

Women Friendly Facilities

We know that Women's participation in sport and physical activity is influenced by the **extent, variety and accessibility of facilities.**

Design Considerations:

- graphics in the building were of active girls and women, of all shapes and sizes, in a variety of activities which affirmed the accessibility and pleasure of participating
- on site child care was available
- there were programs for parent/caregivers and children
- place where you could park and lock your stroller
- place where you could refrigerate bottles of milk and warm them up
- well lit parking lot
- well lit building with good signage
- corner mirrors were installed to improve visibility and safety
- bus escorts were available
- change rooms were impeccably clean
- change rooms were designed to give women more privacy than the men's
- there were introductory skills workshops
- women only hours in the weight room
- there was more aerobically oriented exercise equipment

Policy Considerations

- Gender equity involves addressing organizational practices and policies that may hinder the participation of girls and women. To get started answer the following questions: Is access to prime time slots and prime facilities equal for males and females? Is there an equal resource budget for males and females? What is the rate of participation by females and males in co-ed programs and for female only programs? What types of activities are offered for males and females? Are females being excluded or stereotyped (pictures/language) in promotional materials?

Promotion Considerations

- When promoting and marketing facilities or events highlight some of the design considerations mentioned above such as emergency telephones, lighting, bus stops, available services (e.g. washrooms), parking lots, etc. that address safety or other concerns for women and girls.
- When promoting facility use to females, encourage group activities. Social aspects appeal to women and they will be safer traveling in pairs or groups. This also attracts women as this experience can create a supportive and cooperative environment for participants in which, they learn it is OK to make mistakes, that the group is there to support them, and that they can depend on others.
- Promote female-only or family events at your facilities with “learn – to” types of opportunities. These provide skill-building sessions and women gain confidence in a comfortable environment and are more likely to continue using the facility.

- Some marketing may exclude females. To sell programs to females, use female-friendly language, images, role models, etc. to promote your sport and physical activity opportunities. Advertise in different sections of your organization's promotional material as many girls and women will not be looking in the sport or recreation section. You might also want to develop separate brochures for female programs. Advertisements in grocery stores, at malls, in schools, etc. – where girls and young women are.
- **Female Friendly Language** - When producing or approving print materials, interacting with colleagues and staff, or speaking to community members and participants, consider the following:
 - Parallel words such as: women and men, girls and boys.
 - Neutral words such as: they, instructor, coach, leader, partner, everyone.
 - Modifiers (unbiased adjectives and adverbs) such as: talented player, thoughtful coach; not- handsome, sexy, etc.
 - Balance- use both men and women in examples and include both sexes in non-traditional roles.
- **Visual materials:** When producing or approving visual materials for your organization, be aware of:
 - **Equality** - portray both sexes equally as participants and leaders;
 - **Frequency** - show both sexes with equal frequency and in ways that depict them as equals;
 - **Sexuality** - portray both sexes with dignity and modesty in all matters, especially with regard to clothing, body position, and camera angles;
 - **Other variables** - portray different types of women and men- visible minorities, athletes with physical disabilities, aboriginal, different age groups, and different body types.