



TAG in Action: U.S. Soccer Foundation

As part of its national call to action, **Adolescent Health, Think, Act, GrowSM (TAG)**, the Office of Adolescent Health, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service has identified a number of successful strategies for improving adolescent health throughout the country.

The Goal

The [U.S. Soccer Foundation's](#) *Safe Places to Play* and *Soccer for Success* programs help communities address childhood obesity and juvenile delinquency and increase options for safe afterschool programming.

The Game Plan

Through the *Safe Places to Play* program, the Foundation has helped to create and develop more than 1,100 soccer fields across the country in order to give kids safe and accessible areas to play. *Safe Places to Play* transforms abandoned courts, empty schoolyards, and small vacant lots into state-of-the-art soccer fields. The program is built on the belief that every child should be able to play soccer without being concerned for his or her safety. Through grants to underserved communities, *Safe Places to Play* helps communities address the common challenge in underserved areas of inadequate places for youth to play and be active. The grants help cover the costs of design, construction, surfacing, and enhancement.

Through its *Soccer for Success* program the Foundation partners with community-based organizations to provide a free afterschool option for youth that ensures kids from kindergarten through 8th grade are physically active for the recommended 60 minutes per day. They also learn about eating right and other ways to stay healthy, and they gain important decision-making and relationship skills from their interactions with coach-mentors and peers. *Soccer for Success'* lessons don't stop on the field. Coach-mentors meet with families regularly to educate parents and guardians about how to embrace an active and healthy lifestyle and nurture their child's personal growth. A [recent study](#) found that children who participated in *Soccer for Success* significantly improved their Body Mass Index (BMI) percentile, waist circumference and aerobic capability compared to children in other afterschool programs in the same neighborhoods.

The Winning Plays

The U.S. Soccer Foundation's efforts on behalf of children go beyond simply seeking to expand the availability of soccer programs and fields. As the U.S. Soccer Foundation describes, making soccer accessible to youth has a broader purpose: "We view soccer as a powerful vehicle for social change. By supporting the development of places to play, places to grow and places to learn, our goal is to ensure that children in underserved communities have easy and affordable access to quality soccer programs that support their physical and personal development."

Learn More

U.S. Soccer Foundation
<http://ussoccerfoundation.org/programs/>

