



Parents' Guide

Encouraging Healthy Habits In Teen Girls

(NAPSA)—Good news: Teen girls are embracing being active, and athletics is the leading activity they participate in at school. Today, 65 percent of high school girls participate in a school sport. The top 10 are track and field, soccer, tennis, basketball, volleyball, softball, cross-country, swimming, cheerleading and dance team.

Survey Results

A recent survey conducted by Varsity Brands found that a majority of female teens say playing on a sport/spirit team makes them happier (78 percent), builds their overall confidence (73 percent) and helps relieve stress (69 percent). Participating in athletics helps teen girls make new friends (86 percent) and gives them a built-in support system (65 percent).

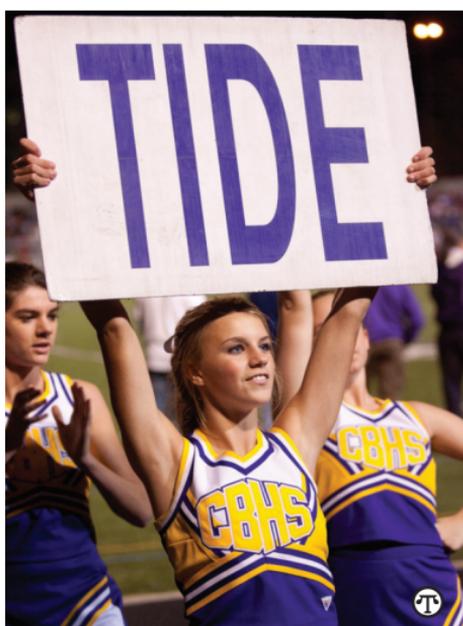
The survey also found that cheerleaders are more likely than general teens (57 percent vs. 46 percent) to hold a leadership position in/out of school, to be less shy (26 percent vs. 19 percent), and to be more comfortable speaking in public (64 percent vs. 54 percent) and 81 percent have grade point averages of 3.5 or higher.

Other Advantages

"In addition to helping them keep fit, participation in athletics gives teen girls a variety of interpersonal benefits and teaches them to enjoy healthy competition," said Nicole Lauchaire, vice president, Corporate Marketing and Communications for Varsity Brands, the leading resource for cheerleading camps, competitions and apparel. "Team athletics like cheerleading give teens a social outlet, confidence boost and stress relief."

Many good reasons exist for teen girls to participate on a cheer team:

- They become part of a team of school leaders.
- As some of the most visible members of the student body, cheerleaders can have a positive influence on others.
- Girls learn new skills and



Cheerleaders are more likely than other teens to hold a leadership position in and out of school.

stay in shape through a mix of conditioning, skills training, dance and cardio.

- Cheerleading builds lifelong character traits such as confidence, leadership, positive energy and motivational skills.

The Parents' Part

Parents can take active roles in selecting the right cheer program for their kids. Here are some questions to ask:

- Is the coach certified through the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Administrators (AACCA) and has the school conducted the appropriate background checks?
- Does the coach adhere to AACCA practice and performance guidelines?
- Does the coach properly balance practice time between athletic training and spirit leadership instruction?
- Does the squad have an emergency plan in place?

Learn More

For more information on cheerleading benefits and results from the Varsity Teen Girl Survey, visit www.varsity.com.