



Gender Equity in Sport and Recreation

Definition:

Gender Equity is the process of allocating resources, programs and decision-making fairly. It does not mean providing the exact same programs to both girls and boys. Some girls' activities may be the same as those offered to boys, some may be altered, and some may be altogether different.

This brochure will primarily focus on gender equity as it pertains to girls and young women in community recreation settings.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Research the best programs for girls and get input from the participants themselves. Read on for tips and strategies to make your program a success.
- Be creative in your planning. Gender Equity is about providing a wide range of opportunities that meet girls' diverse physical activity and sport needs, interests and experiences. Think outside the box!
- Hire the best instructors possible. Gender equity will happen if the leader does not tolerate negative stereotypes about girls and women, celebrates individual achievements, and promotes lifelong physical activity for all participants.
- Implement a great program by giving participants a lot of choice and providing different levels of play - some individuals may want completion, others may want something more recreational. When single-gender environments aren't an option, ensure an inclusive co-ed environment where everyone is supported and valued.
- Commit to ongoing evaluation and improvement of programming.
- Celebrate successes and share the positive experiences and learnings with your community.



RESOURCE SUPPLEMENT

RESOURCES

CAAWS. On the move: a handbook for recreation practitioners: increasing participation of girls and women in physical activity and sport. 2006

ProMOTION Plus & Coaches Association of BC. Coaching Female Athletes brochure.

Canadian Association of the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS).
Phone: (613) 562-5667
Website: www.caaws.ca

ProMOTION Plus - Girls and Women in Physical Activity and Sport in BC
Phone: (604) 737-3075
Website: www.promotionplus.org

This information has been adapted from CAAWS' On the Move Handbook/Initiative. Special thanks to Sydney Millar, National Coordinator, On the Move, for her assistance.

BRITISH COLUMBIA RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION
101 - 4664 Lougheed Hwy, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5C 5T5
Tel: 604.629.0965 Fax: 604.629.2651
bcrpa@bcrpa.bc.ca www.bcrpa.bc.ca



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WHY IS EQUITY IMPORTANT?

- if a girl does not participate in sport by the age of 10, there is only a 10% chance she will be physically active when she is 25.
- between the ages of 12 and 19, girls are significantly less active than boys, with 64% of girls considered inactive (compared to 48% of boys).
- the number of girls and women involved in sport and physical activity as athletes, coaches and administrators is lower than boys and men; and their accomplishments are often not acknowledged within society.
- providing gender equitable programs will provide girls with the opportunity to succeed and feel confident in a sport environment, enabling them to pursue all areas of involvement.

WHAT ABOUT THE BOYS?

The growing inactivity level of boys is also a serious problem. In just 15 years, obesity has doubled for pre-teen girls but tripled for boys. This rise will have long term negative effects on individuals and society in general. Many of the tools and techniques reviewed here will be equally helpful in targeting boys who are inactive or not as interested in 'traditional' sports.

Remember at this age there are likely more deficiencies within the genders than between them. Treat participants with respect as the unique and special individuals that they are. Forego old stereotypes for both girls and boys.

ON THE MOVE SUCCESS FACTORS - TOP 10 PROGRAMMING CHARACTERISTICS FOR GIRLS

1. Emphasize Fun

Girls and young women want to have FUN and hang out with their friends while being physical activity - make this the focus of the program.

2. Introduce a Variety of Physical Activities

Girls and young women are often unaware of what opportunities are available. Promote the diversity of opportunities within your community and add some excitement to your program by visiting water parks, arenas, courts, climbing gyms and parks.

3. Allow the girls to help design the program

Taking the time to incorporate their ideas will increase their interest and contribute to their overall experience.

4. Provide Female-Only Opportunities

Many females feel uncomfortable or are restricted from participating in front of males, especially some running, swimming or contact games. Make it special - just for them!

5. Create a Positive Environment

Create an inclusive environment where participants feel safe and supported. Be mindful of your language and image. Have zero tolerance for poor behaviour of others.

6. Ensure Similar Age Groupings

Targeting a narrow age group will make programming to specific interests easier. Create opportunities for young women to mentor or adopt leadership roles in programs for girls.

7. Teach the Basics

Helping girls to develop their skills will increase their confidence and interest in pursuing life-long physical activity/active living. You may need to modify the rules to emphasize learning new skills, for example lowering the hoop in basketball.

8. Be a Positive Role Model

Try new activities, demonstrate active living, and respect participants' needs, interests and experiences.

9. FOOD!

Incorporate food whenever you can - it's a great motivator. Talk about the links between food and healthy development, or plan a session on healthy eating.

10. Give a Choice of Clothing And Music

Allowing girls and young women to wear their choice of safe and appropriate clothing will increase their participation. For example, allowing t-shirts over bathing suits.

REINFORCE GENDER EQUITABLE LANGUAGE - USE IT EVERY DAY!

USE	AVOID
Women and Men	Mens' and Ladies'
girls and boys	boys and gals
partner	wife, husband
chair	chairman, chairwoman
councilor	alderman
everyone	guys (to include both sexes)
player to player defense	man to man defense
you throw correctly/incorrectly	you throw like a girl/boy
fair play	sportsmanship
athlete	sportsman
hockey	Hockey and women's hockey

GOALS FOR A GENDER EQUITABLE PROGRAM:

1. To increase awareness of the benefits of regular physical activity.
2. To provide opportunities to have an enjoyable and positive recreation experience, while increasing his or her comfort level in physical activity environments.
3. To increase the types of recreational sport and physical activity programs offered.
4. To increase the physical activity skill level, self-esteem, and self-confidence of participants.
5. To provide a supportive forum for individuals to voice their opinions and ideas and encourage their participation in program planning and decision-making.

You have the opportunity to help girls and young women in your community open doors to a lifetime of physical activity and health. This is your chance to make a difference.