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Perspectives on Participation in and Support for Youth Physical Activity Opportunities in Low-Income, African American Neighborhoods

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Low-income, African American youth lack accessible, high quality youth physical activity opportunities (YPAO) which undoubtedly contributes to their low levels of physical activity. **PURPOSE:** To identify and describe factors related to low-income, African American youth's participation in neighborhood youth physical activity opportunities (YPAO). **METHODS:** Nine, 60-90 min focus groups were conducted with 55 individuals (parents/guardians of youth, YPAO providers, small business representatives) from low-income, African American neighborhoods. The questions posed to the focus groups were related to awareness of YPAOs, benefits and barriers to providing YPAOs, ways to increase youth participants in YPAOs, and mechanisms (e.g., funding) for creating, improving, and sustaining YPAOs. Focus group recordings were transcribed, and thematic analysis was performed to identify themes related to increasing youth participation in YPAOs. **RESULTS:** Participants across community sectors identified seven major themes: exposure or having access to YPAOs, parent buy-in/accountability (e.g., personal values and trust with YPAOs), technology as a promotor (e.g., Wii Sports) or barrier (e.g., TV) to youth participation in YPAOs, increasing a sense of community, need for cost-effective YPAOs, finding resources to support YPAOs, and how to best use resources available to YPAOs. **CONCLUSION:** Developing strategies to incorporate effective community partnerships, creative program ideas with advertising, and active, multisector involvement including small businesses into practice has the potential to increase participation of low-income, African American youth in YPAOs.

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