



## GETTING GIRLS & YOUNG WOMEN ACTIVE! CAAWS' On the Move INITIATIVE

**On the Move** is a national initiative designed to increase opportunities for inactive girls and young women (ages 9-18) to participate in fun-filled, supportive, female-only, recreational sport and physical activity.

1. **On the Move** is an innovative programming concept designed to increase girls' and young women's participation in sport and physical activity. Based on research and the experiences of **On the Move**-type programs across Canada, the user-friendly **On the Move Handbook** discusses the issues and barriers that girls and young women face in their participation, and provides information about program design and implementation, leadership, promotion, and building community support. Workshops and presentations across the country educate and increase awareness amongst policy makers and practitioners in the sport, physical activity, education and health sectors about increasing opportunities for girls and young women to participate.
2. **On the Move** is also a national network of practitioners involved in female-only programming, and individuals and organizations concerned with the health and well-being of girls and young women. The network is a resource for information about the importance of increasing girls' and young women's participation, and shares program successes and challenges.

CAAWS, the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, is a national non-profit organization working to encourage girls and women to *participate and lead* in physical activity and sport. Since the organization was founded in 1981, CAAWS has positioned itself as an agent of change, using cooperation, collaboration and consultation to achieve gender equity. CAAWS provides expert advice, positive solutions, and support to Canada's sport, physical activity, health, education and social service sectors through leadership, research and communication with several sectors of Canadian society.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- ✓ Learn for oneself
- ✓ Each one teach one
- ✓ Share the resources
- ✓ Create partnerships/networks
- ✓ Involve girls and women
- ✓ Program for those not there
- ✓ Use new models and methods
- ✓ Integrate gender equity plans & policies
- ✓ Ask for what is equitable
- ✓ Make a personal commitment
- ✓ Join the CAAWS Network

### WHAT CAN ORGANIZATIONS DO?

- ✓ Build healthy communities with physical activity and sport programs that include everyone
- ✓ Actively support female involvement
- ✓ Provide a wide range of physical activity choices
- ✓ Offer female-only physical activity opportunities
- ✓ Ensure equity in promotional materials, award systems, and at events
- ✓ Encourage females to assume leadership roles

## Wondering what you can do to increase the participation of girls and young women? Here's 10 easy suggestions:

### 1. **Emphasize Fun and Social Aspects**

Physical activity should be a fun experience. Emphasize participation over skill; celebrate personal bests and accomplishments.

### 2. **Introduce a Variety of Physical Activities**

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

### 3. **Allow Input into Program Design**

Value the interests and ideas of girls and young women. Ask what sports and physical activities they are interested in. Create opportunities for them to plan and make decisions. Taking the time to incorporate some of their ideas will increase their interest and contribute to their overall experiences of sport and physical activity

### 4. **Provide Female-Only Opportunities**

Many females feel uncomfortable or are restricted from participating in front of males. Provide girls and young women with opportunities to participate in physical activity in their own way.

### 5. **Create a Positive Environment**

Creating a positive environment means making sure girls and young women feel safe and supported. Think about your own and others' actions, and listen to participants' concerns and needs. Be considerate of language, visual images, and the behaviour of others.

### 6. **Target 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 and young women to develop their skills will increase their confidence and interest in pursuing life-long physical activity.

### 8. **Be a Positive Role Model**

Be a role model, for girls and young women, colleagues and parents. Try new activities, demonstrate healthy, active living, and respect participants' needs, interests and experiences.

### 9. **FOOD!**

Incorporate food whenever you can. Pizza parties are instant successes. 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 clothing will increase their participation. Music adds to the creation of a welcoming environment.