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:

**Barriers**

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

**Facilitators**

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

**Individual**

- Lack of support from family, peers, and teachers

**Interpersonal**

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

**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

**Adolescents who do not meet World Health Organization recommendations for PA (at least an average of 60 min/day moderate-to-vigorous intensity PA)**

- Girls: 84.7%
- Boys: 77.6%
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 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.

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