

Good Practice Guidelines

Sports and Recreation: Children and Young People

Introduction

These good practice guidelines support the learning and development of community and non-profit organisations that design and implement sports and active recreation programmes for tamariki and rangatahi. Drawing on sector resources and research (in particular, Balance is Better by Sport New Zealand), they have been prepared by the Centre for Social Impact for the Rātā Foundation.

Indicators of Good Practice

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| <p>Indicator #1: Create a safe social and physical environment</p> | <p>Tamariki and rangatahi must feel and be safe when they participate in sport and active recreation, and protected from physical, social and emotional harm. This includes providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• plans and procedures to ensure risks are minimised, removed or managed to protect tamariki and rangatahi from harm• suitable and safe facilities and equipment• sports activities that adhere to the correct technique and skills• an environment of respect and fairness. |
| <p>Indicator #2: Treat tamariki and rangatahi with dignity and respect</p> | <p>Empowering tamariki and rangatahi to contribute ideas to decisions about the planning and implementation of sports and active recreation programmes increases the likelihood of their engagement and participation in the activities. To improve the quality of their experience, good practice involves creating an environment where tamariki and rangatahi are at the centre and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• different social and cultural perspectives are recognised and valued• all tamariki and rangatahi are equal and accepted regardless of ability, ethnicity, socio-economic situation, or gender• the stresses and challenges of tamariki and rangatahi lives are treated with sensitivity. |
| <p>Indicator #3: Model good behaviour and values</p> | <p>Tamariki and rangatahi can learn and develop positive values and attitudes towards sports and active recreation through their experiences as a participant. Good practice sports programmes foster this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• modelling expectations of behaviours for tamariki and rangatahi, parents/caregivers, coaches, supporters and officials• encourage positive participation by parents/caregivers• discuss winning and success from the perspective of tamariki and rangatahi. Research shows focussing on competition and early specialisation is detrimental. |

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| <p>Indicator #4: Collaborate with other providers to ensure consistent approaches</p> | <p>Programme delivery is enhanced by regular communication with school and club sports providers and by adopting consistent approaches to sports and active recreation. Closer links can be fostered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing resources • joint policy development • shared facility use. <p>Benefits for tamariki and rangatahi include the consistent application of rules, and smooth transitions between school and club, and club and club programmes.</p> |
| <p>Indicator #5: Participation determined by age, stage and readiness</p> | <p>Developmental age and stage, and the concept of readiness, play an important part in determining when tamariki or rangatahi should start to play or progress in sport and active recreation activities. Good practice includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basing readiness on an assessment of the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of tamariki or rangatahi • emphasising the development and mastery of individual and team skills and fostering positive attitudes and values associated with 'good' sport • considering the sports development pathways and learning required at each stage of participants' development. |
| <p>Indicator #6: Adapt activities to match the ability and needs of tamariki and rangatahi</p> | <p>Adult versions of sports may be imposed on tamariki and rangatahi which can be inappropriate for participants' age and level of development. Equipment can be too big, there may be too much practice time expected and rules can be too complicated. Activities may need to be modified to encourage participation by tamariki and rangatahi. The approach should be to emphasis fun, participation and skill development over competition, with an aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenge tamariki and rangatahi yet ensure safety of play • encourage tamariki and rangatahi to try a range of sports and develop a wide range of skills • provide an appropriate amount of activity that matches the needs of tamariki and rangatahi. |
| <p>Indicator #7: Inclusive and participatory evaluation practices</p> | <p>Good practice includes making time to consider and understand what is working and what can be improved, and to adapt and evolve. It is important to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek feedback from tamariki and rangatahi on their experiences with sports and active recreation activities • shape and re-shape programme design and ways of working based on feedback from tamariki and rangatahi and other appropriate stakeholders • collect data that demonstrates the impact of the sports programme and the difference it makes to tamariki and rangatahi lives • share findings to demonstrate successes and lessons learned. |

Demonstrating Good Practice

When seeking funding for tamariki and rangatahi sports or active recreation programmes, community organisations should describe how the proposed initiatives align with the seven indicators of good practice. Many funders expect to see evidence of:

- plans and procedures for keeping tamariki and rangatahi safe from harm
- how the organisation incorporates age and stage of development into programme design
- how tamariki and rangatahi have been involved in shaping the programme and their opportunity for future participation
- the values that underpin the programme and strategies to implement them
- how the programme connects to and works with other providers, resources and programmes
- how the programme will engender a positive attitude towards sport amongst participants and their families and whanau.

Key Questions:

Can We Strengthen our Sports Programme Practice?

- Is our organisation familiar with the Sport NZ Good Practice Principles and the Balance is Better website?
- Have we considered how we meet the needs of diverse tamariki and rangatahi?
- Are we providing tamariki and rangatahi with a safe, respectful, consistent and inclusive environment?
- Are the activities that we provide appropriate to our tamariki and rangatahi and their stage of development?
- How will we emphasise fun, participation and skills development amongst tamariki and rangatahi?
- Do we have feedback mechanisms for tamariki and rangatahi taking part in our programmes?

Key Resources for More Information

- 1 Good Practice Principles: Children and Young People in Sport and Recreation** (Sport New Zealand, 2014):
sportnz.org.nz/media/2012/good-practice-principles-for-the-provision-of-sport-and-recreation-for-young-people.pdf
 - 2 Examples of Good Practice Principles: Children and Young People and in Sport and Recreation** (Sport New Zealand, 2014):
sportnz.org.nz/media/2013/examples-good-practice-principles-for-the-provision-of-sport-and-recreation-for-young-people.pdf
 - 3 Balance is Better: The Home of Youth Sport in New Zealand, Sport New Zealand.** The Balance is Better website promotes quality experiences for all young people to keep them active and in the game. The website provides information for parents, coaches, leaders and administrators and offers a series of webinars.
www.balanceisbetter.org.nz
 - 4 Mana Taiohi: A principles based framework that informs the way people who work with young people tamariki and rangatahi work in Aotearoa** (Ara Taiohi):
www.arataiohi.org.nz/mana-taiohi/#principles
 - 5 Addressing the decline in sport participation in secondary schools: Findings from the Youth Participation Research Project** (Australian Sports Commission, 2017):
sportaus.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/678687/34896_Youth_participation_project-full_report_acc2.pdf
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Case study:

Youth Sports: Good Practice



Sport Tasman is one of 17 Regional Sports Trusts across Aotearoa. It exists to get 'More People, More Active, More Often' throughout the top of the South Island. Recent trends have shown a big drop-off in sports and active recreation participation, especially amongst 15-17 year olds. As a result, Sport Tasman are moving away from the traditional, competitive sports model towards a broader emphasis on wellbeing, fun, movement and active recreation.

One of the initiatives to emerge from Sport Tasman's refocus has been Kōhina Māia, a three-year programme aiming to get more girls aged 12-18 into sport and active recreation. The initiative demonstrates good practice by:

- addressing barriers to participation such as lack of confidence, an overly competitive environment, and skewed gender ratios
- providing a range of activities – from traditional sports like volleyball, to skating, mountain biking, yoga and health food workshops
- emphasising fun, being comfortable and making friends.

For more information on Sport Tasman and Kōhina Māia, visit: www.sporttasman.org.nz

This good practice resource was developed in 2021 by: