

THE IMPACT OF CLUBS



MEASURING THE IMPACT OF BGC CLUBS

This evaluation is part of the BGC Canada Learning and Impact Project. The purpose of the project is to help Clubs across Canada understand and improve our impact in the lives of the children and youth in our communities. The evaluation is designed to discover how children and youth who attend Clubs are developing in four key areas: positive relationships, healthy living, lifelong learning, and leadership.

To understand this, we explored two broad evaluation questions:

- What kind and quality of impact are we having on children and youth?
- What about our programming is contributing to the impact?

As of August 2023, Clubs have collected 12,945 member responses. This includes two years of member surveys and one year of qualitative interviews. A second round of interviews is planned for late 2023 and a third survey deployment in early 2024. As such, the Learning and Impact Project is the largest evaluation study of children and youth in Canada using mixed methods (surveys and in-depth, one-on-one interviews).



EVALUATION DESIGN

INTENDED IMPACT

The Learning and Impact Project measures the impact of the Club experience across 21 indicators, grouped into four domains of impact. The domains of impact are based on our evidence-informed theory of change: the BGC Canada Model for Success. The domains and corresponding indicators being measured are:

- Positive Relationships: connection, belonging, conflict resolution, acceptance of self, and acceptance of others
- Healthy Living: choices, nutrition, physical activity, positive outlook, and resilience
- Lifelong Learning: school readiness, exploration, creativity, challenges, and goal attainment
- Leadership Skills: identity, influence, confidence, initiative, cooperation, and self-regulation

MEMBER SURVEY

The 2023 survey included one survey item to assess each impact factor. Each item was accompanied by four response options: Not at all, A little, Some, and A lot. The survey also included five demographic questions: duration of participation, age, Indigenous identity, identity as black or a person of colour, and gender identity.

Teams from 77 Clubs (96% of full-member BGC Clubs in Canada) participated in the survey implementation in 2023. Each Club invited members ages eight and older who attended their Club during a 1-week span sometime in February or early March to complete the survey.

In 2023, there were a total of **6,796** respondents of children and youth.

PROJECT FEATURES

BGC Canada partnered with Dialogues in Action (DIA) to build the capacity of Clubs to produce credible self-studies of their impact. The project is participatory in nature in that it trains teams of staff from each Club to collect and make meaning of their own data. Both the quantitative and qualitative components of the project include two-part trainings for Clubs delivered by DIA. The first training prepares Clubs to collect data with fidelity to the evaluation design. The second training teaches Clubs how to identify findings based on their data. Clubs then develop their own reports describing their data and findings.



To hear from Club leaders about their experience with the project, [click here](#)

MEMBER INTERVIEWS

Teams from 17 BGC Clubs conducted interviews in 2022. Each Club identified a purposeful stratified sample of their Club participants to interview. Clubs used a standard, semi-structured protocol that was organized around the four domains of impact. Most interviewers captured data through a voice-to-transcription application. Each interviewer used a two-step analysis process to identify insights and themes from the interview data. Then, the teams of interviewers from each Club worked together to identify findings from their interviews.

In 2022, Clubs interviewed **375** children and youth.

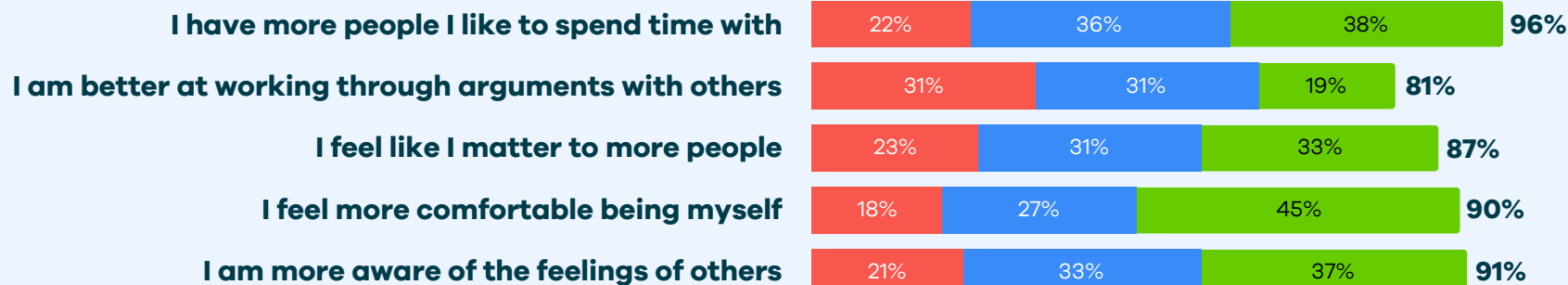


IMPACT BY DOMAIN

IMPACT IN POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The experience of having more people they like to spend time with, the feeling that they matter to more people, the sense that they can be more comfortable being themselves, and the skills of being more aware of the feelings of others because of a BGC Club point to positive movement along the pathway toward a lifetime of positive and caring relationships.

Because of the Club...



IDENTITY: I VALUE WHO I AM.

The interview data show that the Club experience provides children and youth with a sense of worthiness, self-value, and self-respect. The messages they receive from adults and peers alike help to shape an image of themselves that becomes part of their narrative about themselves. This positive sense of self provides them with security, identity, and confidence in who they are and who they are becoming. It helps them accept and value themselves during a time of life when the development of a sense of self is a critical developmental task.

"Through BGC I was able to find who I truly was, I overcame being just 'the kid who was bullied' and became someone I wanted to be. I've become stronger and I found my strength, this is all because of BGC."

BELONGING: I FIT IN WITH A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT ME.

Children and youth who were interviewed spoke clearly of the sense of belonging they find when they are at the Club. They are accepted. They experience the care of others, from peers to adults. They are surrounded by people and in an environment that provides them with a sense of safety and security. They know they belong. And for some, the Club is one of the rare places where they experience a true and authentic sense of belonging. Children and youth who attend Clubs not only experience belonging for themselves, but they learn how to provide a sense of belonging for others.

"I like being here because I get treated as if I'm part of a family here."

IMPACT IN HEALTHY LIVING

The data show that children and youth are more physically active, make better choices for themselves, know more about what kind of food is healthy for them to eat, and are more confident in their future because of their experience in a BGC Club. Progress in these areas contribute to momentum in their lives toward health and wellbeing.

Because of the Club...



SELF-CARE: I AM ABLE TO CARE FOR MYSELF BETTER.

Some of the children and youth who were interviewed spoke of the impact of Clubs on their ability to take care of themselves. For some, this meant developing self-care strategies that changed how they processed their own emotions. They learned how to take time to manage their emotions before engaging in communication. They were able to develop positive coping strategies and avoid negative coping strategies. They knew more about how to access help when they needed it. They learned to be kind to themselves. Their experience at the Club improved their ability to care for their own mental, emotional, social, and physical health.

"Before I was working with BGC, I was definitely not in a good space. I learned that my health matters. I started taking care of myself a lot more and treating myself better."

RESILIENCE: I AM ABLE TO DO OKAY WHEN THINGS GET HARD

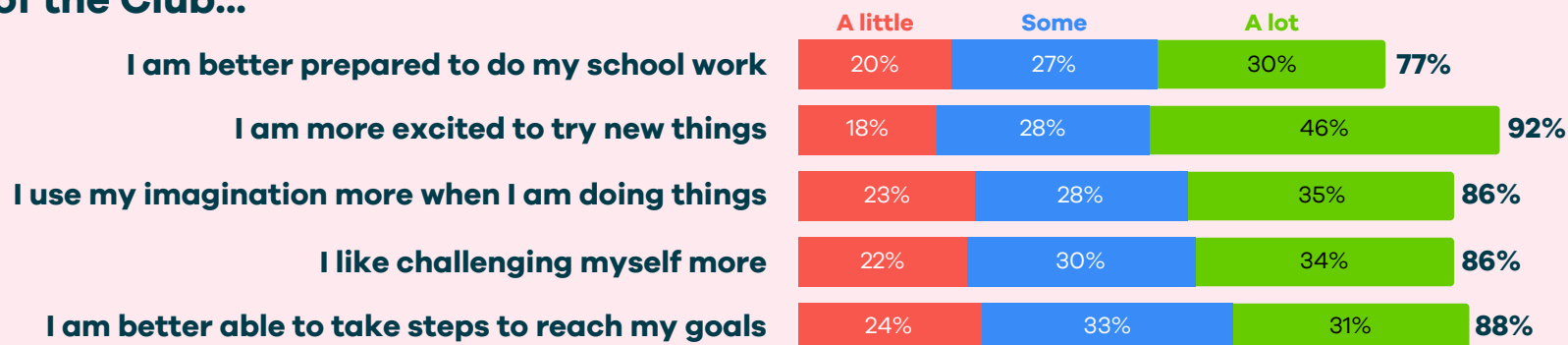
One of the most significant tasks of growing up is to develop the ability to handle difficulty with resilience. Through their experience at the Club, children and youth are able to recognize their emotional state and are better able to self-regulate or seek help. Children and youth describe learning skills to handle their emotions of anxiety, worry, fear, stress, and discomfort. They develop the ability to be okay when they are feeling sad or anxious. And when they need help, they are able to practice seeking support from others at the Club, both peers and caring adults.

"[I've learned] to close my eyes, think good thoughts. Breathe in, breathe out... hug something that means something to me."

IMPACT IN LIFELONG LEARNING

Data show that children and youth are more excited to try new things, use their imagination more, challenge themselves more, and are better able to take steps to reach their goals because of their involvement with a BGC Club. The data signals progress along a trajectory of building habits of lifelong learning that will contribute to the future where their potential is realized.

Because of the Club...



CHALLENGE: I AM CONFIDENT IN MY ABILITY TO FACE PROBLEMS.

One of the themes emerging from the qualitative interviews is the realization for children and youth that they are developing the ability to navigate difficult situations that once seemed impossible. They see problem-solving modelled for them at the Club. In particular, they realize that the socio-emotional challenges they face can be faced with skill, poise, emotional self-regulation, and confidence. They learn how to communicate when they feel uncomfortable and how to listen to the discomfort of others. They gain communication skills that enable them to face challenges with others productively.

"Being with BGC made me take things that I learned and put them into everyday actions. It became part of how I acted and not how I thought."

GOAL SETTING: I HAVE A DREAM FOR MY FUTURE.

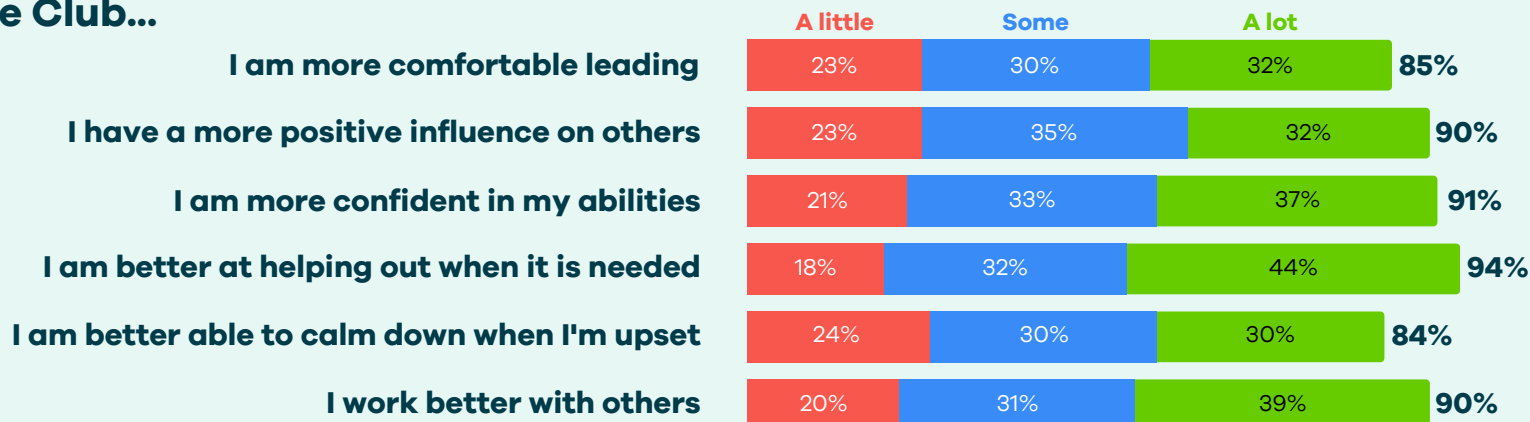
The experience of the Club allows children and youth to envision a future that will be meaningful and enjoyable for them. Some of them have set goals for personal growth and development as a result of their time at the Club. Others have had an experience that has put them in touch with a passion in their life that they would like to pursue. Others find the support they receive and the confidence they experience provides an opportunity for them to dream about a future.

"I believe that the Club will help me achieve better grades and support my goal of becoming a chef."

IMPACT IN LEADERSHIP SKILLS

The data show that children and youth are better at helping out when it is needed, work better with others, are more confident in their abilities, and have more of a positive influence on others because of the Club. These features of growth and development provide early evidence that they are on the path toward self-sufficiency, independence, and the ability to have meaningful participation in community and civil society as a result of their experience in a BGC Club.

Because of the Club...



AGENCY: I CAN SHAPE MY FUTURE.

In a BGC Club, children and youth have the opportunity to make choices, explore their choices, and consider the impact of those choices on their lives. They try activities they have never done before. They explore what they like and dislike in a safe and supportive environment. In this way, they come to understand their strengths and areas for growth. They develop a sense of being an agent of their own lives; being able to make and follow through on decisions instead of simply receiving the decisions of others. This builds in children and youth the strength and poise to be able to create the kind of lives they desire to have.

"The Club has given me an idea of what I could potentially do... people actually helped me see things one step at a time and I was able to see more clearly goals for my future."

COOPERATION: I CAN WORK BETTER WITH OTHERS.

Along with conflict resolution, children and youth are learning how to play and work with others. They do activities with others at the Club, and what they learn as they engage with others are lessons they can practice in any interaction with another person. This develops critical skills of cooperation, necessary for a successful life. They learn how to accept the ideas of others. They learn how to work within rules and boundaries. What they learn at the Club, they can take and apply at school and home.

"If you are leading then definitely get other people's opinion and stuff even though you're leading. Everyone's opinion still matters."



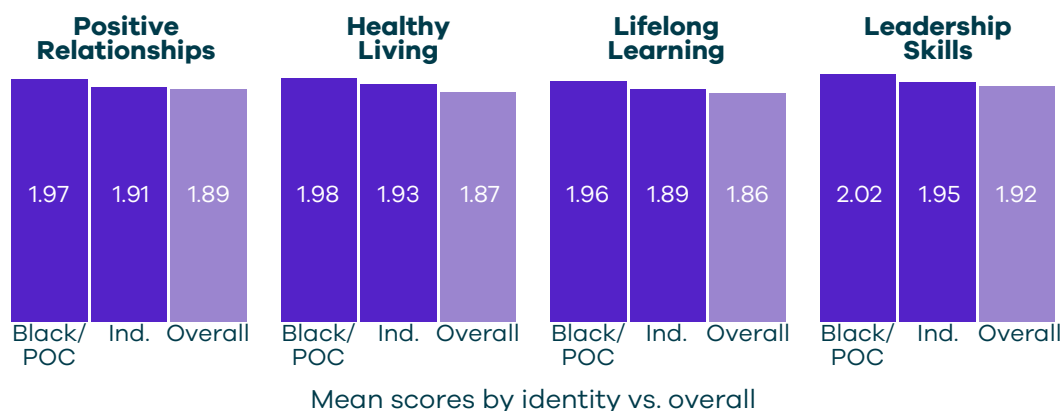
KEY INSIGHTS

DEMOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS

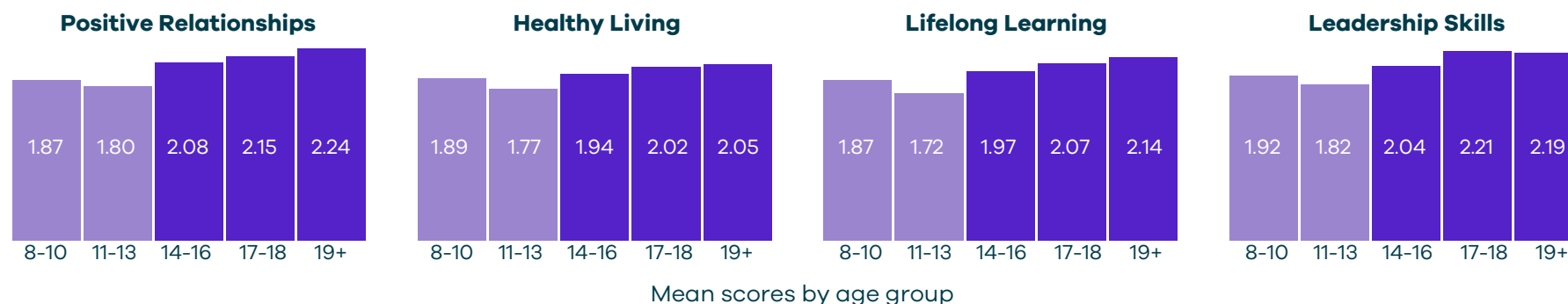
The survey included four demographic items: age, identity as Black or a person of colour, identity as Indigenous, and gender identity. The following charts summarize the data by grouping survey items into domains of impact (positive relationships, healthy living, lifelong learning, and leadership skills) and calculating a mean score for each domain by assigning a numerical value to response options (Not at all = 0, A little = 1, Some = 2, and A lot = 3). Disaggregation of survey data provides greater clarity about the consistency and variability of impact across demographic differences.

Children and youth that identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or a person of colour) report equal or higher levels of impact.

The two exceptions are items related to empathy and healthy choices for respondents that identify as Indigenous.



Youth ages 14+ report the highest levels of impact.

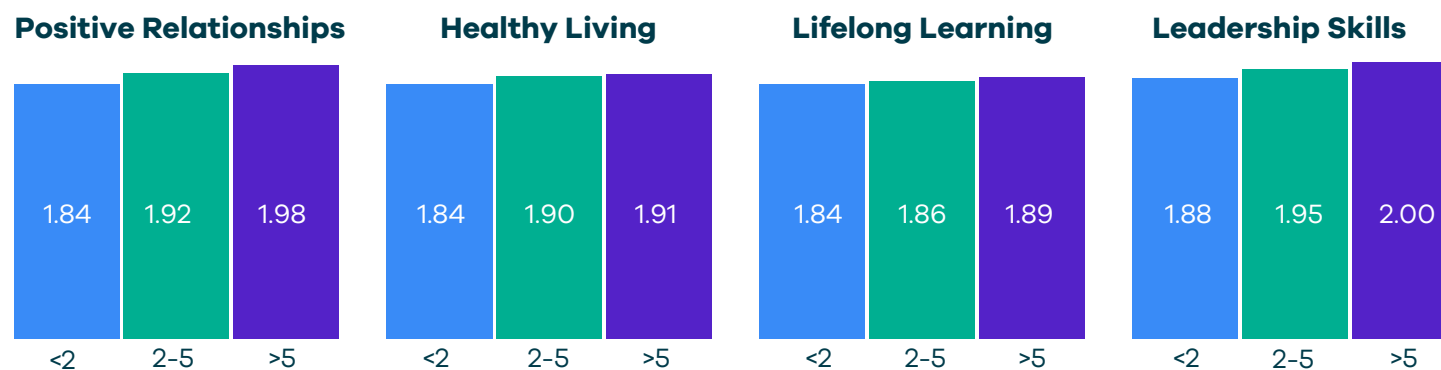


DOSAGE MATTERS

On the 2023 member survey, respondents were asked how long they have been coming to the Club. Including this question gave us the opportunity to explore how dosage influences impact.

Seventeen of the 21 indicators measured on the member survey showed more impact with more years of attendance at the Club. All factors in the domains of positive relationships and leadership skills show more impact corresponding to more years attending the Club. Three of the five factors in both healthy living and lifelong learning showed more impact with more years at the Club. The four factors that did not show more impact with more years at the Club were: nutrition, physical activity, imagination, and exploration.

The following chart summarizes the data by grouping survey items into domains of impact and calculating a mean score for each domain by assigning a numerical value to response options (Not at all = 0, A little = 1, Some = 2, and A lot = 3).



Mean scores by time attending Club (# of years)

WHAT CREATES THE IMPACT

The following themes represent features of the approach of BGC that appear to be creating positive outcomes.

OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE

One of the strongest and most distinct findings from the national qualitative data is the power of trying something new for children and youth. Clubs give them the chance to expand their experiences by doing activities and being exposed to new ideas, things, and people. This enriched environment broadens and deepens their learning. It helps them gain new perspectives. It gives them a sense of confidence. It promotes curiosity in a safe and supportive environment. Having first experiences within the environment of Clubs promotes greater involvement in other areas of their lives as they gain the desire and confidence to try new things outside of Clubs.

"When trying new things at BGC I know I can try my best and still feel included by staff."

PROVIDING A SAFE AND WELCOMING PLACE

The Club is a place where children and youth feel safe and secure to be themselves. Interviewees reported feeling accepted and comfortable in the Club. They are encouraged to celebrate each other and the uniqueness of each other. Different perspectives, backgrounds, and cultures are honoured. The staff of Clubs work hard to help children and youth feel safe emotionally and physically. Providing them with an experience of true, authentic, meaningful community is a catalyst for impact. The kind of community curated in and through Clubs give children and youth the experience of belonging and acceptance.

"At BGC everyone is allowed to be who they are."

ADULTS WHO CARE

The data show the influence of the staff on children and youth is undeniably significant. The relationships that are developed with staff provide a supportive scaffolding for their development. The influence of the staff can be seen in many areas of the members' experiences. At the Club, children and youth experience the power of a loving, caring, attentive adults in their life. The quality of this relationship is transformational. Leaders believe in them and see their potential. Leaders support, give advice, encourage, and bring the best out of kids.

"Here the leaders say, 'come on you can do it' and then I believe in myself a bit more and I can do it."

FRIENDSHIPS THAT MATTER

Experiencing a consistent and dependable environment filled with positive relationships is critical to healthy development. The constancy of a positive social environment shapes them in ways no other experience can. They experience a powerful sense of belonging and integrate those experiences into their identity and outlook, both for the present and the future. The impact of having friendships that matter is seen in a wide variety of areas of human development: self-esteem, confidence, resilience, sense of self, stability, positivity, and more.

"Sometimes I get upset about something and when I come to the program, where I know my friends are going to be here, or there is usually something here that is going to make it not so bad. I don't ever come here and get upset about being here."