



Canadian Association for the
Advancement of Women
and Sport and Physical Activity

Association canadienne pour
l'avancement des femmes
du sport et de l'activité physique

How Dads Can Encourage Their Daughters to Participate in Sport and Physical Activity

Dads (and uncles and grandfathers) can play an important role in encouraging girls and young women to participate in sport and physical activity. Here's a few tips to get you started!

Be an active role model

- Take time to be active WITH girls and young women – integrate activity into your daily or weekly schedule, and plan active vacations.
- Talk to girls and young women about the benefits of sport and physical activity in your life, and ask them about their experiences. Many young women stop participating as demands from school and friends increase – support her in finding a balance to stay involved.
- Encourage girls and young women to try a variety of sports and physical activities, building a foundation for life-long active living.
- Attend girls' and young women's games and cheer her on.

Emphasize fun and fitness rather than competition and slimness

- Increase fun and success by taking time to build girls' physical skills and game strategy.
- Encourage girls and young women to bring a friend to increase fun and social support.
- Invest in quality clothing and equipment to ensure proper size and fit.
- Avoid comments about body size and shape; celebrate girls' and young women's skill, strength and spirit.
- Use inclusive language (e.g. player-to-player defense instead of man-to-man defense) and avoid derogatory comments phrases like "you throw like a girl".

Support girls' and women's involvement as leaders

- Encourage young women to become leaders in sport and physical activity, as volunteers, coaches and officials. Support their participation in certification and leadership development courses.
- Talk to girls and young women about careers in the sport and physical activity sector as a way to stay involved in an activity they love.
- Introduce girls and young women to women sport and physical activity leaders at the community, provincial/territorial and national levels as role models. Talk about how they inspire you.

Help change negative perceptions

- Be vocal about equitable access for girls and women with respect to programs, facilities, equipment, quality coaching, leadership opportunities, media coverage, etc. Question policies and practices that limit girls' and women's participation and leadership in sport and physical activity, and throughout Canadian society.
- Make attending or watching a women's sport event an event for the whole family. Attend or tune in to a professional game or national, provincial or territorial championship; or cheer on a local university, college or high school team. Send the message that you value participation and competition for all.
- Nominate women for awards and recognition programs available through CAAWS and other women's organizations; and for community, provincial/territorial, national and international sport and physical activity awards. Nominate women athletes, coaches, officials and builders for Sport Halls of Fame. These women will inspire ALL Canadians to participate and lead in sport and physical activity!

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