

**“Most people feel that sports are more of a boy thing, but girls can play sports too. I would love my daughter to be involved in that”: A Qualitative Study Exploring Parental Perceptions on Sport Participation for Girls.**

Despite evidence on the importance of sport participation for overall physical, cognitive, and psychological health, sport attrition among teenage girls in Canada is three-times higher than that among teenage boys. A recent study on sport participation for adolescent girls in the Greater Toronto Area identified interactive effects of individual, environmental, and task constraints that influence girls' sport participation. Factors such as family support, peer encouragement, positive early experiences, and sport requirements (e.g. physical intensity) interplayed to influence sport participation. Exploring parental influence on sport participation for girls is crucial given that research has linked benefits related to sport participation to social contextual factors, including young athletes' interactions with parents. The main objective of this qualitative study was to explore parental perceptions regarding sport participation for girls. Semi-structured interviews with parents of girls aged 6 to 12 years were conducted (n=9). Open-ended questions probed to uncover parental criteria considered in making decisions related to daughters' sport participation. Thematic analysis identified 10 main themes within the broader categories of sport criteria, daughter's representation, and parental role and experience. These themes included sport requirements, player involvement and challenge level of sports, gender stereotypes, daughter's enjoyment in sport participation, factors that influence the daughter to participate, and impact of sports on daughter's self-efficacy. Additionally, the themes encompass parental history in sports, perceived importance of sport involvement by the parent, and parent's willingness to provide both tangible and emotional support. Collectively, these aspects guide the decision-making process of parents regarding their daughters' participation in sports.

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