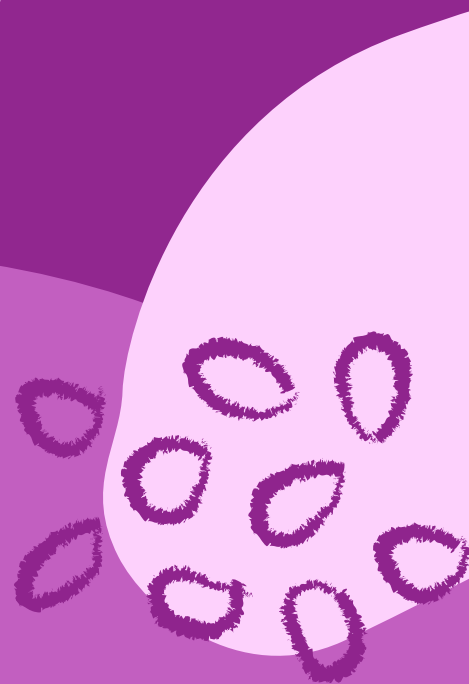




PARENTS GUIDE

TO GETTING YOUNG WOMEN AND
GIRLS PHYSICALLY ACTIVE



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 lifestyle diseases, and more fitness, stamina, flexibility and a better mindset.

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 with their friends!

Inactive girls and young women are in danger of leading an unhealthy, unhappy life.

We want girls to become physically active to help curb these health risks. Parents need to be active role models and encourage girls and young women to be physically active.

We need to work as a team to help raise active, healthy, confident, secure young women.

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INTRODUCTION

This Parents Guide will give you some insight into motivating your daughter to become active and creating a positive and supportive environment for young women and 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.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE **PHYSICALLY ACTIVE?**

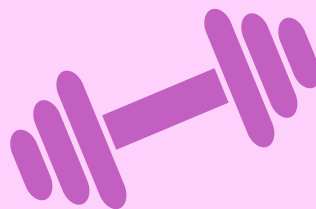
Physical activity is anything that moves your body and gets your heart pumping. Working out on a regular basis (up to 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity every day) will make your daughter strong, increase her energy and flexibility and turn her into a physically active person. She doesn't have to run a marathon or swim to Rangitoto to be considered active.

Whether she engages in lighter activity like throwing a ball 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 emphasise that being a physically active girl or young woman means a lot more than the numbers on the scale.

SOME BENEFITS OF BEING ACTIVE:



Flexibility
move better



Strength
feel stronger



Stamina
more energy

WHAT CAN **YOU** 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.

WAYS TO MOTIVATE GIRLS TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

BREAK DOWN 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.



EMPHASISE THE NON-AESTHETIC BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

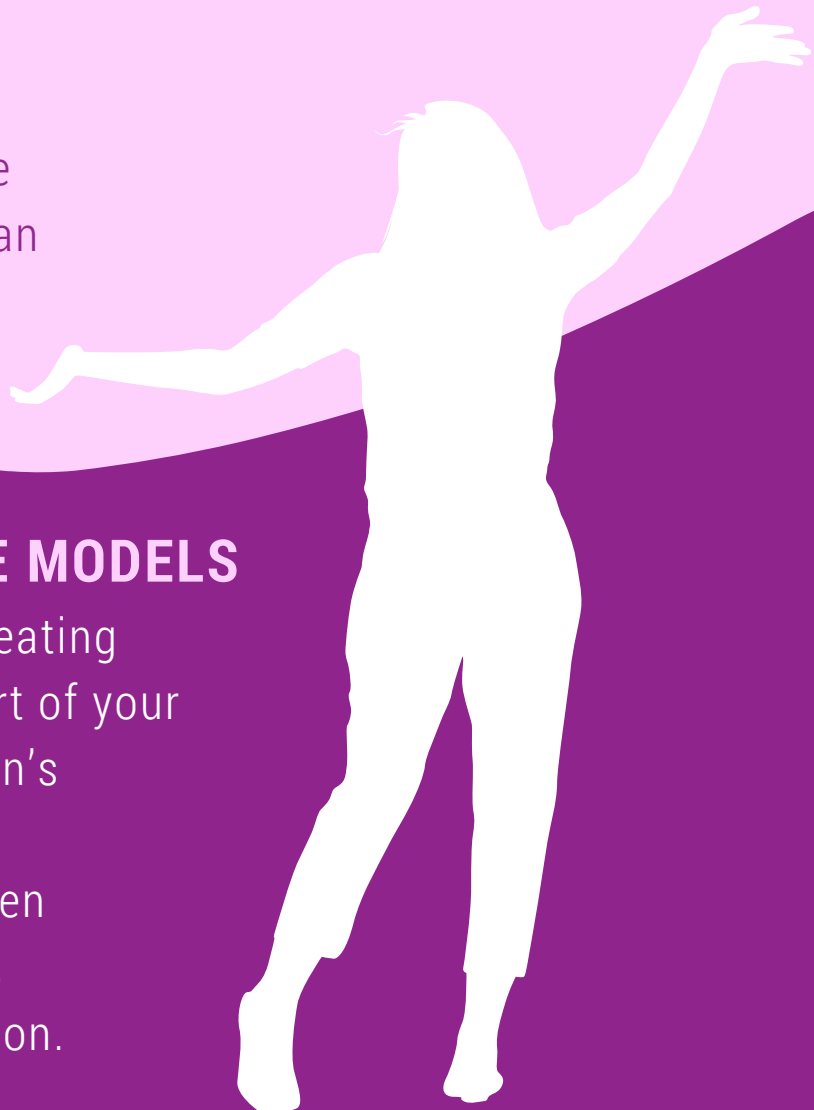
Many girls are preoccupied with their bodies and physical appearance, but physical activity has many benefits that don't just have to do with looks, like strength, stamina, flexibility, better mood, more energy, positive mindset and improved self-esteem. If she improves in these areas, she'll enjoy the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

PRAISE HER EFFORTS

A smile, a nod of the head, some kind words of encouragement can be powerful.

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 and acknowledge New Zealand women sports heroes like Sarah Walker, Valerie Adams and Lisa Carrington.



BUDDY UP

Don't just tell her—show her—be active together and set a good example. Take a class together or show her your moves! Set up an activities course in your back yard or your neighbourhood 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!

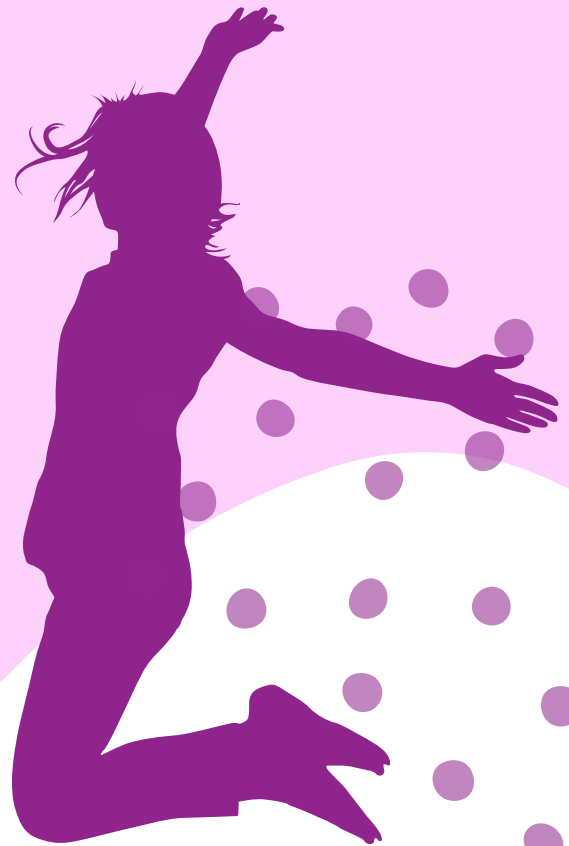


DISCOVER ACTIVITIES THAT FIT HER PERSONALITY AND BODY TYPE

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.

MIX IT UP!

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 activity.



GET WITH THE PROGRAMME

Once she has chosen a few activities she's interested in, find a programme for her to participate in. Many organisations have girls' specific sports programmes and physical activities. Even a 10-minute "active" break while doing homework or watching TV helps.

ENCOURAGE SCREEN FREE TIMES

Use that time to do something fun that the whole family can join in i.e. card games, charades, walks along the beach, pillow fight, any fun game that gets your body moving is a huge bonus.



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.

LISTEN, TALK AND CONNECT

Why should you talk with your daughter about the tough issues? If you don't—who will? 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.

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.

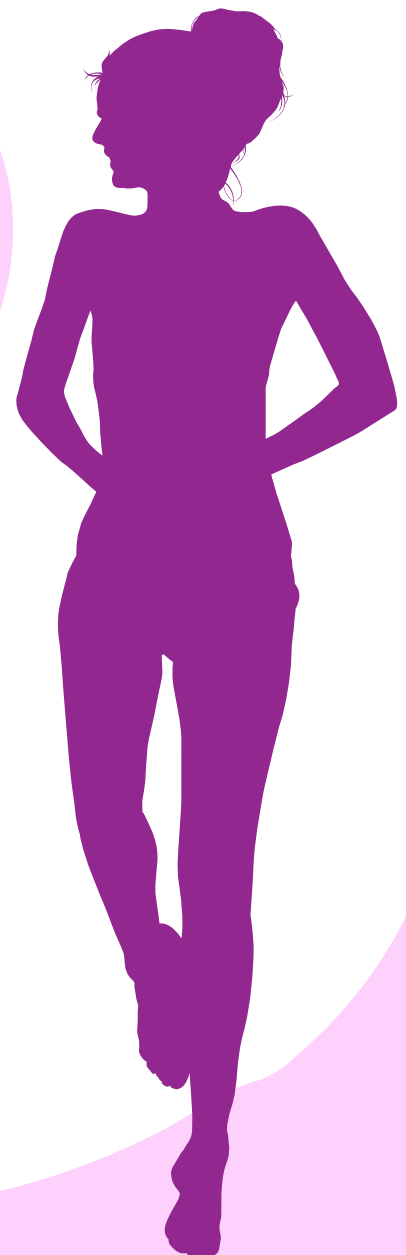
Emphasise your daughter's behaviour, not her person, when criticizing or correcting her.

Try to be honest and patient

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



**TALK
TO YOUR
DAUGHTER**



Positive feedback
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.

Listen, Listen, Listen!

ORGANISED SPORTS TEAMS

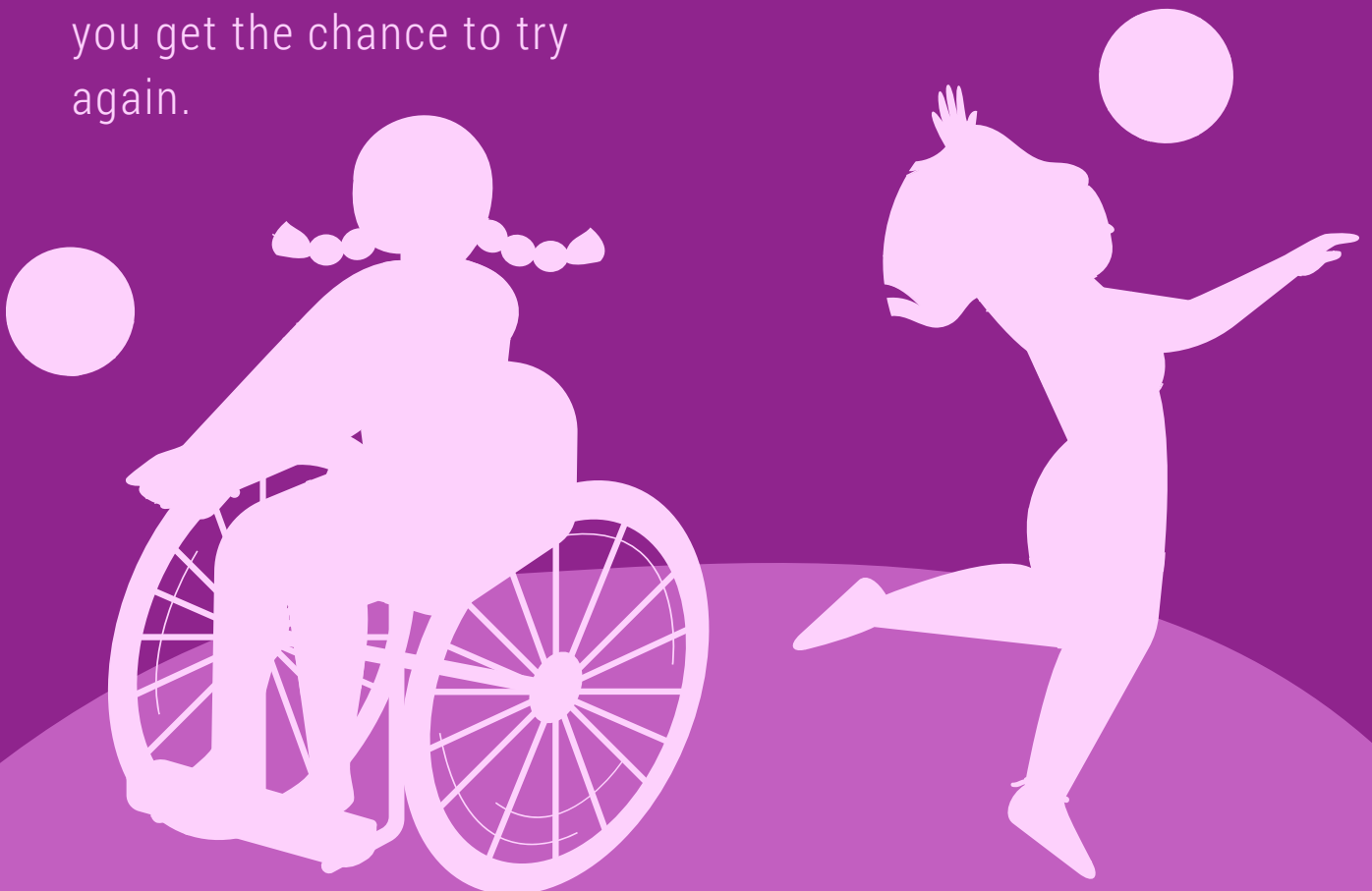
If your daughter wants to join a sports team, she will need your support and encouragement in this pursuit.

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 and young women who are active and play sports are more likely to have higher self-esteem and self-confidence.



SELF-ESTEEM BOOSTERS

Young women and girls receive dozens of commercial messages on a daily basis, 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 behaviours that are health risks.

Some young women and girls see only the negative, downside of life. They worry about the next catastrophe. They believe that one problem ruins everything.

Teach her to be more optimistic. Teach her that what you see in social media is most often not the reality and encourage her to follow people who make her feel good.

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

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!

MORE INFORMATION

[>>](http://AKTIVE.ORG.NZ/WHAT-WE-DO/WOMEN-GIRLS)



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