

GIVING GIRLS A POSITIVE START WITH SPORT AT HOME

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Take Action



WOMEN
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SPORT

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1. Challenge stereotypes and expect our girls to be sporty

Encourage discussion around challenging gender stereotypes as a family. Talk about things that children see or hear from peers, in school, in sport and in media, and unpick the limiting messages that these might give girls and boys together. Support wider family members to understand why this is important. Expect girls to be as active and sporty as boys and help others to do the same. Be mindful that due to stereotyping, girls may need additional encouragement and support to get involved and stay in sport.

2. Language - change the story

We are all affected by stereotyping, but we don't always recognise how this affects our language and the gendered expectations this communicates to children. Use language in which girls are seen as confident in themselves and good at sport. Support boys to express vulnerability meaningfully, and to challenge themselves and their peers if they are excluding girls. As a family, be mindful of language that perpetuates gender stereotypes, especially in books, clothing, and the media. With the right language, we can reset expectations and change the story for girls in sport.

3. Be active role models

Parents and carers who are physically active are more likely to have active children. It's especially important that girls have active role models that can nurture them to develop a love for sport and physical activity. Active mums can inspire and help normalise female participation for girls and boys.

Active dads should support girls as much as boys, and model allyship to their sons. Family life can be very busy, and finding ways for the family to be active together is a great way to have fun, connect and strengthen bonds between with one another.



4. Equalise toys and activities

Children will improve the skills that they have the most opportunity to practise and this can be reinforced by toys, games and activities. Dispel the myth that there are 'boys' toys' and 'girls' toys' and share this with your wider family, especially at gift-giving times of the year. Give girls toys, activities and kit that can encourage a love of sport, develop skills and let them have fun. Give boys toys and activities that allow them to express themselves, show care, as well as be active. This way brothers and sisters are more likely to play together.

5. Celebrate girls and women in sport

It is important for all children to see girls and women succeed in and enjoy sport and physical activity to normalise female participation and inspiration. Celebrate the sporting journeys and achievements of girls and women amongst your friends, family and local community. Watch women's sport as a family and expose children to stories of amazing female athletes as much as male athletes.

6. Boys and men as allies

Boys can learn to be allies from a young age if we help them to understand why sport matters for girls as much as boys. Let's support boys to understand that being an ally for girls is part of being a good sportsman, and with this a good person.

It's important to address any negative attitudes and behaviours towards girls in sport in a meaningful way and to give boys the confidence to do the same. Male caregivers can lead by example and instil respect for girls and women in sport.

Gender equality within families will help fuel male allyship. Allyship is vital if girls and women are to feel they truly belong in sport.

