

GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
IN SPORT AND RECREATION



■ ■ Sport is neither inherently good nor bad; the positive experiences of sport do not result from participation but from the nature of the experience. In the hands of the right people with the right attitudes, sport can be a positive, character-building experience. ■ ■

– Dr Stuart Robbins, *Straight talk About Children in Sport*, 1996.

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INTRODUCTION

This document sets out 10 principles for delivering sport and recreation to children (0-12 years) and young people (13-18 years).

These principles should be applied by coaches, parents, instructors, teachers and administrators involved in leading, supporting or managing sport and recreation opportunities for children and young people.

Children and young people view sport and recreation differently from adults. It is well-researched that they generally want to:

- have fun
- improve their existing skills and learn new skills
- be with friends or make new friends
- be challenged
- experience success
- become physically fit and healthy.

Research shows that young people highly value the intrinsic rewards gained from participating in sport and recreation. The rewards that young participants gain from learning a new skill, or simply being involved in activities with their friends, often mean more than extrinsic rewards such as winning trophies or awards.

We encourage children and young people to participate in sport and recreation because:

- it can be a fun and enjoyable way to spend time
- movement is important for brain development and physical development
- being active contributes to maintaining physical and mental health, including relieving stress and anxiety
- participation in sport and recreation can contribute positively to self-esteem and self-worth
- being involved in sport is often seen as a strong social asset
- sport and recreation opportunities provide an environment where children and young people can learn the values of teamwork, goal setting, self-discipline, following rules, respect for others, respect for the environment, coping with winning and losing, and success and failure.

Participant-centred approach

Children and young people vary widely in terms of their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development and in their motivation for participating in sport and recreation.

Sport NZ advocates for a participant-centred approach to providing sport and recreation opportunities for children and young people. This is because we understand the immense value that children and young people can receive from participating in quality sport and recreation, why they participate, and also understand that they are not all the same.

This approach requires sport and recreation providers to listen to and consider the needs, wants and perspectives of children and young people when planning and implementing programmes. It means recognising and catering for individual differences in terms of development, ability and other factors that may impact on participation.

Creating a safe and supportive environment

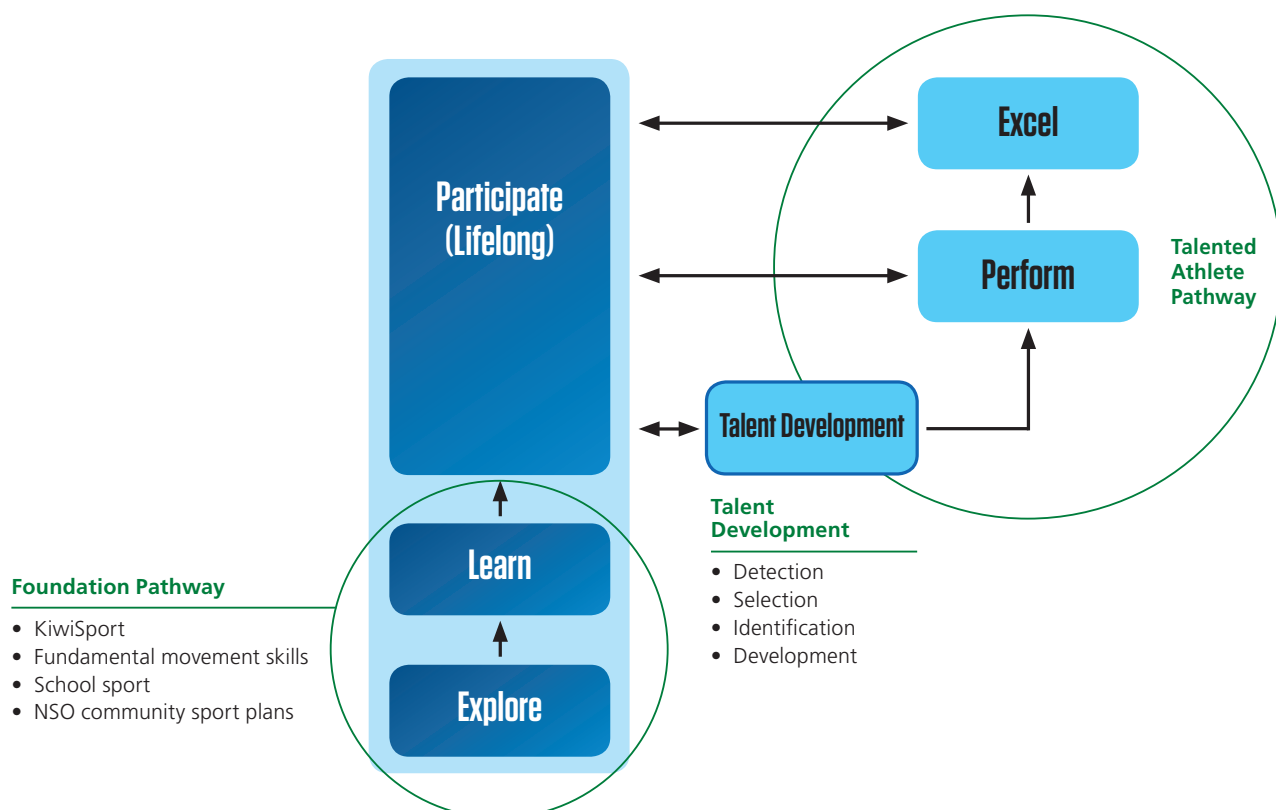
Children and young people need an environment that is safe and supportive, where they are encouraged to be the best they can be and can enjoy what they are doing. Again research tells us that children and young people do not enjoy experiences where:

- there is an over-emphasis on winning from both parents and coaches
- only the best players get to play or participate consistently
- some participants are favoured over others
- they perceive not to be on good terms with the person in charge
- they cannot participate with their friends
- they fear being hurt
- they don't feel safe
- they do not have enough fun
- they don't feel that they are improving or developing their skills.

Parents, coaches and instructors have a major influence on the nature and quality of the environment where children and young people participate. They can significantly influence the decisions children and young people make, including the choice to keep participating or to give up. Quality coaching and positive parental involvement are essential for a positive sport experience.

Understanding stages of development

The Sport and Recreation Pathway (below) provides a generic model of participant and athlete development. Many sports have used this to develop their own specific development model. Providers of sport-specific opportunities for children and young people should become familiar with their own sport's pathway, as this will help guide the learning and development of young participants.



THE 10 GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES – A QUICK LOOK

The list below identifies 10 good practice principles and identifies the aspects of participation that are impacted by each principle. In general the principles apply to all age groups however there are two exceptions – Principles 6 and 9 – these are noted in the table below.

	Principle	Focused On	Relevant Stage and Development
1.	Create a safe social and physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality experiences 	All
2.	Treat children and young people with dignity and respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant-centred approach • Values 	All
3.	Model good behaviour and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role modelling/Values • Learning and development • Leadership development 	All
4.	Be consistent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality experiences • Cooperation between providers 	All
5.	Become familiar with developmental ages and stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant-centred • Player development pathways 	All
6.	Let children play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of play • Fun and enjoyment 	Explore Learn
7.	Ensure there is full participation and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity • Fun and enjoyment • Leadership development 	All
8.	Modify or adapt activities to suit the ability of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning • Fun and enjoyment 	All
9.	Provide an appropriate amount of activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun and enjoyment 	Learn Early Participate
10.	Prepare children and young people to compete successfully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant-centred • Fun and enjoyment • Winning vs. success 	All



PRINCIPLE 1: CREATE A SAFE SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Children and young people must feel physically and socially safe when they participate in sport and recreation. Sport and recreation providers have responsibility for protecting children and young people from physical, social and emotional harm.

Keeping participants safe covers a range of areas including:

- the physical environment – facilities, equipment, techniques, weather conditions
- the social environment – the different relationships between participants, coaches or instructors, and parents
- the emotional environment – bullying, promoting positive feelings about individuals, preventing any forms of abuse.

In practice

- There must be plans and procedures in place to ensure that potential risks are minimised, removed or managed effectively to protect participants from harm
- Suitable facilities should be available and accessible for children and young people's sport and recreation
- Check that facilities and grounds are in good order and safe to use
- Avoid repetitive drills, these are likely to cause injury and boredom
- Ensure that children and young people treat each other with respect and fairness
- Ensure the availability of safe and appropriate equipment, including protective gear where necessary
- Positively encourage the development of correct technique, and appropriate physical and technical skills.



PRINCIPLE 2: TREAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

Children and young people expect to be treated sensitively and respectfully during their sport and recreation experiences. There is no place for words or actions that can damage a child or young person's self-esteem or impact negatively on their enjoyment of sport and recreation. Constant criticism, put-downs and being set up to fail are not only examples of poor behaviour but also diminish participants' enjoyment of the activity and can often lead to dropping-out and poor self-esteem.

In practice

- Where possible, children and young people should be given a chance to contribute ideas, especially about decisions that affect them
- Create an environment where all participants are equal and accepted
- Recognise and value the social and cultural perspectives that young participants bring with them
- Show an interest in the child or young person's life and be sensitive to the stresses, demands and challenges of childhood and adolescence
- Don't mock or demean young participants and avoid stereotyping.



PRINCIPLE 3: MODEL GOOD BEHAVIOUR AND VALUES

Children and young people have the opportunity to learn and develop positive values and attitudes associated with sport and recreation through their participation experiences. For example, participation in sport and recreation creates opportunities for participants to learn about the importance of fair play and positive side-line behaviour, how to cope with winning and losing, and about the rewards that can come with effort. This can only happen if these values and attitudes are encouraged or modelled by coaches, teachers, instructors and parents.

In practice

- Set and model expectations of behaviour for children, parents, coaches, supporters and officials
- Encourage parents to positively participate in and contribute to their children's sport and recreation
- Always act with integrity
- Understand that children and young people value fairness, and that they have expectations of adults in terms of behaviour and support
- Consider the concepts of winning and success from the perspective of children and young people, rather than imposing adult views
- Remember that children and young people's sport and recreation is about their interests and aspirations, not those of their parents or coaches.



PRINCIPLE 4: BE CONSISTENT

Children and young people can participate in activities delivered by a range of providers. Coordination between providers means there will be consistency of delivery in terms of rules applied, modifications and competition groupings, all of which are beneficial to children and young people. Coordination may also allow providers to share equipment, facility hire and coaching.

Developing consistency of messages and provision of complementary opportunities allows for smooth transitions between providers, such between as schools and clubs, and supports the sport and recreation development pathway.

In practice

- Develop connections with other providers to ensure consistent messages and approaches to sport and recreation delivery
- Consider the role of regular communication, using shared resources, joint policy development and shared facilities
- Prepare children and young people to compete successfully as ways to develop closer links.



PRINCIPLE 5:

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH DEVELOPMENTAL AGES AND STAGES

Developmental age and stage, and the concept of readiness, play an important part in determining when a child or young person should start to play or progress in sport and recreation. Often decisions are based on a participant's physical development. However, readiness will depend on a child or young person's social, emotional and cognitive development, as well as their physical development. While the majority of children pass through the same developmental phases, each child develops at their own pace.

Chronological age is a poor indicator of development and progress, especially in sport. There is no magic age at which a child is ready to play organised sport. Evidence suggests that success in sport does not depend on how early a child gets involved in sport, but is associated with a child participating when they are optimally ready to participate. Young brains and bodies are not equipped for competition or organised team sports. Muscles and nerves take time to develop to a point where a child can learn and perform skills that lend themselves to organised sport.

Early sport and recreation activities should focus on skill development and play until an individual shows signs of readiness for competitive sport. Readiness is determined by a variety of factors, including (but not limited to):

- expressing a desire to play and participate
- having the ability to receive and understand instruction
- being able to work with others
- understanding competition
- having the physical attributes such as the physical size, strength, skill level, and coordination required to meet the demands of the activity.

There is little evidence to suggest that early specialisation makes an athlete better at sport. Specialising in one sport or activity too early is potentially damaging to young people. Research suggests that children should experience a wide range of activities, rather than narrowing down their choices too soon. Children who participate in a wide variety of activities and specialise only after reaching puberty, tend to be more consistent performers, have fewer injuries and stay in sport longer.

In practice

- Encourage children to be as physically active as possible
- Emphasise the development and mastery of skills – both individual and team – and help participants develop positive attitudes and values associated with 'good' sport
- Become familiar with your sport's player development pathway and the learning required at each stage of development
- Assess the physical, technical and cognitive capability of your participants, and use that assessment as the basis for your participant development plan.

PRINCIPLE 6: LET CHILDREN PLAY

Play enhances every aspect of children's development, not just for sport and recreation but in other areas such as developing self-esteem, learning social skills, developing spatial awareness, brain and language development, and encouraging the development of imagination. However, it is important to understand that children do not play in order to learn, but play provides a significant opportunity for learning.

Numerous studies identify that children's free time and opportunities for free play are declining. Increasingly children's play is organised and structured, and is becoming increasingly institutionalised and adult-driven. Free play is child-driven and provides an opportunity for children to practice decision-making, develop their creativity, leadership and group skills. Ensuring that a child has access to both free and structured play will create balanced learning and development opportunities.

Additionally, studies show that outdoor play has a positive impact on a child's physical and mental wellbeing. In particular, outdoor play provides opportunities for physical challenges, risk-taking and generally more vigorous play. Children also like it when adults, especially parents and caregivers, join in with their play activities.

In practice

- Recognise that play is a worthwhile activity for children – it has meaning and value that is often not understood by adults
- Provide children with the opportunity to play on their own, with friends and with parents on a regular basis
- Promote and encourage play that facilitates the development of gross and fine motor skills
- Promote and encourage play environments that stimulate creative decision-making and problem-solving skills.



PRINCIPLE 7:

ENSURE THERE IS FULL PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

Every child or young person has the right and should be encouraged to participate in sport and recreation, regardless of their individual ability, socio-economic situation, ethnicity, gender or any other factor. This means that those in charge must plan to accommodate individual differences and abilities by offering a broad range of activities, and adapting activities to ensure that everyone can be included.

In order for children and young people to learn and develop, they need many opportunities to try things out, to test themselves, to experience success and have fun. Children who are less skilled are often the first ones to be eliminated in games and activities, or spend the most time on the bench, yet they are the ones who would benefit from more time participating.

Organising activities that allow lots of involvement by everyone will help participants develop competence and confidence. Fundamental movement skills become ingrained when children have the opportunity to rehearse and use them repetitively. They master skills by doing rather than watching or listening. More complex movement patterns can be learnt as fundamental movement skills become ingrained.

For some children and young people, such as those with a disability, more planning and thought is required to ensure they have the same opportunities to develop, learn and participate alongside others.

In practice

- Accommodate individual differences and abilities by offering a broad range of activities and competition structures
- Give children and young people a chance to contribute to planning and decision-making in their activities
- Foster participant-centred protocols.



PRINCIPLE 8:**MODIFY OR ADAPT ACTIVITIES TO SUIT THE ABILITY OF PARTICIPANTS**

Some sport and recreation activities are more difficult for beginners or less-skilled players. Others use complex equipment or rules. Games and activities should be modified, where necessary, to allow all participants an opportunity to participate fully in order to learn and develop.

Many sport providers have recognised that the needs and abilities of children are different from those of adults. As a result, they have developed modified versions of their sport and fun games as a better way to meet the needs of younger participants. Modification should not only relate to skill development, but can also be applied to game formats and competition structures.

Modifying activities is not just for younger children. There are many situations where young people may not have the required skills for an activity and where some modification would help their learning.

In practice

- Modify the activity to match the developmental stages and skills of the participants.
- Modified versions of sports should:
 - resemble the sport from which they are derived
 - be safe to play and yet still challenging for participants
 - provide players with skills that are a relevant base for progressing to the parent sport
 - reduce excessive physical demand placed on children from adult equipment and field sizes
 - emphasise fun, participation and skill development over competition
 - reduce the likelihood of domination by physically stronger or early maturing players.

PRINCIPLE 9:

PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF ACTIVITY

Sport and recreation providers should consider the needs, wants and perspectives of the children and young people they are working with as a central element of programme planning. This should include:

- the frequency and duration of sports practices
- when to emphasise physical conditioning training and its intensity
- the nature of competition or level of challenge
- general skill development versus specialised skill development
- the provision of social opportunities
- consideration of developmental stage over chronological age.

In practice

- Children get the greatest benefit from short, action-packed sessions. They do not need to practice formally more than once per week
- Encourage children to try a range of sports and activities to discover what they enjoy, and to develop a wide range of skills
- Early specialisation can lead to burn-out and stress, and result in a young person dropping out of sport. Children and young people should play a variety of sports for as long as possible
- When making decisions or planning children and young people's sport activities, use developmental stage (size, coordination and maturity) rather than a child's age as a primary guide.



PRINCIPLE 10:**PREPARE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO COMPETE SUCCESSFULLY**

Children and young people cannot compete effectively when they do not have the required skills. This is not just technical/movement skills but also the attitudes and values that allow 'good' sport to happen.

Organised sport is a competitive activity, but it is important that winning is kept in perspective as children and young people are learning how to play. Children and young people tell us that too much emphasis on winning turns them off sport. They want proper preparation to enable them to compete successfully in sport. Programmes that emphasise skill development and success through effort provide more fun and enjoyment, and increase the likelihood of retaining children and young people in sport over time.

Being physically active is beneficial to growth. However, when children are asked to participate in activities that do not allow for the uneven spread of growth and maturation, there is potential for lessening the enjoyment and increasing the risk of injury.

In practice

- Focus on developing a wide range of basic sports skills that lead to increased mastery, self-confidence and competence
- Praise effort, hard-work, improvement and fair play
- Do not label children as good or bad at their sport – they will flourish if they are praised for their effort
- Implement the New Zealand Coach Approach philosophy through coaching and development programmes. The NZ Coach Approach emphasises the philosophy of participants as learners, and coaches as facilitators of participant learning and development. For more information visit the [Sport NZ Coach Approach webpage](http://www.sportnz.org.nz/communities-and-clubs/Coaching/NZ-CoachApproach/)¹.

¹ www.sportnz.org.nz/communities-and-clubs/Coaching/NZ-CoachApproach/

THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF PARENTS

We've all seen the headlines:

- Police called in after coach hits player
- Threat to kill at kid's soccer game
- Dad runs onto field, tackles opposition player

Children and young people's sport does not always bring out the best in adults, especially parents. Unfortunately it's the children and young people that suffer. They are the ones whose enjoyment is compromised. They are the ones who stop participating when adults behave poorly.

Many adults have the responsibility for leading, managing, or supporting children and young people's sport and recreation. When they do, they have the opportunity to influence the quality of the experience. While participation in sport and recreation can provide positive benefits, this depends on how opportunities are delivered by these adults, and experienced by children and young people.

Your child, their game

Parents make up the majority of adults involved in children and young people's sport and recreation. They provide financial, emotional and physical support. Depending on the nature of that support, they can also influence a child or young person's enjoyment and continued participation. Positive parental engagement and support has been shown to have a positive effect on the sport and recreation experiences of their children.

The rule of thumb for parents, in whatever capacity they find themselves, is to always remember that while it is YOUR CHILD, it's THEIR GAME.

Educated sports parents

The best way for parents to support their children is to remember that participating in sport and recreation should be all about their child learning, developing, having fun and learning important skills. The performance aspect should only become important for parents when it becomes important for their children.

Educated sports parents:

- encourage their children to be physically active
- are interested, supportive and educate themselves to support their child better
- allow their children to set their own goals and be accountable for their own performances
- understand that, for their children, learning and mastering skills are more important than winning
- recognise that making mistakes is part of the learning process for participants
- understand that winning for children is often more than just what is on the scoreboard
- recognise that early success does not necessarily translate into super stardom later
- recognise that poor side-line behaviour embarrasses and frustrates their children
- cheer for all players, not just their child
- understand the importance of supporting their child's coach by not trying to instruct their child during the activity
- do not give referees a hard time, but thank them after the game for their giving their time.

THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF COACHES

Coaches can inspire children and young people to continue participating in sport, or they can be the reason that children and young people drop out. Coaches must be aware of the potential impact they have on the experiences of children and young people in sport and maximise their positive impact. Good coaching is one of the key factors in retaining people in sport and developing young New Zealanders.

To be effective, coaches must focus first and foremost on the needs of the participant or athlete being coached. A guide to the characteristics and needs of young participants can be found in [Appendix 1 of the Sport NZ Coach Development Framework²](#).

Participants at different stages of development will have different coaching needs. Most coaches of children and young people will be volunteers and are likely to be classified as Foundation Coaches or Development Coaches.

Foundation coaches

Foundation coaches support participants enjoying their first experiences in organised sport. The vast majority of the participants will be primary school aged children trying out a range of modified sports in either a club or primary school setting.

The ideal Foundation Coach will:

- nurture a love of sport and active recreation
- focus primarily on fun, participation and skill development
- understand the needs of young participants in the Learn Stage – primarily primary school aged children
- encourage participation in multiple sports and the development of a wide range of skills
- introduce the concept of fair play
- understand that they are in the business of creating not only better young athletes, but better young people.

Development coaches

Development coaches support a wider range of participants, including the young people who continue in organised sport through the later years of primary school, the secondary school students in both the school and club setting, and the adults who continue to play organised sport in a non-elite environment.

The ideal Development Coach will:

- nurture a love of multiple sports
- focus on skill development and decision making
- understand the needs of participants in the Participate phase – primarily intermediate and secondary school children, and adult non-elite participants
- reinforce ethical approaches to sport and recreation
- provide for participants needs and aspirations
- understand that they are in the business of creating not only better athletes, but better people.

² www.sportnz.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/Coaching/Coach-Development--Education/Coach-Development-Framework1/

Parent and coach partnership

Coaches of youth sport often find the most challenging part of their role is managing the relationship with the parents of their players. This is an important relationship to foster. The key to managing this successfully is to meet with the parents before and during the season to ensure that the parents understand:

- your coaching philosophy
- the team's objectives for the season
- what is expected of them and their children
- what the lines of communication are
- how they can be involved and help out during the season
- how to deal with any issues they may have
- the team rules.

Parents as coaches

Many parents end up coaching their child's sports team. This is a challenging situation for both parent and child, which can lead to both positive and negative outcomes. Several studies have been undertaken looking at ways to ensure that the experience is a positive one for both adult and child. These studies concluded that:

- it is important to separate the parent and the coach role. As a parent you have a responsibility to your child, but as a coach you must consider the needs of all of the participants in your care
- when you are coaching, your child is a member of the team and should receive no more or less attention than any other participant. They certainly shouldn't feel any extra pressure to perform
- away from the game, the coach's hat comes off and the parent's hat goes back on. Young people tell us that they don't enjoy the post-mortem discussion in the car on the way home when their parent is also their coach
- it is important to keep the lines of communication open with your child when you are also the coach, so any concerns your child might have can be openly discussed with your child and dealt with
- in some situations, especially with older children or in more competitive leagues, parents may need to discuss the parent-as-coach situation before any coaching roles are agreed to.

For more information on coaching visit the [Sport NZ Coaching webpage](https://www.sportnz.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/Coaching/)³.

³ www.sportnz.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/Coaching/

THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS

Teachers are another key influencer on children's participation in sport and recreation, and the provision of sport and recreation experiences.

Schools have unique opportunities to provide adequate physical activity through mandatory physical education programmes, quality school sport programmes and after school initiatives.

Teachers can influence and support student's participation by:

- providing the enthusiasm, drive, and commitment that will lead to students becoming involved in sport and recreation
- providing leadership in physical education, and sport and recreation experiences
- supporting involvement in sport and recreation through learning in physical education, for example the development of fundamental movement skills
- purchasing the equipment and resources needed for curriculum and co-curricular sport and recreation activities;
- ensuring that learning is enjoyable and that it builds students' confidence and competence in a range of appropriate physical activities
- coaching, managing or officiating school teams.

While schools have a significant role in providing and promoting diverse sport and recreation opportunities for students, schools are not isolated places. They are part of their communities and the wider society, which contribute to the social and environmental factors that influence students' choices, behaviours, and attitudes.

Schools can provide more and better sport and recreation experiences for students when they collaborate with other organisations. When a school and its community have strong links, they can ensure that students and young people receive consistent messages about the importance of sport and recreation, and the opportunities that are available to them.



THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF PEERS

Social interaction, being with friends and meeting new people are often the key reasons children choose to participate in sport and recreation. These needs can be fulfilled simply by doing something low-key and fun with friends (for example, roller blading, playing hacky sac, kicking around a ball. It can also be satisfied by joining and participating in new sport or recreation activities, with the hope of meeting new friends and acquaintances.

It is important to acknowledge that, like other influential groups (such as parents, teachers and coaches), peer groups can impact both positively and negatively upon the participation environment.

If new activities fail to provide positive social experiences (for example, because a new group is not welcoming), or established activities stop satisfying this need (such as when friends fail to be selected in the same team), this can be a reason children opt out.

Numerous studies have shown that children's perceived and actual competence in sport is strongly related to positive peer-relationships and perceived acceptance by their peer group.

There is also emerging evidence that a child's social network may be uniquely relevant and influential to their choice of activities. For example, children have been found to be more physically active in the presence of peers and friends in their natural environment than when alone or in the presence of family members. However, in an organised setting, such as gym class or a sport team, children who feel less confident and competent have been reported to be less physically active when in the presence of their peers.

Given this social aspect of sport and recreation is a major motivation for many children, participation opportunities that encourage children to be together, play together, and compete together should be encouraged.



THE 10 GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES – SUMMARY TABLE

Principle	Focused On	Relevant Stage and Development	In Practice
1. Create a safe social and physical environment Children and young people must feel physically and socially safe when they participate in sport and recreation. The provider has responsibility to provide a duty of care and protect children and young people from physical, social and emotional harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality experiences 	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There must be plans and procedures in place to ensure that potential risks are minimised, removed or managed effectively to protect participants from harm Suitable facilities should be available and accessible for children and young people's sport and recreation Check that facilities and grounds are in good order and safe to use Avoid repetitive drills as these are likely to cause injury and boredom Ensure that children and young people treat each other with respect and fairness Ensure the availability of safe and appropriate equipment, including protective gear where necessary Positively encourage the development of correct technique, and appropriate physical and technical skills.
2. Treat children and young people with dignity and respect Children and young people expect to be treated sensitively and respectfully during their sport and recreation experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant-centred approach Values 	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, children and young people should be given a chance to contribute ideas, especially about decisions that affect them Create an environment where all participants are equal and accepted Recognise and value the social and cultural perspectives that young participants bring with them Show an interest in the child or young person's life and be sensitive to the stresses, demands and challenges of childhood and adolescence Don't mock or demean young participants and avoid stereotyping.
3. Model good behaviour and values Children and young people have the opportunity to learn and develop positive values and attitudes associated with sport and recreation through their participation experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role modelling/Values Learning and development Leadership development 	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set and model expectations of behaviour for children, parents, coaches, supporters and officials Encourage parents to positively participate in and contribute to their children's sport and recreation Always act with integrity Understand that children and young people value fairness and have expectations of adults in terms of behaviour and support Consider the concepts of winning and success from the perspective of children and young people, rather than imposing adult views Remember that children and young people's sport and recreation is about their interests and aspirations, not those of their parents or coaches.
4. Be consistent Coordination between providers means there will be consistency of delivery in terms of rules applied, modifications and competition groupings, and smooth transitions between providers such as schools and clubs, all of which are beneficial to children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality experiences Cooperation between providers 	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop connections with other providers to ensure consistent approaches to sport and recreation delivery Consider the role of regular communication, using shared resources, joint policy development and shared facility use as ways to develop closer links.

	Principle	Focused On	Relevant Stage and Development	In Practice
5.	<p>Become familiar with developmental ages and stages</p> <p>Developmental age and stage, and the concept of readiness, play an important part in determining when a child or young person should start to play or progress in sport and recreation. Readiness will depend on a child or young person's social, emotional and cognitive development, as well as their physical development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant-centred Player development pathways 	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage children to be as physically active as possible Emphasise the development and mastery of skills – both individual and team – and help participants develop positive attitudes and values associated with 'good' sport Become familiar with your sport's player development pathway and the learning required at each stage of development Assess the physical, technical and cognitive capability of your participants, and use that assessment as the basis for your participant development plan.
6.	<p>Let children play</p> <p>Play enhances every aspect of children's development, not just for sport and recreation but in other areas such as developing self-esteem, learning social skills, developing spatial awareness, brain and language development, and encouraging the development of imagination. It is important to understand that children do not play in order to learn, but play provides a significant opportunity for learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of play Fun and enjoyment 	Explore Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise that play is a worthwhile activity for children – it has meaning and value that is often not understood by adults Provide children with the opportunity to play on their own, with friends and with parents on a regular basis Promote and encourage play that facilitates the development of gross and fine motor skills Promote and encourage play environments that stimulate creative decision-making and problem-solving skills.
7.	<p>Ensure there is full participation and inclusion</p> <p>Every child or young person has the right and should be encouraged to participate in sport and recreation, regardless of their individual ability, socio-economic situation, ethnicity, gender or any other factor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity Fun and enjoyment Leadership development 	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodate individual differences and abilities by offering a broad range of activities and competition structures Give children and young people a chance to contribute to planning and decision-making in their activities Foster participant-centred protocols.

Principle	Focused On	Relevant Stage and Development	In Practice
8. Modify or adapt activities to suit the ability of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning • Fun and enjoyment 	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify the activity to match the developmental stages and skills of the participants. • Modified versions of sports should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – resemble the sport from which they are derived – be safe to play and yet still challenging for participants – provide players with skills that are a relevant base for progressing to the parent sport – reduce excessive physical demand placed on children from adult equipment and field sizes – emphasise fun, participation and skill development over competition – reduce the likelihood of domination by physically stronger or early maturing players.
9. Provide an appropriate amount of activity Sport and recreation providers should consider the needs, wants and perspectives of the children and young people they are working with as a central element of programme planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun and enjoyment 	Learn Early Participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children get the greatest benefit from short, action-packed sessions. They do not need to practice formally more than once per week • Encourage children to try a range of sports and activities to discover what they enjoy, and to develop a wide range of skills • Early specialisation can lead to burn-out and stress, and result in a young person dropping out of sport. Children and young people should play a variety of sports for as long as possible • When making decisions or planning children and young people's sport activities, use developmental stage (size, coordination and maturity) rather than a child's age as a primary guide.
10. Prepare children and young people to compete successfully Children and young people cannot compete effectively when they do not have the required skills. Programmes that emphasise skill development and success through effort provide more fun and enjoyment, and increase the likelihood of retaining children and young people in sport over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant-centred • Fun and enjoyment • Winning vs. success 	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on developing a wide range of basic sports skills that lead to increased mastery, self-confidence and competence • Praise effort, hard-work, improvement and fair play • Do not label children as good or bad at their sport – they will flourish if they are praised for their effort • Implement the New Zealand Coach Approach philosophy through coaching and development programmes. The NZ Coach Approach emphasises the philosophy of participants as learners, and coaches as facilitators of participant learning and development.



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