



A helpful tool for
thinking about tween
physical activity

“TO MOVE ME, FIRST
YOU’VE GOT TO
UNDERSTAND ME.”

ABOUT THIS TOOL


Behavioral profiles are a handy way to keep humans front and center when you're tackling big, messy problems. We're using them to help tweens stay active. You might find them useful as well...

To know if you're making an impact, you might conduct rigorous scientific research.

But to figure out how to make an impact, you need to spend time with people to really understand them.




We heard a rich diversity of opinions, thoughts and feelings.



All we get a grade for is putting on the uniform, so for me PE is just listen-to-music time.

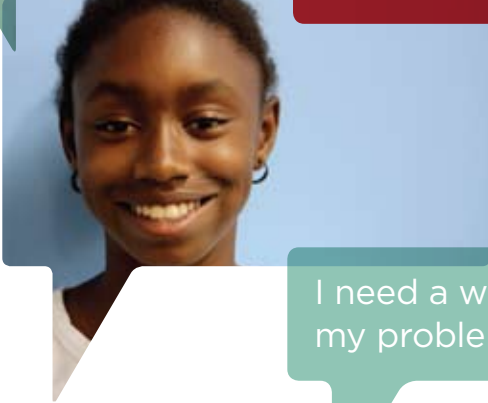
I don't like doing things when people tell me to. I like to choose.

Whether you're playing or on the bench, you're still on the team.




Video games are my way to be myself.

I don't like team sports because people get annoying if we don't win.



I need a way to forget my problems and stress.

When I was younger, I played tag or hide-n-seek. In middle school it stopped, and we just talked.



We're too rural to let them bike on that two-lane highway.

So, how do you figure out what it all means?



Look for patterns. They allow you to cluster similar voices in one archetype.

We ended up thinking of tweens in terms of eight behavioral profiles.





BORN TO RUN

For these kids being active isn't a chore, it's what makes them feel good. They're natural athletes, get picked first, and people cheer them on. Their sports and teams provide meaning and self-esteem.

“I like playing sports on a team. It's like getting your hair braided. You don't want to be the only one at school with braided hair.”



BUSY BEEES

“I started taking swimming lessons when I was young, then I joined the Y swim team, and now I do pretty well.”

These tweens are always running from one activity to the next. Mondays are clarinet practice. Tuesdays and Thursdays it's after-school art. Wednesdays are kick-boxing, and weekends it's taiko drumming and science camp. Not every activity is physical, but it's in the mix. Their strong support network helps too.



OUT & ABOUT

“My parents don’t talk to me about going outside. I’m always outside. I’m barely home.”

You won’t find these kids home often. They’re on BMX bikes at the park or skateboarding through the condo complex. Their wheels are both transportation and passion. Team stuff isn’t their thing, but they’re active as they criss-cross the neighborhood.

“I want to play football in high school, so I’m lifting weights to get ready for tryouts.”

These kids may not be star athletes, but they’ve found sports that match their body types. A little extra mass helps when you’re playing football or hefting a shot put. And when you’re part of a team, you feel better about yourself. This gives heavier boys in particular a chance to fit in and stay active.


SAVED BY SPORTS



SAVED BY SUPPORT

“We’re trying to be fit as a family.”

These kids wouldn’t be active on their own, but someone is urging them on. It may be regular family walks or trips to the Y or an exercise routine set up by parents who offer incentives to stick with it. One way or another, these tweens are learning to be active thanks to the people around them.



“In PE all I do is sit on the bleachers.
I don’t want to get all sweaty or
mess up my hair.”

These tweens aren’t interested in PE, sports or exercise. They’re often image-conscious girls who don’t want to mess up their look, so they choose not to participate. Others feel highly self-conscious about their bodies and shy away. But there’s one way to get some of them moving – music and dancing.

OPTING OUT



MISSING OUT

“After I get home
I care for the
younger kids
the whole time,
weekends too.”

For these tweens there's little opportunity to be active. With parents at work, they're usually home alone after school or taking care of younger siblings. It's often about environment too. Whether it's a house on a two-lane rural highway or an urban apartment complex, it's not safe to be running about.



“I’m slightly athletic. I don’t want to be so fat I can’t walk, but I also don’t like running around.”

These tweens spend vast amounts of time playing online and console games. Most are boys whose social interaction revolves around gaming. Outside of this world, some struggle socially. These kids don’t have much interest in being physically active or participating in sports or exercise.

GONE GAMING

These profiles represent a spectrum of risk for sedentary behavior.

Born to Run

Natural athletes who thrive in sports.

Busy Bee

Tweens running from one activity to the next.

Out and About

Kids who get their exercise on the go.

Saved by Sports

Heavier kids with a sport to match their body type.

Saved by Support

Kids with family who keep them active.

Opting Out

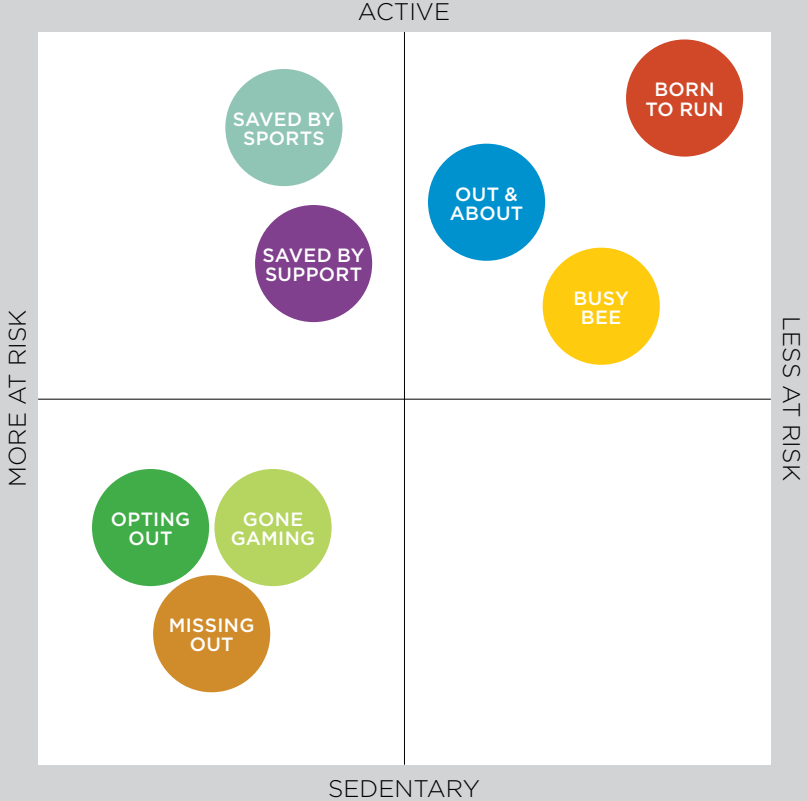
Tweens who choose not to participate.

Missing Out

Tweens who can't get out of the home.

Gone Gaming

Avid gamers with little interest in physical activity.



We found a few potential ways to harness these profiles:

FRAME CHALLENGES WITH THESE PROFILES IN MIND

DESIGN SOLUTIONS THAT TARGET SPECIFIC AT-RISK PROFILES

RECRUIT SPECIFIC AT-RISK BEHAVIORAL GROUPS TO PROVIDE INPUT AND FEEDBACK

How might you use these behavioral profiles to improve the lives of kids?

Handwriting practice area with horizontal dotted lines.

What's next?

HopeLab is using these profiles and other insights to develop and test fun new products that will get kids moving.



This research is part of HopeLab's effort to fight the effects of childhood obesity by increasing physical activity in tweens.



To learn more about how HopeLab is making a difference in the lives of kids, visit: www.hopelab.org

in collaboration with



To see how Daylight is using human insight to take on tough challenges, visit www.daylightdesign.com

with support from



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

To find out how the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is helping Americans lead healthier lives, visit www.rwjf.org