

Children's Parliament Active Children

On 16th March 2016, Members of Children's Parliament (MCPs), Youth Ambassadors and adult decision makers from across Scotland met at the second **National Sitting** of Children's Parliament. The Active Children Mural was the focal point of this event, looking at how Scotland's children can be supported to lead active lives. Some of their key messages are included in this leaflet.



What can adults do to help?

- Ask children about their views and experiences, whether about the sport they would like to play or how a community centre could be better or what support they need to participate and compete.
- Ensure that children have a choice of what sport and physical activities they want to take part in.
- Highlight opportunities to get active to children and families.
- Create more opportunities for children with disabilities to get involved in sport and physical activities (i.e. swim sessions for children with autism, adapted sports for wheelchair users, etc.).
- Provide more training for coaches so they are positive, supportive and knowledgeable and do not shout at children.
- Make sure that parks are cleaner and safer so that children can play there without worries.
- Ensure schools have adequate space and quality equipment for sports and other physical activities.
- Make sport free or cheaper so more children and families can participate.
- Be active as adults, so children see it as a normal and fun part of life. Be a role model!



What helps children to lead active lives?

1. When you have the confidence to try.

"Sometimes you worry that you're not good enough. Your friends can help and encourage you. When you work together it's better because you have someone to look after you and help you learn more."
"It's important to believe in yourself because it helps you achieve your goals, you feel good inside, and it helps you push harder and not give up. If you have more confidence from sport, it will help you in your life, like if you don't get a job, you keep trying until you find something."

2. When children have a choice in what sports and activities they participate in.

"If you don't like football and you were forced to do it, you wouldn't enjoy it. Adults should encourage children to do what they want. Adults should give children lots of options."
"We don't have certain sports and we don't have a running track at our school. Sometimes the activities are only for little kids and not us. You need time to learn how to do things and the wee ones need space to do that away from big kids."
"It's frustrating if you aren't listened to. If you give an idea and they say they will do it, but they don't."

3. When it's fun and social.

"Sometimes you don't have a place where you feel like you can talk to people, but when you're doing sports you can make new friends. When you do sports in a team you feel like you belong because you all win together."
"I would have felt better if I knew people when I moved up to the next swimming group."

4. When children have support from their families and parents/carers.

"When I'm doing my swimming lessons, my dad just sits on his phone. I feel quite unhappy – I'd like him to cheer me on."
"When my dad comes to pick me up from tennis, he leaves work 10 minutes early so he can watch me play. It's my favourite part of the week, having my dad watch me play tennis on a Monday."
"You feel better when your family is supporting you. They can encourage you or cheer when you do well. It's also good when they join in and play with you."

5. When coaches are positive and encouraging.

"When adults yell and use their power to make you feel embarrassed or bad, that's not supportive. You don't want to play when that happens."
"It's better to have a good coach because it makes it more fun. A good coach is happy and listens to you."

6. When your teammates are respectful and supportive.

"It feels good when you're playing together + having fun. I like it when people are honest, helpful + polite."
"It's not fun when people are being mean and bullying you or when they don't include you or pass to you."
"My picture is about a girl who thinks she's better than everyone else so she can be mean. The other girl is really upset and angry and she doesn't want to try because she was put down."

7. When everyone is included, regardless of disability, age or gender.

"Everyone should be able to join in. If you are a boy or a girl or if you are from a different country, no one should say you can't join in or stop you from playing."
"Everyone should get a shot even if they're not good. You can change the rules slightly to make sure everyone can be included, even people with disabilities."
"My picture is a drawing of a basketball court and a girl is happy because now she can play because she's got a special wheelchair which means she doesn't have to sit on the sidelines."

8. Having easy access to programmes and activities that help children to develop their skills.

"Every time I do football I have to go up to Inverness and it takes ages to get there. I have to do homework too so I don't have free time."
"My picture is about a girl at her first week of gymnastics and she didn't know how to do anything, but her coach was really nice and encouraged her. She got really good and people saw her and said she could go far. In the end she got in the Olympics!"

9. Playing with quality equipment and in safe, up-to-date venues.

"I don't feel supported at the park when there are people who don't make you feel safe – it's really scary when there are people drinking + yelling. It's dirty and yucky at the park + there's swears written on things."
"If you don't have the right kit, it could stop you from having fun. Schools should provide the right kit or the kits should be cheap in the shops, so everyone can afford it or people in high school should give away their old kits to younger children."
"Getting new kit can motivate you to do sports. You feel like you can play better."

10. Making sport and physical activity affordable.

"For my highland dancing you need to pay really dear fees. And you have to pay to go swimming but sometimes it's free and that's good – they should make it clear to children and parents when you can do sport for free."
"I wanted to go to a running club but it's too dear, so I go out with my mum and my sister in her pram and go for a wee run."

What do children need to lead ACTIVE LIVES?

Children's Parliament is Scotland's centre of excellence for children's participation and engagement.



Active Children

The Active Children Project explored children's views and experience of sport and physical activity in Scotland. The mural highlights the children's key messages around five project themes.

Forty children aged 8-11 from Angus, Highland, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk and Edinburgh took part and then met with adults to explore the subject further at the 2016 National Sitting.

By embedding children's voices in discussions of policy and practice we can help improve services and outcomes.

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