



GIRLS NEED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TOO!

How can we encourage our daughters and granddaughters to become more physically active?

While the chances for girls to participate in sport and physical activity are increasing, participation statistics paint a different picture. Only 36% of Canadian girls are active enough to benefit their health. There is also a concern that the rate of physical activity drops considerably between childhood and adolescence. The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (www.caaws.ca) suggests the following tips for parents and caregivers...

Be a positive role model

- Participate with your daughter - parental involvement increases participation. Research shows that mom's participation increases activity levels even more than dad's participation.
- Work with her to make sure she learns the basic skills, (e.g. running, throwing, catching, kicking) to improve her confidence.

Support her interests in different activities

- Avoid, whenever possible, giving your daughter her brother's old equipment. Give her quality equipment that fits properly.
- Let her try different activities to find out what she likes best - don't force your ideas on to her.
- Make sure she has the time to be active, especially as she gets older. Help her find a balance with other activities in her life (e.g. homework, part-time job).

Watch your language

- Be encouraging - avoid comments like "you throw like a girl".
- Instead of asking "Did you win?" or "Did you score?", consider asking "Did you have fun?"

Show her you're proud of her accomplishments

- Take pictures of your daughter involved in physical activity; frame and display the pictures.
- Try to attend as many games as possible.
- Keep in mind that a positive word of encouragement or a hug can mean so much.



Expose her to positive role models

- Introduce her to active women including recreation leaders, coaches, and family/friends.
- Talk about the opportunities available for girls and women as a participant, a volunteer, or a coach.
- Pick movies, television shows, books or magazines that portray active girls and women in a positive light. For example, you may want to watch the movie "Bend It Like Beckham" or subscribe to "Active Woman Canada Magazine" (www.activewoman.ca).
- Watch events on television that highlight women's sports. While spending too much inactive time is not recommended, following some of Canada's best female athletes like Perdita Felicien (Track & Field) or Hayley Wickenheiser (Hockey) can encourage participation.

Emphasize fun and fitness

- Avoid comments related to weight and body size. Compliment participation, effort, sportsmanship, teamwork, and commitment.
- Encourage her participation in lifelong activities like walking, swimming and bicycling.
- Encourage fun and participation as opposed to performance and winning.

Help her to succeed

- Give her the opportunity to be successful by helping her choose appropriate activities for her size, age and ability level.