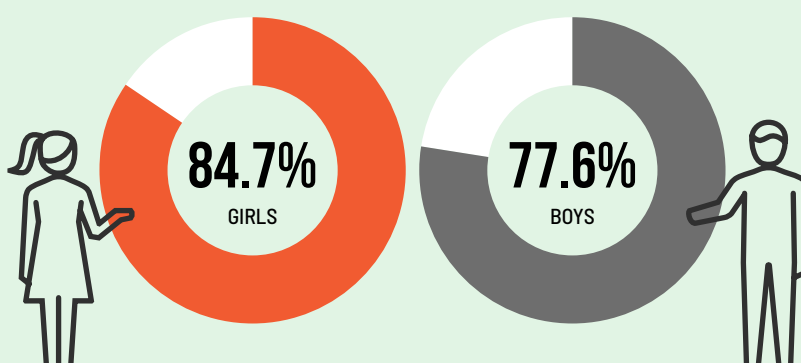


# Barriers and Facilitators of Physical Activity Participation in Adolescent Girls

PA – PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PE – PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical activity (PA) levels differ by gender among adolescents. Globally, 84.7% of adolescent girls and 77.6% for boys do not meet World Health Organization recommendations for PA, which are at least an average of 60 min/day of moderate-to-vigorous intensity PA. Many studies have shown that participation of girls in PA and sports decreases throughout adolescence, endangering their current and long-term health. A recent review of the literature identified some of the barriers and facilitators of participation in physical activity by adolescent girls in three domains:

ADOLESCENTS WHO **DO NOT MEET**  
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PA  
(AT LEAST AN AVERAGE OF 60 MIN/DAY MODERATE-TO-VIGOROUS INTENSITY PA)



## BARRIERS

## FACILITATORS

- Lack of time
- Perceived lack of competence
- Discomfort during and after PA
- Increased social and family obligations
- Preference for other leisure activities



INDIVIDUAL

- Weight management
- Perceived competence or skill level
- Health benefits
- Enjoyment

- Lack of support from family, peers, and teachers



INTERPERSONAL

- Support from family, peers and teachers
- Opportunities to socialize

- Costs of participation in available opportunities
- Safety concerns in neighbourhood outdoor areas and environment



ENVIRONMENTAL

- Accessibility and availability of recreational facilities
- Opportunities to try new types of PA
- Input from girls on preferred activities and formats of delivery
- Influence of media on social norms

# Policy implications

Evidence-based policies to ensure a gender-responsive approach are necessary to improve participation of adolescent girls in PA and sports.

Whole-of-school approaches to link the school curriculum with the broader school environment and the local community can be applied in practice to increase the participation of adolescent girls.



## SCHOOL CURRICULUM

- Involve girls in development of the physical education (PE) curriculum.
- Include girls' preferences in the PE curriculum.
- Develop PE curriculum that is non-competitive and flexible.
- Promote active breaks.
- Increase extracurricular opportunities for a PA.
- Ensure resources and materials to deliver gender-responsive PA-promotion strategies.



## TEACHERS

- Provide evidence-based training and continued professional development.
- Increase physical literacy of pupils at earlier ages.
- Develop strategies for training parents and peers to support PA.



## FAMILY AND PEERS

- Encourage participation of girls in PA and sports.
- Provide positive reinforcement for continuing participation.



## ENVIRONMENT

- Provide opportunities for participation of the family in PA and sports.
- Increase access to recreational PA facilities.
- Promote active commuting to and from school.
- Create safe neighbourhoods, sidewalks and cycling paths.
- Facilitate dialogue about gender norms related to PA and sports.
- Improve coordination among the education, health and local sports sectors.

## REFERENCES:

Duffey K, Barbosa A, Whiting S, Mendes R, Aguirre IY, Tcymbal A, et al. Barriers and Facilitators of Physical Activity Participation in Adolescent Girls: A Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews. *Front Public Health*. 2021;9:743935. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.743935>  
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