

WOMEN'S
SPORTS
FOUNDATION

Go Girl Go!

PARENTS' GUIDE



BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE HAS REWARDS FAR BEYOND THE GYM, TRACK OR POOL

The more active your daughter is now, the more active she will be as an adult. That means a healthier heart, stronger bones, less chance of cancer and diabetes, and more fitness, stamina and flexibility. Did you know that when girls are active, their anxiety and depression levels fall? It's true. Physical activity is a mood

enhancer. Girls who play sports and do other activities have a healthier body image. And playing sports has lots of social benefits, too. Besides building good friendships, girls learn teamwork and how to strive toward goals. Sports provide experiences in leadership, independence and assertiveness. But the number-one reason girls participate is to have fun!

Unfortunately, we have created a generation of sedentary youth. Inactive girls are in danger of leading an unhealthy, unhappy life. We want girls to become physically active to help curb these health risks. The Women's Sports Foundation is committed to doing its part, but we also need you to be active role models and encourage girls to be physically active. We need to work as a team. We are here to work together—you, the adult leaders and the GoGirls—to help raise active, healthy, confident, secure young women.

GoGirlGo! is a unique education program that uses four GoGirl characters and champion athletes to educate girls about being physically active and avoiding health-risk behaviors. It is designed to be presented by adult leaders in a sport environment. The program features true-life stories and life lessons from champion athletes like Julie Foudy, Sanya Richards and Diana Taurasi.

All program materials are free and come in a GoGirlGo! kit containing a GoGirls! Guide to Life and a GoGirls! Scrapbook, comprehensive instruction guides for group leaders and this parents' guide for you. Each girl and adult leader also receives a free one-year membership in the Women's Sports Foundation.

The basic GoGirls! Guide to Life includes eight sessions, each featuring the athlete's story and accompanying educational information and activities. The topics covered in the Guide are alcohol and drugs, body image, diversity, smoking, emotions, nutrition, bullies and family issues. Additional stories on sleep, anger, dating, harassment and environmentalism are available online at www.WomensSportsFoundation.org/GGGCurriculum.

WHY THE PARENTS' GUIDE?

This Parents' Guide will give you some insight into the latest knowledge about motivating your daughter to become active and creating a positive and supportive environment for girls. There are also some ideas on how to communicate better with your daughter, build her self-esteem and help her to make confident decisions.

Even if your daughter is not participating in an organized GoGirlGo! program, you can still inspire and motivate her to get active.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR GOGIRLGO!

Is your daughter in a GoGirlGo! program?

It's important to understand that this material serves a wide range of communities and populations throughout the entire country. What may be a pressing topic in one community may not seem to you to be appropriate for your daughter based on your family's particular values or beliefs. We've carefully presented this material based on what research has shown to be the health-risk behaviors most relevant to your daughter's age group, but we encourage you to review the chapters and speak with your program leader about any concerns you have. Visit www.WomensSportsFoundation.org/GGCGCurriculum to review all chapters and topics.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Physical activity is anything that moves your body and gets your heart pumping. Working out on a regular basis (up to 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity every day) will make your daughter strong, increase her energy and flexibility and turn her into a physically active person. She doesn't have to run a marathon or swim the English Channel to be considered active. Whether she engages in lighter activity like throwing a Frisbee or more vigorous activity like running, she'll still be engaging her body in movement, and that's what matters.

It's also important to emphasize that being a physically active girl means a lot more than the numbers on the scale. Here are some of the benefits of being active:

- Strength
- Stamina
- Flexibility





WHAT YOU CAN DO

Girls need to build physical activity into their lives. They need to decide that being physically active is important and worth the time and effort to keep at it. Help your daughter to stay active, every day, all year round. Physical activity does not have to mean elite sport competition. The key is movement, in whatever shape that comes—biking, dance, hiking and even yoga. You can help. Here are some ways to motivate girls to be physically active:

Break down the barriers to activity.

Let her know that it's okay to sweat and be athletic. Encourage her friends to join in. When she sees them doing activity and having fun, she may be persuaded that it's cool after all. If she doesn't know anything about sports, start to watch different sports together so she can understand the rules and how different games are played.

Emphasize the non-aesthetic benefits of exercise. Many girls are preoccupied with their bodies and physical appearance, but physical activity has many benefits that don't just have to do with looks, like strength, stamina, flexibility and improved self-esteem. If she improves in these areas, she'll enjoy the activities and want to continue.

Introduce her to role models.

Let her see you working out, sweating and making physical activity part of your life. Take her to girls' and women's sports events. Check out the biographies and films of women sports heroes like Mia Hamm, Wilma Rudolph and the Williams sisters in your library or online.

Discover activities that fit her personality and body type. Suggest activities in which she can be successful and challenged, which play on existing abilities and at which she will learn new skills. Find a challenge for her skill level and body type. Visit www.WomensSportsFoundation.org/FindYourSport and take the interactive survey that will suggest sports and physical activities with lots of information on each activity.

Get with the program. Once she has chosen a few activities she's interested in, find a program for her to participate in. Many girls' organizations have sports and physical activities—the YWCA, PAL, community recreation centers, local park and recreation department, the Girl Scouts, etc. Even a 10-minute "active" break while doing homework or watching TV helps. Check with local colleges for camps or clinics held by women's sports teams.

Buddy up. Don't just tell her—show her—be active together and set a good example. Start an activity bracelet (a charm bracelet will work) that includes balls and activity charms that commemorate the activities you tried and did together. Take a class together or show her your moves! Set up an activities course in your back yard or your neighborhood where you can go up and down steps, jump rope, stop and do modified sit-ups and push-ups, skip or walk fast, hang or do pull-ups on a bar (monkey bars at local park) or any other activities.



Keep it fun! Make a sports scrapbook. Each time you and your daughter try a new activity together or attend a sports event, create a new page in your scrapbook. Include pictures, ticket stubs, magazine clippings...The possibilities are endless! Be creative!

Praise and reward her efforts. A smile, a nod of the head, some kind words of encouragement can be powerful.

Mix it up. Make sure you are doing a wide variety of activities to keep them interested. Instead of always running

around a track or playing soccer on a soccer field, take your activities to the beach or a local park. Each season try a weather-appropriate sport.

Encourage her to stick with it! Help her schedule the time to be active by keeping a fitness calendar or putting your activities on a calendar. Sneak notes into her lunch or her clothes with words of inspiration or praise. Organize a trip to a WNBA game for her and her friends.

ORGANIZED SPORTS TEAMS

If your daughter wants to join a sports team, she will need your support and encouragement in this pursuit. Learn the language and the rules of her sport. Cheer for her. Give her a pat on the back for her accomplishments and a shoulder to cry on for her disappointments. The great thing about sports and physical activity is

how you get the chance to try again. You can be there to remind her that she has another chance.

We've come a long way in the past several decades. The physical possibilities for females today are endless. Girls can train and sweat and push themselves to their limits with pride. Best of all, girls who are active and play sports are more likely to have higher self-esteem and self-confidence.



www.GoGirlWorld.org provides information for you and your daughter to explore the benefits of more than 100 sports and activities.

LISTEN, TALK AND CONNECT

WHY SHOULD YOU TALK WITH YOUR DAUGHTER ABOUT THE TOUGH ISSUES?

If you don't—who will? Research shows us that kids want a caring adult to talk about violence, sexual issues, drugs and alcohol. The kids who have had these conversations with their parents are the ones who turn to their parents later.

We all get sad, angry and stressed out. Most people experience emotional distress at some time. Let your daughter know that it's okay to feel this way once in a while. Brainstorm together about some positive ways to cope with school stresses, relationship problems and self-images issues. Above all, you need to tell her that she is not alone.

Use this great opportunity to:

Talk with your daughter.

Create an open environment—let her know that she is welcome to express her feelings, concerns and ideas to you.

Tell your daughter about your experiences—let her know your values.

Listen. Listen. Listen.

Try to be honest and patient.

Let her know that mistakes have nothing to do with your love for her.

Emphasize your daughter's behavior, not her person, when criticizing or correcting her.

Don't underestimate the value of praise and positive feedback from YOU—for any kid, at any age—for even the smallest thing.

Keep communicating—even when she seems to be shutting down. She'll remember that you are the one who listens and cares.

SELF-ESTEEM BOOSTERS

Girls receive 250,000 commercial messages by the time they are 17 years old, telling them what to eat and what to look like, but not encouraging them to be physically active.

Girls who feel good about themselves are much less likely to participate in behaviors that are health risks.

Some girls see only the negative, down side of life. They worry about the next catastrophe. They believe that one problem ruins everything. Teach her to be more optimistic. Tell her that she has personal skills and powers that she hasn't even tapped into yet. Let her know that nobody is perfect. Tell her how you, too, were not so perfect in your youth.

A good idea here is to teach your daughter to use positive self-talk. Every time she thinks something negative about herself, she should change it into something positive. Even if she doesn't believe it at first—the positive voice is the one she should be hearing.

MAKING CONFIDENT CHOICES

Teen athletes are less likely to get pregnant and more likely to delay their first sexual experience than their inactive peers; they're also less likely to use drugs or smoke cigarettes and more likely to do better in school and graduate from high school.

Your daughter will be confronted with lots of opportunities to test the boundaries. Friends can have a powerful influence. Peer pressure is so important to how she will behave. There is something you can do about it.

Talk to your daughter about what makes a good friend. A good friend is someone who shares her values and beliefs. A good friend is someone who listens to her feelings, and respects her decisions. Someone who tries to pressure her into doing something harmful isn't a friend at all.

Role play ways your daughter can get out of sticky situations without losing face. Make it a game—an acting drama. Come up with different situations and take on different roles so your daughter can practice what she might say to friends.

The bottom line is that she still wants to be accepted by her friends. Brainstorm together the various excuses she could make and still sound okay. Let her “train” for these times so it will come easy.



Giving your daughter the gift of sport and physical activity is a great way to ensure she leads a happy, healthy life. Don't let the opportunity pass you by!

WHO WE ARE:

The Women's Sports Foundation—the leading authority on the participation of women and girls in sports—advocates for equality, educates the public, conducts research and offers grants to promote sports and physical activity for girls and women. Our educational materials are generally provided at no charge and grant programs provide \$500,000 annually, primarily to provide sports participation opportunities for girls.

GoGirlGo! is made possible by the support of our donors. These materials would not be possible without the generous support of Philip Morris Youth Smoking Prevention and the Foundation's national sponsor, Gatorade. The Women's Sports Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations to the Foundation are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please give generously to support our mission and objectives.

RESOURCES

www.4girls.gov

www.aausports.org

www.bam.gov

www.daughters-sisters.org

www.familyeducation.com

www.fitness.gov

www.GoGirlWorld.org

www.kidshealth.org

www.melpomene.org

www.momsteam.com

www.parent-teen.com

www.sportsparenting.org

www.talkingwithkids.org

www.thedadman.com/dadsanddaughters

www.WomensSportsFoundation.org

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