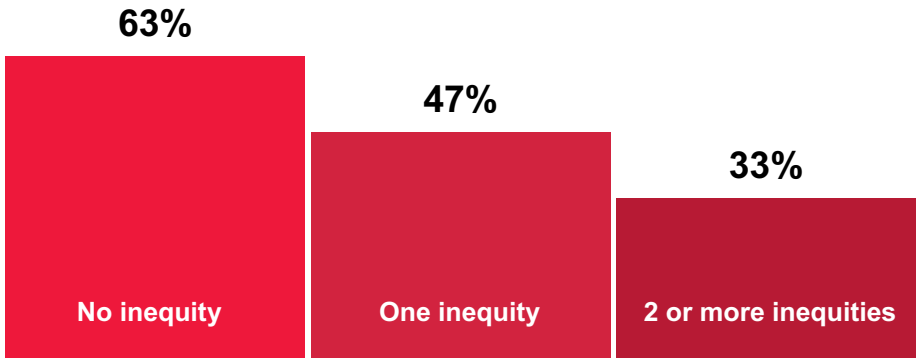
Note: This approach has been adapted from Sport England's Inequalities Metric, which explores how disadvantage accumulates across different population groups and influences participation outcomes.
*Disability is defined here as self-reported disability, not the definition that the WG-SS is using.

Multiple inequities create greater obstacles to being physically active

The impact of inequities becomes much greater when multiple inequities occur together. Young people experiencing one identified inequity are already less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines than those experiencing none. However, participation drops further when multiple inequities are experienced at the same time. This pattern is evident for both tamariki and rangatahi. Participation falls progressively as inequities accumulate, showing that barriers to participation often compound rather than exist independently.

Percentage (%) of tamariki meeting the physical activity guidelines

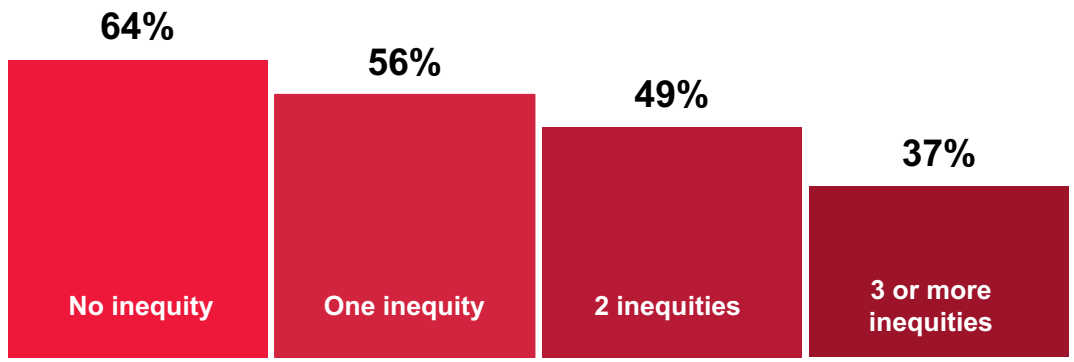
Note: This analysis includes the groups found to be significantly less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines: Asian peoples, migrants to New Zealand and disabled (self-reported*) tamariki.



Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 in 2025/26 with no disadvantages (n=1,627), one disadvantage (n=385) and two or more disadvantages (n=77).
Note: A separate group experiencing three or more disadvantages was not reported for tamariki due to the small sample size (n = 1). This respondent has been combined with the two-disadvantage group.
*Disability is defined here as self-reported disability, not the definition that the WG-SS is using.

Percentage (%) of rangatahi meeting the physical activity guidelines

Note: This analysis includes the groups found to be significantly less likely to meet the physical activity guidelines: females, Asian peoples, migrants to New Zealand, those living in high-deprivation areas and rangatahi experiencing mental health conditions.



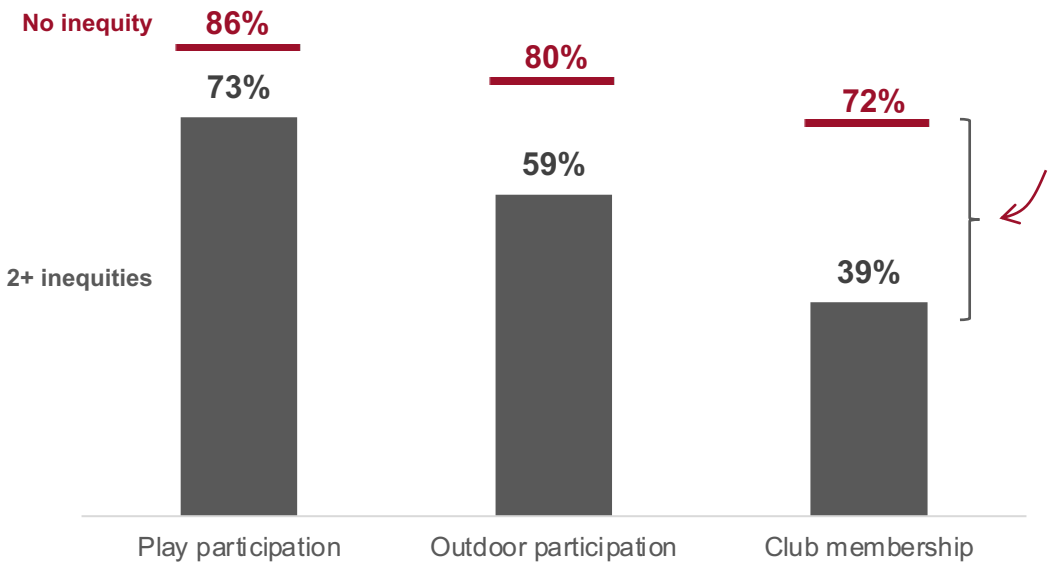
Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity.
Base: Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 in 2025/26 with no disadvantages (n=668), one disadvantage (n=1,039) two disadvantages (n=558) and three or more disadvantages (n=203).

Participation can drop by up to half when multiple inequities are present.

Participation drops when opportunity, connection and support fall away

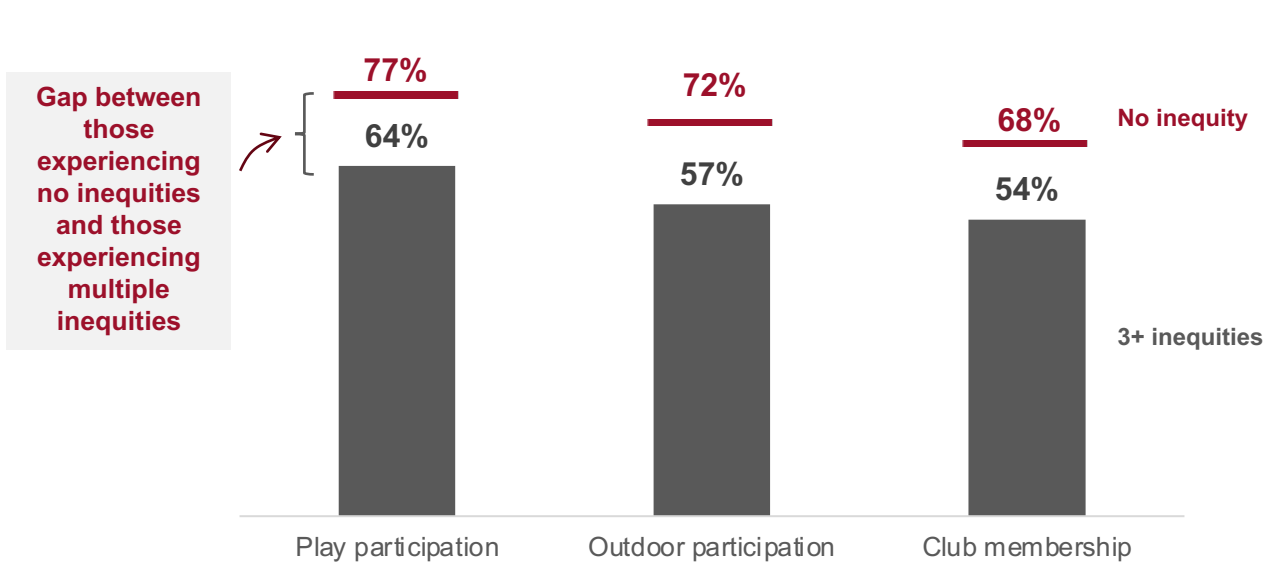
Young people experiencing multiple inequities are not less interested in being active but are less likely to participate through play, outdoor settings and clubs. These gaps suggest they have fewer connections to the people, places and structured opportunities that help turn an intention to be active into regular participation.

Tamariki with multiple inequities



Source: Q16 Where or how participated, Q17 Facilities use for physical activity and Q39 club membership.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 in 2025/26 with no disadvantages (n=1,627) and two or more disadvantages (n=77).

Rangatahi with multiple inequities



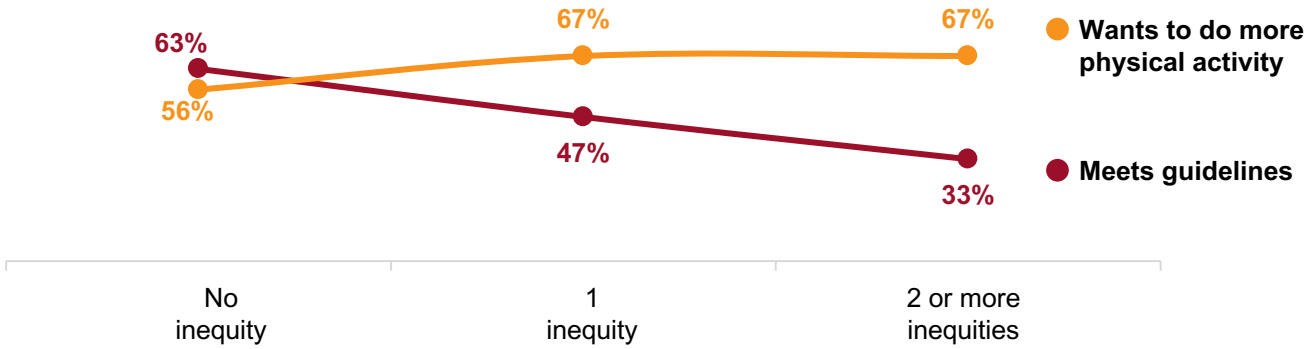
Source: Q16 Where or how participated, Q17 Facilities use for physical activity and Q39 club membership.
Base: Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 in 2025/26 with no disadvantages (n=668) and three or more disadvantages (n=203).

Young people with the lowest participation often have the strongest desire to do more

Young people experiencing greater inequity are not less interested in being active. In fact, they are often more likely to say they would like to do more physical activity than those experiencing no inequity.

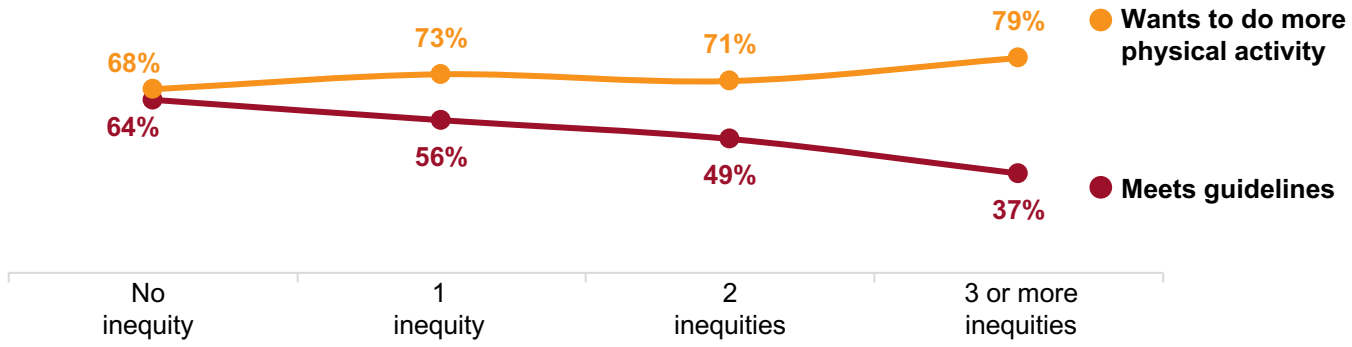
While participation falls sharply as inequities accumulate, the desire to be more active remains high. This finding shows that lower participation cannot be explained by a lack of interest alone, and points instead to the challenges some young people face in turning intention into participation.

Percentage (%) of tamariki meeting guidelines and wanting to do more physical activity



Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity, Q22 Would like to be doing more physical activity.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 in 2025/26 with no inequity (n=1,627), one inequity (n=385) and two or more inequities (n=77).

Percentage (%) of rangatahi meeting guidelines and wanting to do more physical activity



Source: Q16b Time spent doing each activity, Q22 Would like to be doing more physical activity.
Base: Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 in 2025/26 with no inequity (n=668), one inequity (n=1,039) two inequities (n=558) and three or more inequities (n=203).

Access to opportunities and support matters

The strongest participation outcomes are seen where young people are connected to supportive environments, including whānau, clubs, outdoor spaces and opportunities to be active.

As inequities accumulate, these connections become weaker and participation falls, even though many young people continue to express a desire to do more physical activity.

Together, these findings highlight the importance of creating the conditions that enable all young people to participate and thrive through physical activity.

Supporting every young person to be active

Young people are active in different ways, and these continue to evolve as they grow. What remains consistent is the importance of supportive whānau, accessible opportunities, welcoming places and the confidence to take part. The challenge is creating the conditions that enable them to participate in ways that work for their lives.

Supporting active lives means:

- supporting activities across a range of settings from competition, PE, play and independent, self-directed exercise
- responding to the different needs of tamariki and rangatahi
- strengthening the role of whānau and communities
- building confidence and connection
- reducing practical and financial barriers that limit opportunity and choice.

When young people have the right opportunities, connections and support, more can experience the lifelong benefits of being active.



Appendices

Participation in sports and activities

Appendix 1

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Young people's participation by activity in last 7 days (A–O)

This section lists, in alphabetical order, the activities young people take part in, and can help to show change over time.

Activities that are significantly higher or lower than the previous year are shaded in green (higher) or red (lower).

Significantly higher than previous year

Significantly lower than previous year

	All young people		Tamariki		Rangatahi	
	2024/25 (%)	2025/26 (%)	2024/25 (%)	2025/26 (%)	2024/25 (%)	2025/26 (%)
Active games (eg, four square, tag, bull rush, dodgeball)	34	31	37	34	30	26
Adventure racing	1	1	1	0	0	1
Athletics or track and field	7	6	7	5	6	6
Badminton	5	5	2	2	8	8
Basketball or miniball	13	13	11	11	15	15
Canoeing or kayaking	1	1	1	1	2	2
Cheerleading	1	1	1	1	1	1
Climbing	7	6	8	6	6	5
Cricket	5	6	5	5	6	6
Cross country	5	5	6	6	4	4
Cycling or biking	20	20	25	25	15	15
Dance or dancing	16	17	20	19	12	14
Fishing	3	3	2	2	3	4
Football	22	19	22	19	22	19
Futsal	3	2	2	1	4	4
Golf	3	2	2	1	4	4
Golf – driving range	1	2	0	1	1	3
Golf or mini golf or mini putt	2	1	2	1	2	1
Group exercise class	7	7	7	6	8	8
Gymnastics	8	6	12	9	3	4
Handball	6	5	5	5	6	6
Hockey or floorball	5	5	4	4	6	7
Horse riding	2	1	2	1	2	1
Kai gathering	2	1	2	1	1	1
Kapa haka	9	10	11	12	7	7
Karate	3	2	3	3	2	2
Kī-o-rahi	3	2	2	1	4	3
Mountain biking	5	4	4	3	7	6
Netball	10	10	8	8	12	11
Nothing in the last 7 days	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orienteering	1	1	0	0	1	1
Other	7	8	6	7	8	9
Other martial arts, eg, Kung Fu, Judo	1	1	1	1	1	1

Source: Q13a Activities done in last 7 days.
Base: Young people aged 5 to 17 (2025/26 n=4,757; 2024/25 n=4,751).
Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n=2,226, 2024/25 n=2,089).
Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,345, 2024/25 n=2,486).
Note: Participation proportions by activity are not directly comparable with results from 2023 or earlier, due to a randomisation change of the question.

Young people's participation by activity in last 7 days (P–Z)

This section lists, in alphabetical order, the activities young people take part in, and can help to show change over time.

Activities that are significantly higher or lower than the previous year are shaded in green (higher) or red (lower).

Significantly higher than previous year

Significantly lower than previous year

	All young people		Tamariki		Rangatahi	
	2024/25 (%)	2025/26 (%)	2024/25 (%)	2025/26 (%)	2024/25 (%)	2025/26 (%)
Parkour	2	2	2	1	3	3
Playing (eg, running around, climbing trees, make-believe)	44	42	61	58	25	25
Playing on playground	40	38	62	59	16	15
Rollerblading	2	2	3	3	1	1
Rowing	1	1	0	0	2	2
Rugby league	3	2	3	2	4	2
Rugby or rippa rugby	9	8	9	9	9	7
Running or jogging	29	29	26	25	32	32
Sailing or yachting	1	1	1	0	1	1
Scootering	16	14	22	20	8	7
Skateboarding	3	3	3	3	3	3
Skiing or snowboarding	1	1	1	1	1	1
Softball or T-ball	3	2	3	2	3	3
Surf lifesaving	1	1	1	1	1	1
Surfing or bodyboarding	3	2	2	2	3	2
Swimming	31	30	43	40	18	19
Table tennis	3	3	1	1	4	5
Tennis	5	5	6	4	5	6
Touch	8	9	6	8	10	10
Tramping or hiking or bush walks	6	6	6	6	7	7
Trampoline	18	16	24	22	10	10
Triathlon or duathlon	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ultimate frisbee	1	1	0	0	3	2
Volleyball or Kiwi volley	6	7	2	2	10	12
Waka ama or waka hourua	1	1	1	0	1	1
Walking for fitness	24	24	19	18	30	29
Water polo or flippa ball	1	1	1	1	2	2
Workout (weights or cardio)	12	14	3	2	23	26
NET Cycling or biking/mountain biking	23	22	27	27	18	17
NET Football/futsal	22	20	22	20	23	20
NET Golf/golf – driving range/golf – mini golf or mini putt	4	4	3	3	6	6
NET Rugby or rippa rugby/rugby league/touch	15	15	15	15	16	14

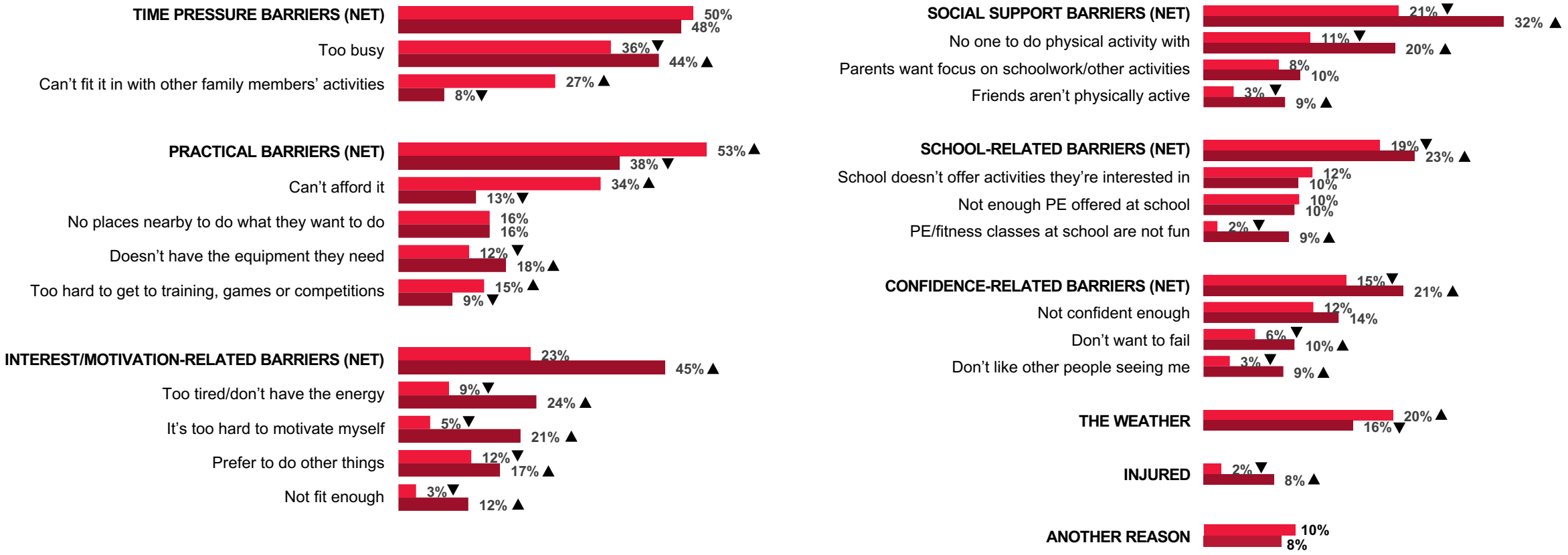
Source: Q13a Activities done in last 7 days.
Base: Young people aged 5 to 17 (2025/26 n=4,757; 2024/25 n=4,751).
Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n=2,226, 2024/25 n=2,089).
Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,345, 2024/25 n=2,486).
Note: Participation proportions by activity are not directly comparable with results from 2023 or earlier, due to a randomisation change of the question.

Barriers to participation for those who want to be doing more

Appendix 2

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Barriers to participation by age groups



Source: Q23 Barriers to participation.
Base: Young people who want to do more physical activity (2025/26 tamariki n=1,189; rangatahi n=1,783).
Note: Net percentages represent the proportion of respondents who selected at least one of the more specific categories within that theme.
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with other subgroups.

Attitudinal trends

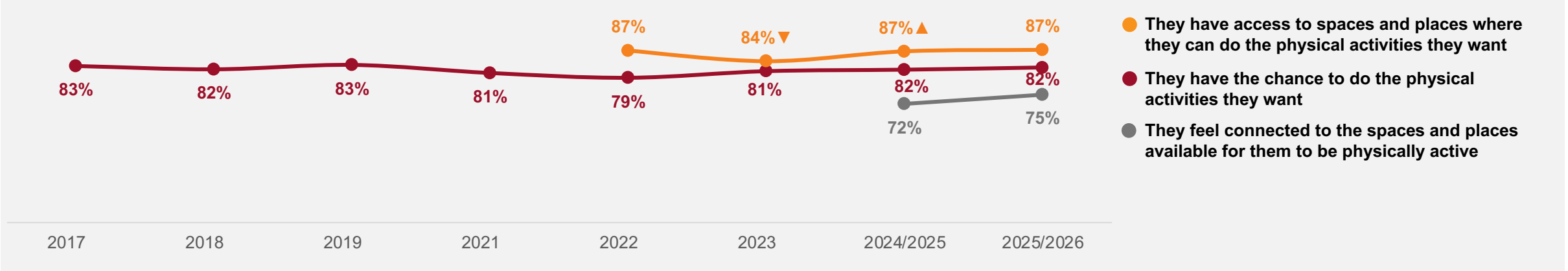
Appendix 3

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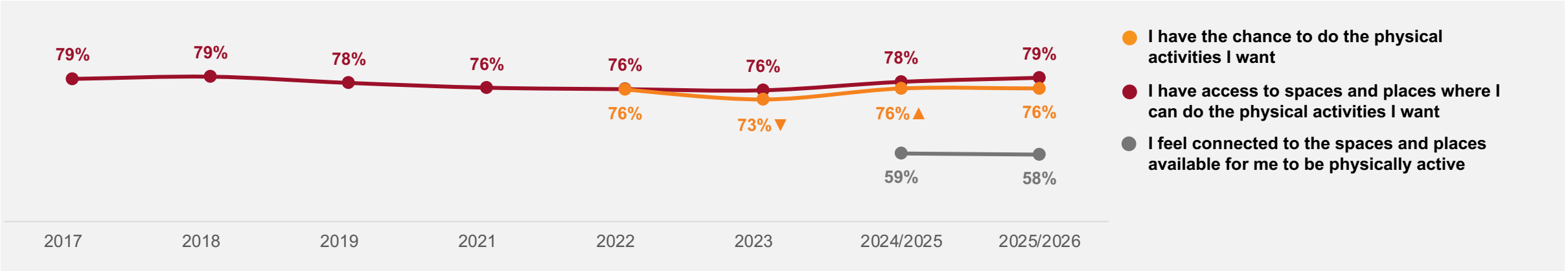
Access and opportunity

Most young people continue to feel they have the chance and the places they need to be active. These measures are broadly stable, although tamariki remain more positive than rangatahi. The largest difference is in connection to spaces and places: three-quarters of tamariki feel connected to the places available to them, compared with fewer than 6 in 10 rangatahi.

Percentage (%) of parents of tamariki agreeing with each statement



Percentage (%) of rangatahi agreeing with each statement

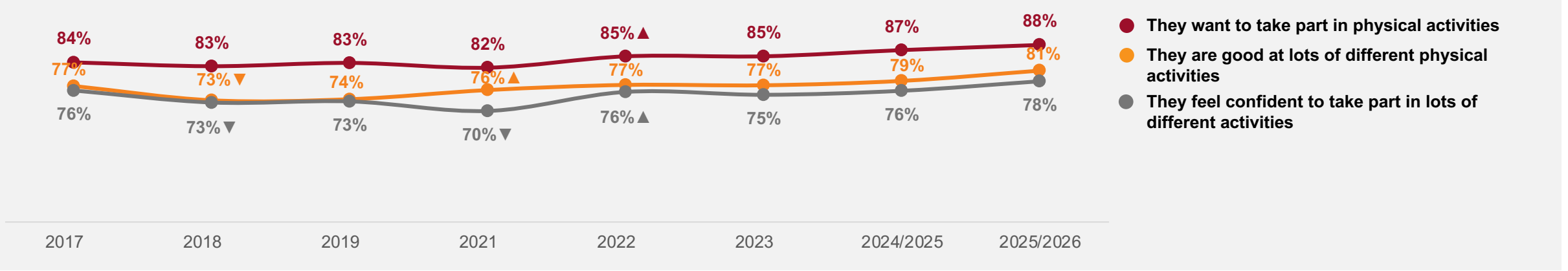


Source: Q39 Attitudes toward physical activity.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n=2,089; 2024/25 n=2,226; 2023 n=1,908; 2022 n=1,691; 2021 n=2,725; 2019 n=3,045; 2018 n=3,690; 2017 n=3,952).
Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 (2025/26 n=2,468; 2024/25 n=2,345; 2023 n=3,982; 2022 n=2,324; 2021 n=2,099; 2019 n=1,754; 2018 n=1,905; 2017 n=2,052).
Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

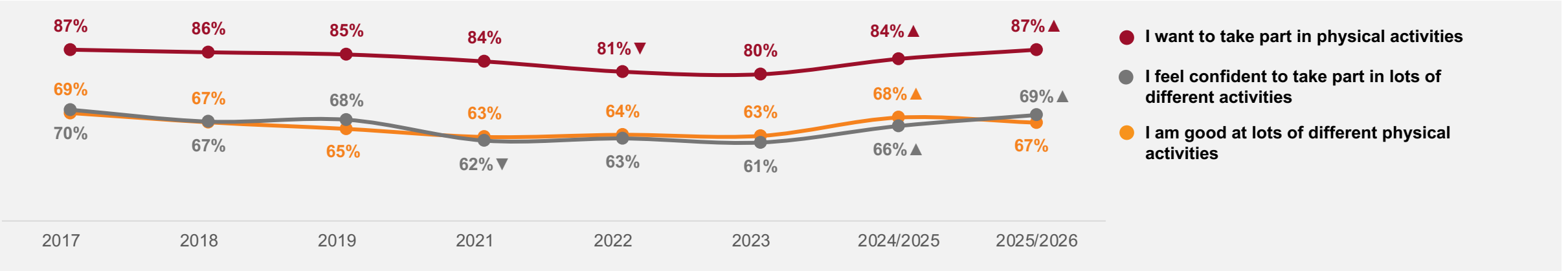
Confidence and enjoyment

Most young people want to take part in physical activity, but confidence and perceived capability remain lower among rangatahi than tamariki. Rangatahi results have continued to improve over time, however, a significant increase in confidence is evident this year. This is encouraging, given the important role confidence plays in helping rangatahi turn opportunities into participation.

Percentage (%) of parents of tamariki agreeing with each statement



Percentage (%) of rangatahi agreeing with each statement

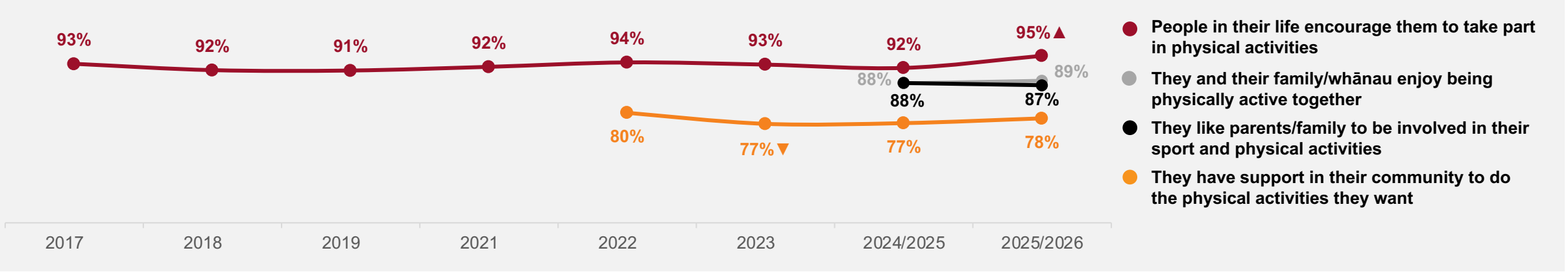


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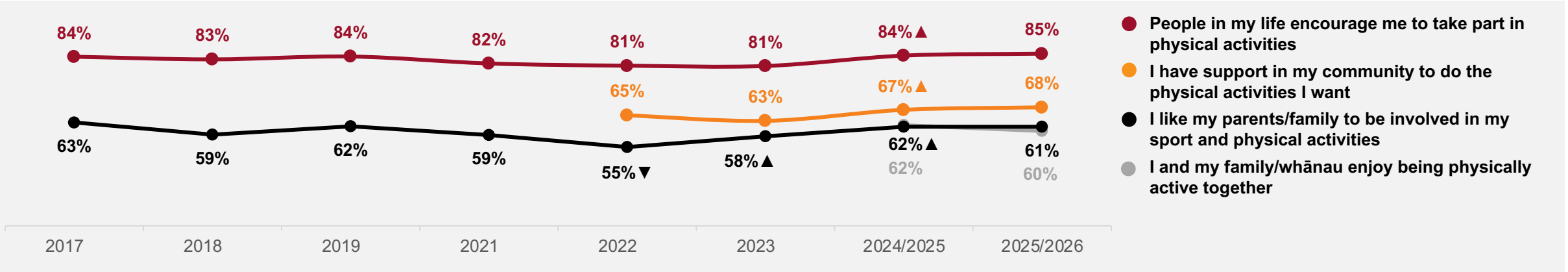
Social support

Social support remains widespread, particularly among tamariki. Most young people are encouraged by those around them, but rangatahi continue to report less community support and less shared activity with whānau than tamariki. Encouragement has improved significantly among tamariki this year, reinforcing the important role that whānau and wider social support play in sustaining participation.

Percentage (%) of parents of tamariki agreeing with each statement



Percentage (%) of rangatahi agreeing with each statement

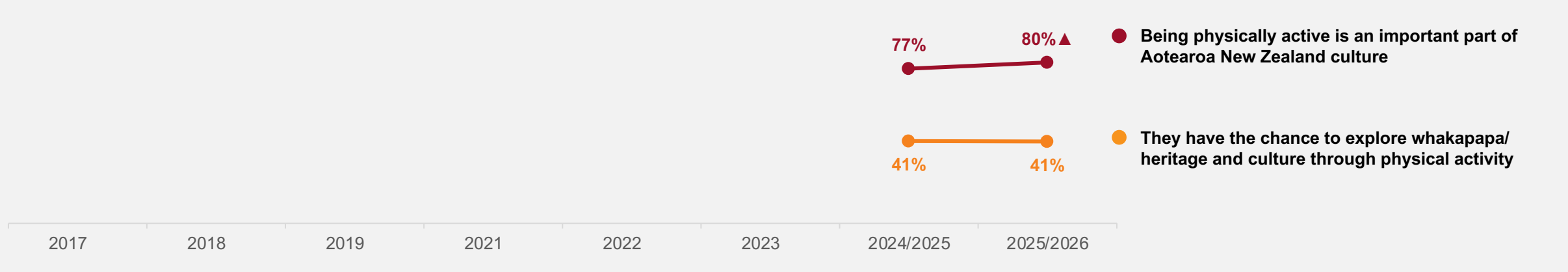


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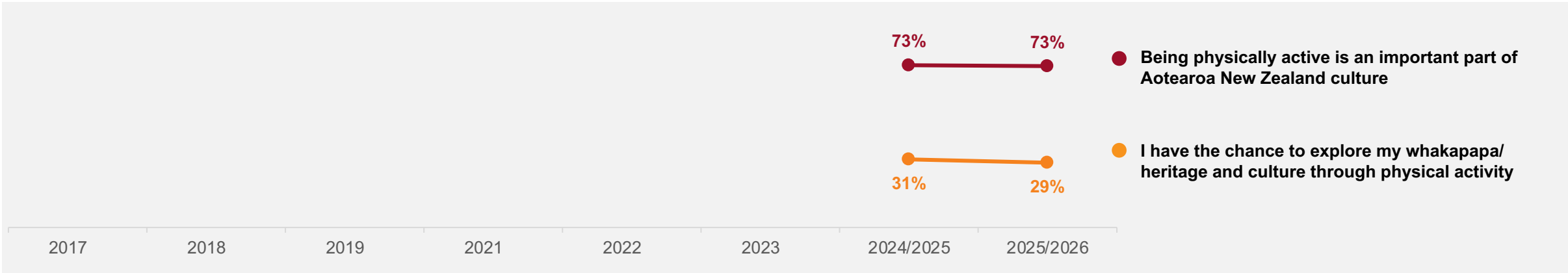
Culture and heritage

Most young people continue to see physical activity as an important part of Aotearoa New Zealand culture. However, considerably fewer feel they have opportunities to explore their own whakapapa, heritage or culture through physical activity. This gap remains especially pronounced for rangatahi. Parents of tamariki are more likely to recognise physical activity as part of Aotearoa New Zealand culture, although this has not yet translated into increased opportunities to explore their own heritage through activity.

Percentage (%) of parents of tamariki agreeing with each statement



Percentage (%) of rangatahi agreeing with each statement

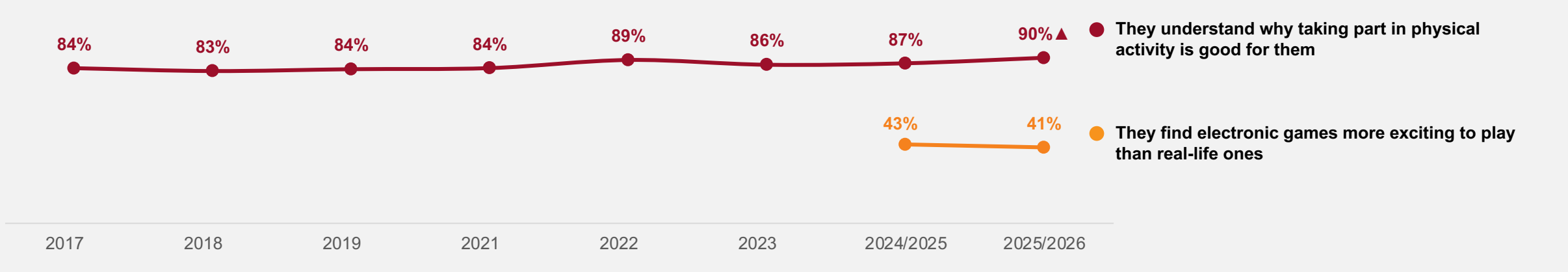


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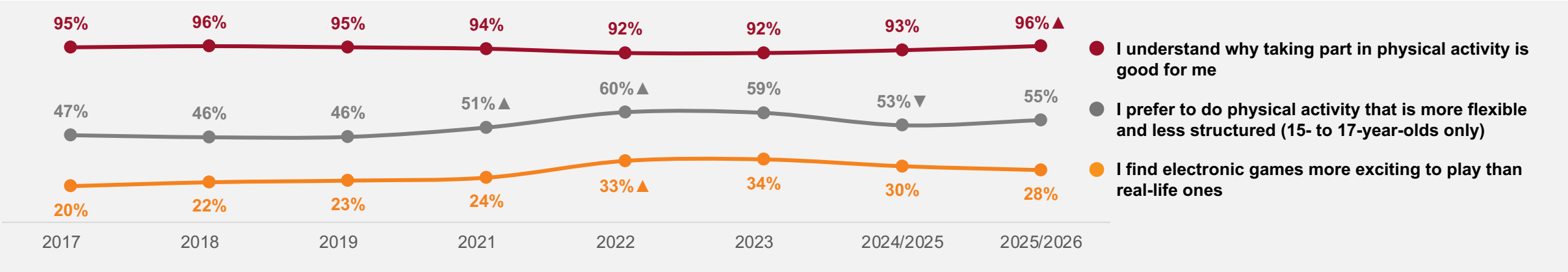
Knowledge, structure and electronic games

Understanding of the benefits of physical activity remains high and has improved significantly this year. Almost all tamariki, and 9 in 10 rangatahi, understand why being active is good for them, confirming that limited knowledge is unlikely to be the main constraint on participation. Among rangatahi, just over half prefer physical activity that is flexible and less structured. Electronic games continue to compete with real-life activity, particularly among tamariki, although their appeal has eased slightly since last year and remains below the post-pandemic peak.

Percentage (%) of parents of tamariki agreeing with each statement



Percentage (%) of rangatahi agreeing with each statement



Source: Q39 Attitudes toward physical activity.
Base: Tamariki aged 5 to 11 (2025/26 n=2,089; 2024/25 n=2,226; 2023 n=1,908; 2022 n=1,691; 2021 n=2,725; 2019 n=3,045; 2018 n=3,690; 2017 n=3,952).
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Note: ▲▼ triangles indicate statistically significant higher or lower results compared with previous year.

Background and research design

Appendix 4

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Background and research design (1 of 2)

Background

Active NZ was introduced in 2017, replacing both the previous Active NZ survey (2013/14) and the inaugural Young People survey (2011).

Each year, around 15,000 adults and 5,000 young people participate in the survey.

Data collection has been continuous since 2017, with the exception of a temporary pause during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

This report provides results for data collected between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

Research design

The research comprises two parts: Active NZ (adults aged 18 and over) and Active NZ Young People (young people aged 5 to 17). Together, these surveys provide a single programme for measuring participation in sport and physical activity among New Zealanders aged 5 and over.

Respondents are randomly selected from the general and the Māori electoral roll and invited by mail to complete the survey online. Adults may receive up to three invitations and reminders to participate.

Adults who have tamariki aged 5 to 11 in their household are automatically directed to the Active NZ Young People survey after completing their own survey.

Parents and caregivers of tamariki aged 5 to 11 completed the survey on their behalf and were encouraged to check responses with the child, where appropriate.

Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 were invited to participate directly. Adults were asked to pass on a flyer included with the invitation materials, which provided instructions for up to three young people in the household to complete the survey online.

Incentives

Adults who completed the survey were entered into a prize draw to win a $1,000 Prezzy Card. Adults with tamariki in their household were then invited to complete the Young People survey on behalf of, or with, their child, with the chance to win one of ten $100 e-Gift Cards.

Rangatahi aged 12 to 17 received a $10 e-Gift Card for completing the Young People survey.

Mailing sequence

Initial invitation: At the beginning of each month, respondents receive an invitation letter. Households with young people also receive a flyer containing information about the Active NZ Young People survey.

Reminder postcard: Around 10 to 15 days later, a reminder postcard is sent to those who had not yet participated.

Final reminder: During the final third of the month, a reminder letter is sent to non-respondents, together with a second copy of the Young People survey flyer.

Background and research design* (2 of 2)

Sampling

Each quarter, a random sample is selected from the electoral roll. The sample is designed to reflect New Zealand's regional, age and Māori/non-Māori population profile, with additional sampling of parents aged 35 to 49 and Pacific peoples to ensure these groups are well represented in the results.

Weighting

Survey responses were weighted to ensure the final dataset reflected the New Zealand population. The weighting approach combined age, gender and region into an interlocked weighting structure, alongside separate ethnicity weights for Māori, Pacific peoples and Asian peoples.

While data collection and weighting were undertaken quarterly, annual results were adjusted so that each quarter contributed equally to the final annual dataset. As a result, each quarter accounts for 25% of the annual results.

Significant differences

Differences reported are significant at the 95% confidence level.

▲▼ Triangles indicate statistically significant increases or decreases from the previous wave, or statistically significant differences from other subgroups. The definition of each triangle is shown below the applicable chart.

All base sizes shown on charts and tables (n=) are unweighted.

Sample sizes	Adults 18-plus	All young people (aged 5 to 17)	Tamariki (aged 5 to 11)	Rangatahi (aged 12 to 17)
2017	27,038	6,004	3,952	2,052
2018	25,150	5,595	3,690	1,905
2019	21,972	4,799	3,045	1,754
2021	23,239	4,824	2,725	2,099
2022	15,118	4,015	1,691	2,324
2023	15,836	5,890	1,908	3,982
2024/25	14,971	4,571	2,226	2,345
2025/26	14,912	4,575	2,089	2,486

2025/26 survey data	Median length of interview (min)	Response rate (%)
Adults 18-plus	11.8	15.7
All young people (aged 5 to 17)	15.2	27.4
Tamariki (aged 5 to 11)	12.0	28.9
Rangatahi (aged 12 to 17)	20.2	25.8

*For more details, please see the accompanying technical report.

Active NZ survey content

Appendix 5

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Adult survey content – 2025/26

Introductory section	Q001 – Q6
Section 1	Q106 – Numbers of days of 30+min physical activity Q7 – Physical activity in last 7 days Q8a – Last 7 days sports and activity list Q8 – Last 12 months sports and activity list Q8b – Last 7 days sports and activities by context Q8c – Time spent for each sport or activity Q107 – Facilities used for physical activity Q31 – Like to be doing more
Section 2	Q103 – Muscle strengthening Q26 – Use of technology (half sample) Q37 – Gym membership Q39 – Club membership
Section 3	Q43a – Volunteering last 7 days Q108 – Time spent volunteering
Section 4	Q48 – Attitudes to being active (half sample)
Section 5	Q141 – Trust/integrity (half sample)
Section 6	Q68 – Life satisfaction
Section 7 (half sample)	QHP4 – Inspired by NZ athletes and teams QHP20 – Follow high performance sport QHP21 – Other high performance sport

Section 9 – final demos	Q70 – Employment status Q73 – Country of birth Q93 – Length of residence Q75 – Ethnicity Q138 – Washington Short Set Q91 – Neurodivergence Q92 – Mental health Q93 – Disabled Q78 – Household income Q94 – Rainbow communities
Closing section/admin	Q104 & 82 & 102 – Consent and detail to link to IDI Q79 – Recontact information – more research Q80 – Recontact information – prize draw Q047 – Link to young people survey
Final question	Optional comments – open text

Young people survey content – 2025/26

Introductory section	Q017 – Q67
Section 1	QSI – Number of days active Q12 – Physical activity in last 7 days Q13 & Q13a – Last 7 days sports and activity list Q16 – Last 7 days sports and activities by context Q16b – Time spent for each sport or activity Q17 – Facilities used
Section 2	Q26 – Activity motivation
Section 3	Q22 – Like to be doing more Q25N – Sports and activities I like to try/do more of Q23 – Barriers to doing more
Section 4	Q95 – Muscle strengthening Q28 – Use of technology Q77 – Gym or fitness centre membership Q39 – Club membership
Section 5	Q36b – Volunteering outside of school last 7 days Q36c – Time spent volunteering
Section 6	Q39a – Attitudes to being active
Section 7	Q117 – Trust/integrity
Section 8	Q48 – Life satisfaction Q49 – Amount of time sleeping

Section 9	QHP4 – Inspired by NZ athletes and teams QHP20 – Follow high performance sport QHP21 – Other high performance sport
Section 11 – final demos	Q73 – Country of birth Q74 – Length of residence Q75 – Ethnicity Q50N – Washington Short Set Q91 – Neurodiverse Q92 – Mental health Q93 – Disabled Q9 – Gender Q94 – Rainbow communities
Closing section/admin	Q59 – Parent involvement Q79 – Recontact consent Q84 – Parent confirmation Q85 & 87 – Consent to link to IDI – rangatahi Q51 – Details for conditional incentive Q80 – Consent to link to IDI – tamariki Q64 – Another child loop Optional comments – open text
Final question	Optional comments – open text