



# UEFA Playmakers Project Literature Review

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This review has been completed on behalf of UEFA by the Carnegie School of Sport at Leeds Beckett University (UK).

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## Executive Summary

This literature review was commissioned by UEFA to develop an evidence base for the forthcoming Playmakers Project. It is intended that the research and insight gathered as part of this exercise will inform programme design, content and delivery. It is also the starting point for a UEFA girls and women's football research and evidence partnership.

As well as the literature review, an international scoping exercise of best practice in sport programmes for women and girls was undertaken. In total, 27 examples of good practice were identified with key features of these programmes highlighted. These included: programme goals, target audience, recruitment and delivery strategies, and impact.

The literature review was structured around the following themes:

### Benefits and Challenges of Girls Participation in Football

In the main, the literature reviewed shows positive outcomes from participating in sport and physical activity during childhood and adolescence. Amongst other, these include:

- Increased educational attainment and employment prospects.
- Increased likelihood of being physically active as an adult.
- Enhanced health and wellbeing.
- Development of life and social skills.

Despite the well-known benefits, it is also clear from the evidence that women and girls' participation in physical activity is lower than that of men and boys. Global statistics showcase that 84% of girls under the age of 17 are not meeting the WHO minimum activity guidelines (WHO, n.d.). Similar findings have been published in European settings, with boys aged 15-24 twice as likely to regularly participate in sport than girls the same age (European Commission for Education, Sport, Youth and Culture, 2018).

It would appear that these statistics can be linked to a number of challenges experienced by women and girls. For example, many sports, including football, are seen as masculine pursuits, where characteristics associated with men and boys - competitiveness, strength and aggression - are highly valued. This traditional positioning of football as a masculine space, makes it undesirable for women and girls to engage in the sport (Norman, 2016). These kinds of belief systems are instilled in girls from an early age, with games like football continuing to be offered unquestioningly as part of boys' Physical Education, yet not the norm for girls (Paetcher, 2003). Yet, we must also recognise that women and girls are not all the same. For example, the work of Ahmad (2011) and Hamzeh (2015) calls attention to the ways in which the hijab ban has excluded some Muslim women and girls from playing football. Different age groups and girls with disabilities will also face different sets of challenges and needs when taking up football.

## **Girls' Needs, Influences and Motivators to take part in Football**

In relation to girls' needs more broadly, the review shows that a focus on fun and enjoyment is a primary reason for getting involved in sport at a young age (Allender et al., 2006; McCalpin et al., 2017; Yungblut et al., 2012). Conversely, competition and highly structured activities are identified as demotivating for young children and girls (Allender et al., 2006; Casey et al., 2014; Farmer et al., 2018). This is an important distinction from the motivations of adults. Perhaps more importantly, it is worth noting that it is often the motivations of adult stakeholders (coaches, policy makers, initiative drivers, parents) that are prioritised over those of the young participants.

Another critical need to facilitate involvement in football is the functional and emotional support of parents (Allender et al., 2006; Knight et al., 2011). However, parental actions and behaviour (coaching from the side lines, arguing with officials, an emphasis on winning) can also negatively impact a young girl's enjoyment (Knight et al., 2011; Goodman and James, 2017). The importance of peer relationships also should not be underestimated because of the assistance, positive feedback, encouragement and social experience they afford (McCalpin et al., 2017; Yungblut et al., 2012). The notion of friendship as an effective promotional tool to encourage new girls to attend football sessions should be noted (Schaillee et al., 2017).

A further issue highlighted within the literature is that it is often the environment that girls are expected to play football in that is the problem – not the girls themselves (Kirk and Oliver, 2014). Two linked and problematic environmental factors which are influential in girls' decision to participate include:

- Girls-only or mixed sex settings, and
- Competitive environments.

For girls who define themselves as sporty, mixed classes are often preferred as they provide opportunities for them to improve at a faster rate by playing against boys (Casey et al., 2014). However, for the majority of girls, this is not the case, with single-sex spaces favoured. This is linked to girls' concerns regarding teasing from boys, and boys' domination of the activity – i.e. not passing to the girls and marginalising their involvement (Casey et al., 2014; Oliver and Hamzeh, 2010).

The notion of competition and other kinds of performance-based outcomes is the other recurring issue contributing to exclusionary environments for girls. As previously identified, the primary motivation for many young girls participating in football is fun and enjoyment, yet traditional competitive sporting environments may suppress this aspect (Spencer-Cavalier et al., 2017).

## **Coaching Strategies to Engage Girls in Football**

Finally, other aspects to consider in creating a positive environment for girls' participation in football relate to the coaching strategies adopted by the coach. One such strategy involves the use of storytelling and imaginative play. This outlook reflects the need for coaches to adapt their coaching in ways that support co-constructing activities with their participants and opportunities for free-play activities. More recent research has begun to address concerns regarding the lack of consultation

with participants, asking girls themselves for the reasons behind their non-engagement. Moreover, these researchers have adopted an approach that places the girls at the heart of research, working with them to create more positive physical environments to enable them to take part (Enright and O'Sullivan, 2010).

Coaches should, therefore, also be encouraged to move away from creating ego-orientated environments to ones that are more task focused, where individual learning, effort and improvement are celebrated through positive reinforcement. Central to this will be coaches who are willing to listen to their participants, critically reflect on their practice, and move away from more traditional views of the coach-participant relationship. However, regardless of who is doing the coaching, the ways in which coaches are trained is also a crucial aspect to consider. Norman (2016) identifies coach education as a significant factor in coaches' ability to work with both men and women (and boys and girls) in sport. Importantly, she argues for coaching courses to move beyond a one-size-fits all approach to working with athletes, and begin to consider their background and identity, including their gender (Norman, 2016).

### **Scoping Exercise of International Best Practice**

The scoping review of 27 local, national and international examples of good practice highlighted that effective sports programmes for women and girls should consider the following:

- Whole community approaches that recognise the importance of considering the needs of, and collaborating with parents, friends, teachers, coaches and community workers.
- Removing barriers of cost, transport, kit, equipment, prejudice, stereotypes and negative attitudes.
- Promoting fun through non-competitive games and/or storytelling.
- Education of key issues that affect young women and girls' lives e.g. peer pressure, sexual health, grooming, body issues, pregnancy.
- Offering a broad and varied range of activities.
- Recognising girls as experts in their needs and encouraging them to help design, deliver and evaluate programmes.
- Developing girls to become role models, leaders and mentors for future programmes.
- Offer activities that develop skills that enable young women and girls to take control of their lives - confidence, self-esteem, resilience, leadership, communication and empowerment.

### **Overall Key Issues for Programme Design, Delivery and Promotion**

Based on the literature review and scoping exercise of best practice a number of key issues that stakeholders should consider when designing, delivering and promoting football programmes for young girls have been identified.

Designing the Programme	<b>Session Plans:</b> important to stress the need for flexibility and not force coaches to follow these to the letter, but to adapt based on participants.
	<b>Coach Education/Training:</b> include more than just 'what' to coach – what are the challenges girls face? How can coaches create a task-oriented environment? How can they encourage ownership?
	<b>Child-Centred Design:</b> Is the programme designed around an adult-centric view of fun? What does fun look like to a 5-8 year old girl? Consider ways to get their input into the session design.
	<b>Consider Exit Routes:</b> – how does this 8-week programme translate into club football? Are clubs/coaches involved in delivery? Are the sessions hosted at a club? Do the club coaches know about the importance of fun/ownership? Or will the girls be faced with the 'same old' challenges once they join a club?
Delivering the Programme	<b>Coach Flexibility:</b> Importance of striking a balance between 'following the guide' and coaching what is in front of you.
	<b>Child-Centred Pedagogy:</b> Understand the need for ownership and empowerment – what does the coach want it to look like, and what do the girls want it to look like? These may be different.
Evaluating the Programme	<b>Research Gap:</b> Use this programme to conduct research into 5-8-year old girls in football – address research gap(s).
	<b>Evaluation Methods:</b> Consider how the programme is evaluated – are the focus and methods adult or child-centric?
Future research	Very little research has been conducted with girls aged 5-8 in football, physical activity and sport settings.
	Recognise challenges relating to gender that girls have to overcome in order to engage in sport and football contexts.
	Understand differences between girls and across European contexts. Different challenges and opportunities will arise when working in different places, with different people.



## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Aim of the Review**

This literature review was commissioned by UEFA to develop an evidence base for the Playmakers Project. This is intended to inform programme design, content and delivery and be a starting point for a UEFA girls and women's football research and evidence partnership. Building on the findings of an existing internally produced literature review, the current literature review will focus on the following priority areas:

- Benefits and challenges of girls' participation in sport/football
- Needs, influences and motivations for girls to take part in sport/football
- Features of positive environments for girls in sport/football
- Benefits and key methodologies linked to imagination-based play/storytelling in sport/football coaching
- General optimal approaches and coaching behaviours to engage girls in sport/football
- Identification of existing examples of best practice in engaging 5 to 8 year-old girls in sport/football

### **1.2 Methodology**

To complete this literature review, the project team followed a Narrative Review methodology. A Narrative Review aims to identify and summarise what has been previously published around an area or areas of knowledge in order to build a coherent narrative for a particular field. Narrative Reviews evaluate the extent and strength of existing evidence and identify areas where further research is needed. The process of finding and assessing literature for inclusion was as follows:

- First, the team identified a number of key search terms linked to the above six focus areas (appendix A) and key academic databases, namely Academic Search Complete, Medline, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, SportDiscus and ERIC.
- Second, we followed a process of initial reviewing, whereby titles and abstracts were read to rule out any papers which were deemed to not be relevant;
- Finally, we saved selected papers for further analysis.

### **1.3 Parameters of the Review**

The initial searches showcased that there is a dearth of specific research on girls aged 5-8 in football, and indeed girls aged 5-8 generally in relation to broader sport and physical activity. In order to ensure sufficient papers were reviewed, our research team attempted to unearth guiding evidence in related fields and populations. As such, additional searches encompassing literature from physical activity, leisure, recreation and physical education were included. Where appropriate, we also included literature which focused on older girls' participation. In this way, the resultant literature review will be as complete as it can be given the current state of development of the field in question.

## 2. Benefits and Challenges of Girls' Participation in Sport/Football

### 2.1 Section Aims

The World Health Organisation (WHO, n.d.) defines physical activity as bodily movement which requires energy expenditure. They further identify different subgroups of physical activity including exercise, physical education in schools, and playing sport. Of the research reviewed, very little specifically considers the benefits of playing football. However, the evidence base regarding the benefits of leading a physically active lifestyle is overwhelming. As such, evidence provided here is drawn more broadly from physical activity research, with specific links to football where possible. Literature reviewed shows positive outcomes relating to health and wellbeing, life and social skills, and education and employment. Despite the well-known benefits, it is also clear from the evidence that women and girls' participation in physical activity is lower than that of men and boys.

To begin to explain this situation, this section of the literature review will discuss the macro-level challenges that act as barriers for girls' participation in physical activity with a focus on sport, and where possible, football. Introducing gender as a sociological concept, the review team will show how constructions of masculinity and femininity link to sport and maintain football as a 'boy's game'. Second, it will discuss the links between football and school-based PE, an important connection considering the focus on 5-8 year olds. Finally, the concept of 'intersectionality' will be introduced as it highlights individual differences between girls. This is useful in signposting how participation in sport/football can be influenced by different sets of challenges for different girls.

### 2.2 What are the benefits of girls participating in football, sport and physical activity?

This section will begin by reviewing the wide-ranging benefits of sport participation: health and wellbeing, Positive Youth Development (PYD), and outcomes relating to education and employment. We draw upon policy documents, official guidelines and academic literature in order to illustrate the range of benefits. Consistent throughout all this work is the understanding that participation in physical activity as a child has long standing benefits (WHO, 2010; Sport England, 2016), not least because being physically active throughout childhood increases the likelihood of long-term participation into adulthood (Pfeiffer, et al., 2006). Whilst not all of this work specifically focuses on the age group 5-8, it considers the benefits of physical activity in youth and childhood for those under the age of 18.

#### 2.2.1 Education and Employment

Traditionally, the focus of the benefits of sport and physical activity for girls has been placed on health and wellbeing (see section 2.2.2.) Whilst of course important, recent research has strongly signalled the benefits of participation associated with educational outcomes and better long-term employment prospects. Many of these benefits are underpinned by the power of sport to facilitate personal development, what has been referred to as Positive Youth Development (PYD, see section 2.2.3). A key underlying belief of a PYD approach is that it enables young people to successfully transition into adulthood and become engaged and productive members of society (Santos et al.,

2017). Skills such as teamwork, leadership, self-confidence, communication and autonomy are of course valuable and required to achieve success in educational settings. This point is also raised by Sport England (2016) in relation to grades and attainment, attendance and engagement within the classroom. A study by Stevenson (2008) illustrates the links between sports participation throughout school and long-term employment prospects. Looking at the impact of Title IX<sup>1</sup> in the USA, Stevenson (2008) equated the rise in girls' sports participation with higher attendance at college and higher labour force participation. Furthermore, she associated the introduction of Title IX to the increase of women in previously male-dominated and/or highly skilled occupations (Stevenson, 2008). Sport England (2016) has since reinforced these findings in a UK context, stating that activity has positive impacts on greater employment opportunities, earnings, job performance and job satisfaction

### 2.2.2 Health and Wellbeing

As previously mentioned, there is a longstanding awareness of the wide-ranging physical and mental health benefits of leading an active lifestyle. A well-established physical outcome is the contribution to maintaining a healthy weight (WHO, n.d.; Sport England, 2016). Obesity is rising globally and is a key focus for national and international health organisations (WHO, n.d.). Telford et al. (2016) demonstrated that girls who participate in sport during adolescence have less body fat than their inactive peers, showcasing the positive influence of sport in reducing obesity. Further benefits include the reduction in the prevalence of a variety of diseases and health issues including hypertension, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and various types of cancer (WHO, n.d.).

In addition, there is also an increasing awareness of the positive influence of sport and physical activity on a person's mental health. Sport England (2016) identify that regular activity can reduce anxiety and depression and can help emotional regulation. Girls aged 11-13 in a study by Sackett et al. (2018) identified that physical activity, or a lack of, can have direct implications for both their physical and emotional wellbeing. As a consequence of the connection between physical activity and physical and mental health, minimum recommended guidelines for physical activity levels during childhood (age 5 to 17) have been produced - 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day (WHO, 2010).

### 2.2.3 Positive Youth Development

Sport as a tool for children and young people's personal development has received increasing attention over the last three decades (Rauscher and Cooky, 2016). Its capacity to be an experience that grows positive attitudes and behaviours has been regularly emphasised. This review has identified three related, yet distinct major research and implementation streams, namely Sport For Development (SFD), Life-Skills Development (LSD) and Positive Youth Development (PYD). SFD is broadly defined as encompassing programmes that use "sport as a tool for development and peace which aim to maximise the potential of sport as a tool to reach personal, community, national and international development objectives." (Sport and Development, 2019). LSD typically focused on the capacity for sport to teach youth essential skills needed to successfully negotiate the demands of

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<sup>1</sup> Title IX is a federal law in the USA which prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions. In relation to sport and athletics, men and women are required to receive equal funding and support.

everyday life (Gould and Carson, 2008; Hodge and Danish, 1999). Finally, PYD has emerged recently as a broader field than LSD focusing on the contribution that sport can make to foster positive and developmental behaviours and attitudes in young people which will allow them to thrive and transition successfully into young adulthood (Benson, 1997; Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas and Lerner, 2005).

Throughout these three schools of thought, a large body of research has contributed to identifying key personal development outcomes attained through sport. For example, in order to develop leadership and teamwork skills, participants involved in an urban dance programme were allowed to choose the dance styles they were taught (Schaillee, et al., 2017). By giving young people ownership over the activity, a sense of autonomy and control was fostered amongst the participants. In other examples, young people have developed communication skills by working closely in teams (Armour and Sandford, 2013; Vierimaa et al., 2017) and self-confidence through setting and reaching personal goals (Gruno et al., 2018). While these examples are not specifically from football settings, parallels can be drawn. For example, the benefits of team-based activities (Armour and Sandford, 2013) can be applied to football. In each example given above, sport or activity sessions were set up specifically to develop young people in a range of ways, over and above physical and mental health benefits.

Recently, Lara-Bercial (2018) reviewed all the proposed outcomes in the existing global literature to develop and refine a comprehensive framework by testing it in a real-life context. The framework contains six areas of development:

1. **Development of the Self:** i.e., positive identity, sense of hope and purpose and self-confidence/belief.
2. **Social Development:** i.e., interpersonal skills, sense of belonging, social capital, cooperation skills, leadership and a broader worldview.
3. **Emotional Development:** i.e., emotional literacy, emotional wellbeing/mental health and emotional control.
4. **Cognitive Development:** i.e., higher school attainment, enhanced learning capacity, improved decision-making and higher communication skill.
5. **Moral Development:** respect for oneself and others and moral decision-making.
6. **Life Skills and Opportunities:** i.e, work ethic, time management, broadened horizons and job prospects.

Despite this positive outlook on the “power of sport”, some researchers have openly challenged the uncritical belief that sport is a universal panacea that can be used to cure all ailments of society. For instance, Coalter has repeatedly stressed that sport is no “magic bullet” (Coalter, 2007, 2013) and that it only serves as a container of developmental experiences. It is the nature of those experiences, and more importantly, the social processes driving them that appear to make the difference and determine whether sport is transformative or not (Coalter, 2013).

Sport sociologists have expressed concern at the “unquestioned beliefs grounded in wishful thinking” (Coakley, 2011, p. 308) about the power of sport and the naïve and unsophisticated understanding of personal development adopted by policy and programme developers (Bailey, 2006; Hartmann &

Kwak, 2011). These so called “sport evangelists” (Giulanotti, 2004) offer an unproblematic and simplistic view of sport and its ‘*organic*’ ability to affect personal growth. In overestimating the power of sport, the evangelists confuse rhetoric with evidence (Spaaij, 2012) and turn a blind eye to “the scale of the challenges” and the fact that “sport requires synergy with broader elements to have a real impact” (Hartmann & Kwak, 2011, p. 298). Lara-Bercial (2018), however, highlighted the nature of sport as an “attention-grabbing” tool and catalyst for personal development because of the organic pull it exerts over young people. In other words, what happens during football matters and has the potential to transcend sport and filter into other areas of life.

Therefore, provision of football activities in school by itself will not likely lead to the desired developmental outcomes, unless such provision contains certain elements. Lara-Bercial (2018) analysed existing literature and condensed these elements into eight determinants of impact:

1. A positive programme atmosphere and culture
2. A community orientation
3. Available resources/assets
4. Interpersonal relationships
5. Intentional programming/planning
6. Quality of activities
7. Individual support
8. Sufficient time in the environment

The various incarnations of the Playmakers Programme across the 55 countries, whilst adapting to their specific circumstances and culture, must consider these elements to maximise the chances of positive outcomes.

The review, however, also highlights the dearth of research specific to grassroots football and moreover to the school environment. Some exceptions include the work of Mossman and Cronin (2019) and Cope et al. (2017). However, most of the work in football in this area has taken place in performance development settings (i.e., football academies). This includes studies such as Harwood et al. (2015), or Gledhill et al. (2017). Therefore, a central recommendation to UEFA is the promotion and funding of further research regarding football as a tool for personal development in grassroots environments.

### **2.3 What challenges do girls have to participate in football, sport and physical activity?**

Despite the well-known benefits of sport and physical activity, as outlined above, there is also an evidence base that shows that girls (and women) are less active than boys (and men). Global statistics showcase that 84% of girls under the age of 17 are not meeting the WHO minimum activity guidelines (WHO, n.d.). Similar findings have been published in European settings, with boys aged 15-24 twice as likely to regularly participate in sport than girls the same age (European Commission, 2018). In the UK, only 8% of girls aged 5-18 meet the guidelines, compared to 16% of boys (Women in Sport, 2017). The following section will discuss some macro challenges associated with girls’ lack of participation in sport, and football.



### 2.3.1 Gender and Sport

The terms gender and sex are often conflated. While sex refers to the biological and physiological differences between men and women, gender can be understood as a set of socially constructed beliefs about masculinity and femininity (Carrington and Williams, 1988; Evans, 1993; Paetcher, 2006). In many respects, masculinity and femininity are constructed as polar opposites: masculinity is often linked with strength, rationality and confidence, whereas femininity is often associated with fragility, emotions and insecurity (Schippers, 2007). This can have very real effects within the sporting landscape (Clark, 2012; Norman, 2016). Many sports, including football, are seen as a masculine domain, where characteristics such as skill, competitiveness, strength and aggression are highly valued. This traditional positioning of football as a masculine space, creates barriers for women who wish to play or coach this sport (Norman, 2016). For example, engaging in masculine pursuits and developing masculine characteristics is viewed as undesirable (Clark, 2012). Despite recent advances within football, it continues to be an activity more closely associated with men and masculinity, both in terms of stereotypes and infrastructure (Caudwell, 2011; Stride et al., 2017).

### 2.3.2 Football and Physical Education

A major challenge to increasing the number of women and girls involved in football, is that football is not an isolated site or context. Ideas regarding masculinity and the appropriateness of particular activities for girls and boys are pervasive across different spaces in children's lives. Of particular importance for this review is the context of Physical Education (PE). For many young people, PE is a significant (and for some, the only) setting for their participation in sport in their formative years (Hay and MacDonald, 2010). This is especially important for the 5-8 age group, as PE will be experienced regularly throughout the school week. However, alongside learning physical skills, PE contexts are crucial sites where young people learn about gender behaviours and appropriate activities (Beltran-Carillo et al., 2012). This is exemplified in the continued practice of offering particular activities to boys and other activities to girls. Games like football continue to be offered unquestioningly as part of boys' PE, yet this is not the norm for girls (Paetcher, 2003). In other studies, teachers have been shown to assume that boys will be naturally better at PE and so spend more of their time and attention on them (Fagrell et al., 2012; Van Doodewaard and Knoppers, 2016). These powerful messages conveyed to girls within PE, extend beyond the school space. The unintended outcome is often an unwillingness to engage with football (and other activities) away from school (Fagrell et al., 2012)

### 2.3.3 Intersectionality

The work of Crenshaw (1989; 1990) has evolved academic and practitioner thinking regarding the uniqueness of individuals, their circumstances, and their experiences. Importantly, Crenshaw drew attention to the way differences within groups of people are often ignored. Of specific relevance to this literature review, is the need to be cognisant of differences within and between groups of girls. For example, the work of Ahmad (2011) and Hamzeh (2015) calls attention to the ways in which structural barriers, namely the hijab ban, have excluded some Muslim women from playing football. Stride et al. (2018) contends that a major failing of policy and practice is the continued viewing of women as a homogenous group. This results in overlooking the variety of barriers that different girls

and women experience. This intersectional understanding is crucial for UEFA's PlayMakers Project when considering the pan-European context. For example, the Eurobarometer report commissioned by the European Commission (2018) highlights differences in participation levels across different European countries, which may indicate different challenges and opportunities for girls.

## **2.4 Summary – Benefits and Challenges of Girl's Participation**

Please see table 1 overleaf.

Finding	Implications for the UEFA Playmakers Project
Participation in sport and physical activity at a young age significantly increases the likelihood of being physically active in later life.	Ensuring coaches, clubs, parents and other stakeholders understand that football at this stage is but a vehicle to foster a lifelong love of physical activity and sport. Learning to play football should not be priorities over all other outcomes.
Youth participation in sport has a range of physical and mental health benefits	<p>Targeting the 5-8 age group can lead to long term benefits and lifelong participation</p> <p>Consider evaluating the specific health benefits to girls aged 5-8 engaged in the project</p>
Sport has PYD associations	<p>Consider how the programme can embed principles of PYD to enhance the benefits for the participants</p> <p>Consider including these characteristics in any form of monitoring and evaluation to assess the broader impact of the project</p>
Gender is socially constructed – football is closely linked to masculinity	<p>Understand the challenges that girls face in entering a masculine sphere</p> <p>Consider including elements of this learning in coach education/training for this project</p> <p>Consider ways to challenge gender stereotypes around girls in football. For example, think about the language that is used and some of the imagery included in the stories and narratives used during the delivery.</p>
Sport, football and PE are intrinsically linked	Consider ways to work with schools and PE practitioners to embed the values of the grassroots project more broadly
Intersectionality: Understand differences within and between groups of women and girls	<p>With a European wide project, there will be multiple different challenges girls face, depending on their context and personal circumstances. The project needs to account for these differences and remain flexible to meet the needs of a range of girls</p> <p>Ensure delivery staff are cognisant of the differences within and between different girls they may come across</p>

Table 1 – Summary of Benefits and Challenges of Girl’s Participation



### **3. Motivations, Needs and Influences for Girls to Take Part in Sport and Football**

#### **3.1 Section Aims**

As discussed in the previous section, there are some challenges associated with girls' engagement in sport and football. Understanding what enables their involvement is crucial for the Playmakers Project. In this section, literature will be presented that addresses what motivates girls to get involved initially, what support they need to begin participating, and other key influences.

To begin, consideration will be given to motivations, with a focus on fun and enjoyment, as extensive literature signposts this as girls' primary reason for getting involved in sport at a young age. After this, attention will focus on the needs of young girls and how parents are identified in the literature as important on daughters' involvement in sport more broadly. In the younger, pre-adolescent years girls are still reliant on parents for functional and emotional support and thus they are categorised as a 'need' here. However, the importance of peer relationships cannot be discounted. Whilst they become more significant in girls' lives as they get older, research reveals that peers and friends are a key influence in the younger ages and this is discussed last.

#### **3.2 Motivation: Fun and Enjoyment**

As explained in the first section of this report, multiple benefits have been linked to participation in sport and physical activity - physical and mental health, life skills, education and employment (WHO, n.d.; Sport England, 2016). Despite these wide-ranging benefits, research has shown that these are not in themselves prime motivators for young girls to get involved in sport and physical activity. For example, Bean et al. (2012) (with girls aged 8-11) and Goncalves et al. (2011) (with women aged 20-21, reflecting on their reasons for participating in sport as a child) identified that health benefits and expectations about the wider benefits of physical activity were not mentioned by girls as reasons for their sports participation. What does appear as a consistent and primary motivator for young children within the literature is fun and enjoyment (Allender et al., 2006; McCalpin et al., 2017; Rehrer et al., 2011; Yungblut et al., 2012).

It is important to understand, however, that the notion of "fun" is a much more nuanced and layered idea than previous literature has perhaps made it to be. Visek and colleagues (2015) have developed the Fun Integration Theory and associated FUN MAPS which offer new light into what fun involves. The crux of this research is the understanding and acceptance that fun is a multi-layered and highly individualised notion. Visek et al. identified four fundamental tenets of fun in youth sport, 11 fun dimensions and 81 specific fun determinants as shown in table 2. The implications for the UEFA Playmakers Project is to ensure that programme designers and coaches understand that creating 'fun experiences' for girls may go beyond the use of characters and stories and to ensure that the perception of each individual girl in the session as to what fun is, is respected and enhanced.

Tenet	Dimensions
Contextual	Games Practices
Internal	Learning and Improving Trying Hard Mental Bonuses
Social	Positive Team Dynamics Team Friendships Team Rituals
External	Swag Game Time Support Positive Coaching

Table 2 – Four Tenets and 11 Dimensions of Fun Integration Theory (Visek et al., 2015)

Figure 1 below shows these concepts in pictorial format.

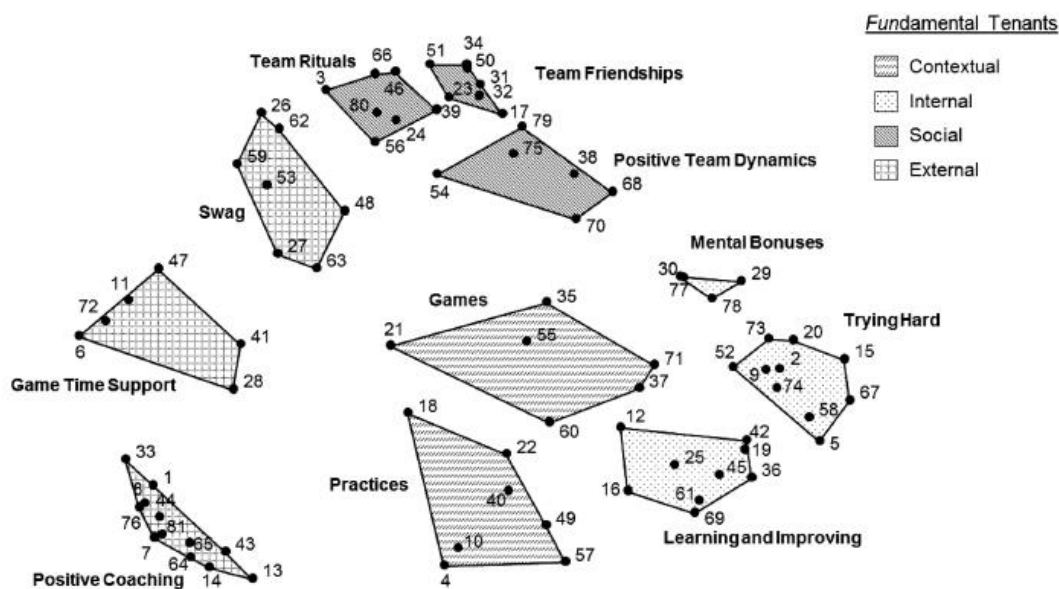


Figure 1 – Fundamental Tenets, Fun Dimensions and Fun Determinants (reproduced from Visek et al., 2015)

Conversely, competition and highly structured activities have been identified as demotivating for young children and girls (Allender et al., 2006; Brieger et al., 2015; Casey et al., 2014; Farmer et al; 2018; Sanchez-Hernandez et al., 2017). This is an important difference between children and adults. Whereas young girls are most likely to be motivated by fun and enjoyment, adults often have other

reasons for playing sport, including competition and winning (Eliasson, 2011). This phenomenon Eliasson (2011) terms as 'belonging to different sports worlds', whereby children and adults place emphasis on different aspects of the game of football. This is an important distinction to take note of for the Playmakers Project as it is often the motivations of the adult stakeholders (coaches, policy makers, initiative drivers, parents) that can be prioritised over those of the young participants. It is crucial for all adult stakeholders of the Playmakers Project to be cognisant of the fun and enjoyment motivator for young girls when planning its promotion and in the delivery of sessions.

### **3.3 Needs: Parental Support**

For girls aged 5-8 to engage in football sessions (or indeed any sport or organised physical activity), they need the support of their parent(s) or guardians. A variety of research has showcased the ways in which young girls require parents/guardians to facilitate their participation in football and sport, including functional and emotional support (Allender et al., 2006; Clark, 2012; Harwood and Knight, 2008; Knight et al., 2011).

For example, in terms of functional support Clark (2012) notes how parents are crucial in financially supporting their child(ren) and transporting them to and from different locations to play. However, it should be recognised that not all parents can support their child in these ways. Harwood and Knight's (2008) study identified that 79% of parents mentioned finances as a stressor in relation to their child's participation. Similarly, Allender et al. (2006) identified cost and lack of access to facilities as a key barrier for parents who wish to support their children. Other functional support from parents that has been identified in the research includes helping them pack their kit and providing them with adequate refreshments for the session (Knight et al., 2011). These are important considerations for organisers of sporting initiatives such as the Playmakers Project to take into account when deciding upon venues, resources, sessions and costs.

Another aspect of parental aid is the emotional support they provide their child. Whilst this type of support is recognised as important for all children, Phillips and Awotidebe (2015) found it more important for girls than boys (with a sample aged 15-18). Examples of positive emotional support include encouragement and praising effort (Knight et al., 2011), providing unconditional support and fostering self-belief (Ross et al., 2015), and being involved and interested in the child's chosen activity or sport (Atkins et al., 2011). Another important aspect of parental support is the notion of role models. Research demonstrates that parents who themselves are active can be an inspiration for their children. For example, Flintoff and Scraton's (2001) study identified that children with active parents were more likely to be active throughout their childhood and adolescence. In a more recent study, girls (aged 12-16) also described how their active parents inspired them to be active (Satija et al., 2018). Collumbien et al. (2019) view parents as critical agents of change in facilitating their child's involvement in physical activity both in and outside the home.

A point to note, however, is that parents are more likely to support their child's sport participation in both functional and emotional ways, if they recognise and understand the benefits of physical activity (Phillips and Awotidebe, 2015). As such, whilst the broader benefits of sport and physical activity are not key motivators for girls themselves, they are significant selling points for getting parents to encourage their daughters into a physically active lifestyle.

Although the importance of parental support is the main focus here, it would be remiss to not mention that extensive research also addresses how some parental actions and behaviour can negatively impact a young girl's enjoyment of sport and football. For example, Knight et al. (2011) found that during team games such as football, girls disliked parents drawing attention to themselves or their child. This can occur through parents attempting to coach from the side lines and/or arguing with officials. Similarly, Ross et al. (2015) identify other negative behaviours including putting too much pressure on the child, becoming over-involved, and/or focusing on winning or performative outcomes as being off putting for children. Significantly, research by Goodman and James (2017) in youth football highlights how parents underestimate the amount of times they engage in behaviours which are perceived as negative by their children. These problematic behaviours are beginning to be recognised more within football, and programmes/interventions are being developed to counteract them - for example, The FA's 'We Only Do Positive' during the 2018/19 season highlighting the importance of positivity from parents and coaches (The FA, 2018a).

### **3.4 Influence: Peer Support**

Goncalves et al. (2012) identify parental support as the key influencer during a girls' pre-adolescence years, whilst friends and peers become more important during adolescence (Light and Yasaki, 2017). However, despite being less influential than parents during the ages of 5 and 8, friendship is still a recurring theme within research. For example, Bean et al. (2012) showcase the importance of social support in sustaining an active lifestyle, and Light and Yasaki (2017) highlight friendship as a specific influence in girls' (age 13-16) continued participation in team sports. Relatedly, Keathley et al. (2013) found that girls aged 15-17 (more so than boys) perceived football to be a social experience, with McCalpin et al. (2017) highlighting friendships as a fundamental reason for girls (age 8-11) to play football.

Yungblut et al. (2012) have elaborated on why friendships are important during activities, identifying the positive peer support girls can offer each other, namely, assistance, positive feedback, and encouragement. Whilst the girls in this study were aged 12-18, they were reflecting back on earlier sporting experiences, the enablers to continued participation, and factors that made them drop out. Having existing friends present was also helpful in making the girls more comfortable and hence confident whilst enabling the fun element to be a priority because of the existing social dynamics (Yungblut et al., 2012). Research by Stride et al. (2018) which similarly asked adult women to reflect back on their early experiences of football, highlights the value of friendships in facilitating participation in football at a young age.

In addition to drawing upon existing friendships, creating new friendships is also a key factor in girls' initial and continued participation. For example, a study by Farmer et al. (2018) focused on girls taking part in 'Gaelic4Girls' - an intervention aimed at 8-12-year-old girls. 90% of the girls identified 'making new friends' as one of their primary reasons for engaging in the programme in the first place. The notion of friendship as an effective promotional tool to encourage new girls to attend was also reported by Schaillee et al. (2017). For their dance sessions, one of their most effective recruitment strategies was word-of-mouth through the girls themselves who would then bring their friends and hence new participants to the sessions.

However, as with parents, research has also shown that peers and friends can also be problematic. Jeanes (2011) found that within football settings some girls would regulate the performances of others. For example, one girl who constantly shouted at her teammates during the games was treated differently because she was 'playing like a boy'. This resulted in her becoming more subdued in subsequent sessions. Similarly, Clark and Paetcher (2007) note that girls who demonstrate a physicality more closely associated with masculinity are regarded negatively by their classmates. These self-policing behaviours link back to notions of acceptable femininities. Eliasson (2011) explains that young football players will set up social parameters for the kinds of behaviour that they deem acceptable. In the case of the research by Jeanes (2011) and Clark and Paetcher (2007), these parameters are clearly gendered. Whilst it is generally deemed acceptable, and even desirable, for boys to be competitive, demonstrative, aggressive and physical, this is less so for girls. Thus, it is important for coaches and facilitators of sessions to be cognisant of these potential challenges amongst girls and their peers so they can be pro-active in challenging these stereotypes.

In summary, whilst parents are critical in some regards to daughters' involvement in sport and physical activity, the influence of peer relationships during sessions cannot be underestimated. Consequently, the importance of peer support cannot be overlooked for the target group of the Playmakers Project.

### **3.5 Summary – Girls' Motivations, Needs and Influence**

Please see table 3 overleaf.

Finding	Implications for the UEFA Playmakers Project
Girls key motivation is fun and enjoyment	<p>Consider this when designing sessions. What does 'fun' look like for girls aged 5-8? We would recommend actively getting their opinions, rather than assuming (as adults) we know what fun looks like.</p> <p>Use this in advertising and promotion</p>
Parents act as role models	<p>Potential to actively engage parents in parts of the session to act as role models for their children</p> <p>Potential to run parallel sessions for parents to also be active</p>
Parents need to understand the benefits of sport	Different marketing strategies/selling points for children and adults. Parents need to know about health, social and educational benefits to encourage them to support children financially and with transport
Parental influence can be positive or negative	<p>Potential to educate parents as part of the programme</p> <p>Be aware of negative ramifications and consider working with parents</p> <p>Consider differences between family groups and the impact this may have on participation. Link to the design of the sessions – Cost? Location? Equipment needs?</p>
Peer influence is one of the key reasons girls continue to participate in sport	<p>Allow time for girls to socialise and be with their friends</p> <p>Actively include elements of teamwork into the session e.g. small team talks or positive peer assessment</p> <p>Consider peer-based marketing e.g. bring a friend day, or money off if a friend comes with you</p>

Table 3 – Summary of Girls Motivations, Needs and Influences



## 4. Features of Positive Environments for Girls in Sport/Football

### 4.1 Section Aims

This section addresses the concept of positive (and, by association, negative) environments drawing on literature from the fields of PE, sport more broadly and football (where possible).

The first point highlighted in this section focuses upon the messages that are commonly conveyed when discussing girls' participation (and more notably, their lack of participation) in sport. Whilst these messages often suggest that it is girls that are 'a problem', more recent research challenges this belief. Rather, it suggests that it is the contexts and environments in which girls are expected to be physically active that are the issue. Therefore, it is important that practitioners are aware of the potential effects of the environment they create.

The research reviewed consistently highlights two linked environmental factors which are influential in girls' decision to participate or not:

- First, discussions are concerned with girls-only or mixed sex settings. Whilst there is buoyant debate over the merits of either approach, for girls who see themselves as beginners, or not sporty, a girls-only space is encouraged.
- Another recurring feature for positive environments concerns the notion of competition and competitive environments. As competitive environments are consistently proven to put off young girls (Bean et al., 2012; Clark, 2012; Yungblut et al., 2012), alternative approaches and modified environments are introduced.

Importantly, it is crucial for practitioners to understand that 'the problem' does not lie with individual girls, but often in environments and contexts which do not suit their needs. Moreover, the emphasis must be on the coach critically reflecting on the environment and their role in adapting it to better suit the needs of different girls.

### 4.2 The 'Same Old Story'

There has been a wealth of research, reports, interventions and strategies in sport and physical activity settings aimed at solving the problem of the lower participation of women and girls in comparison to men and boys. However, all too often it is claimed the dominant narrative emanating from these commentaries places the blame with the girls themselves (Enright and O'Sullivan, 2010; Kirk and Oliver, 2014; Oliver and Hamzeh, 2010; Stride et al., 2018). For example, many reports lead with the headlines that girls participate less and drop out at faster rates in comparison to their male peers. Whilst these statistics may be factually accurate, they are problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, these statistics only provide a partial picture of the issues. They do little to explain the reasons why these statistics are the way they are – Why do girls drop out at a quicker rate than boys? Why do girls engage in less sport than their male peers? (Flintoff et al., 2008). Relatedly, in not fully addressing the reasons behind these statistics, the second point to be made here, is that these statistics implicitly lay the blame with the girls themselves, rather than questioning whether the context, environment and/or coaching practices are the key issue (Kirk and Oliver, 2014). Indeed,

more recent research in PE has begun to address these concerns asking girls themselves for the reasons behind their non-engagement. Moreover, these researchers have adopted an approach that places the girls at the heart of the research, working with them to create more positive physical environments to enable them to take part. For example, Enright and O’Sullivan (2010) adopted a ‘Participatory Action Research’ approach in working with a group of girls in PE. By increasing their involvement in the decision-making process behind their curriculum, they reported increased ownership, engagement and enjoyment of PE. Crucially, this approach allowed the girls to unpack and critique the dominant PE structures and practices which they found troublesome (Enright and O’Sullivan, 2010).

These kinds of initiatives are committed to solving ‘the problem’ of girls’ participation through a critical reflection of the contexts and environments in which they participate. Kirk and Oliver (2014) call for researchers and practitioners alike to engage in more of this change-focused work to reject and challenge the ‘same old story’ - that is, that girls are the problem. For the Playmakers Project this message is particularly pertinent for football providers and coaches who should ensure they are aware of the various environmental factors that create the problems for girls’ engagement. Two of the most common problematic environmental factors are elaborated upon in the following two sections - mixed-sex spaces and competitive settings.

### 4.3 Girls Only Spaces

A key debate regarding girls’ participation in sport concerns the merits (and challenges) of co-educational, or mixed sex groupings, compared to boys and girls playing separately from each other. A large proportion of this research comes from within PE settings and thus this material is used to reflect the key arguments here.

For example, Casey et al. (2014) maintain that both approaches have strengths and weaknesses. For those girls who define themselves as sporty, mixed classes are often preferred as they provide opportunities for these girls to improve at a faster rate by playing against boys (Casey et al., 2014). However, for the majority of girls this is not the case, with single-sex spaces favoured. This is linked to girls’ concerns regarding teasing from boys, and boys’ domination of the activity – i.e. not passing to the girls and marginalising their involvement (Casey et al., 2014; Ennis, 1999; Oliver and Hamzeh, 2010). A host of other studies also advocate a single-sex approach for comparable reasons.

For instance, girls in research by Lopez (2019) reported feelings of intense pressure to play well when boys were present in PE spaces. Similarly, Sanchez-Hernandez et al. (2017) explored football specifically in PE, discovering that boys would dominate and limit the girls’ participation. This strategy was often attributed to beliefs about girls’ lack of skill and feminine stereotypes of frailty and weakness (Sanchez-Hernandez et al., 2017). As such, by not including the girls in play, the boys are complicit in reinforcing the assumption that girls are ‘naturally’ unsuited to playing football. Moreover, in not challenging these practices, PE teachers and coaches are missing the opportunities that mixed sex settings present to contest these beliefs.

Another issue that commonly arises for girls in mixed sex sporting spaces is the focus on their bodies. For example, Lopez (2019) has also identified that many girls feel pressure to conform to gender



ideals relating to appearance, particularly when around boys in PE. This pressure was exacerbated by girls holding each other accountable for the way they looked in front of the boys (Lopez, 2019). Other research has identified that many teachers with co-educational groups show preference towards the sporty boys, often leaving the girls feeling ignored (Beltran-Carillo et al., 2012).

Whilst it is crucial to develop sporting environments that are sensitive to girls' needs (Farmer et al., 2018), it is important to remember the earlier point made - that girls are not one homogenous group, with girls differing on many levels (age, ethnicity, religion, culture, (dis)ability, class, sexuality etc.). Returning to the work of Casey et al. (2014), the difference between the girls who enjoyed playing with boys and those who did not, was their identity as a sporty or un-sporty girl. Whilst there is a dearth of research regarding the merits of girls-only football spaces, policy and practice is beginning to consider the effects of mixed and single-sex groupings and offering both avenues for different girls. For example, in the UK 'Wildcats' centres there are girls-only sessions aimed at those aged 5-11 who have little or no experience in football (The FA, n.d.). In contrast, many girls registered to play in Regional Talent Clubs (RTCs) will play with and against boys' teams throughout the season (The FA, 2017). These types of distinctions are important to understand. As the PlayMakers Project is aiming to attract young girls who may not have experience of football into the programme, it is recommended that girls-only spaces are prioritised.

#### 4.4 Competition

The notion of competition and other kinds of performance-based outcomes is the other recurring issue contributing to exclusionary environments for girls' involvement in PE, sport and football. As previously identified, the primary motivation for many young girls participating in football is fun and enjoyment (Allender et al., 2006; McCalpin et al., 2017). However, traditional competitive sporting environments may suppress the enjoyment and fun aspect for some (Spencer-Cavalier et al., 2017). A report by the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (2012) highlighted that 45% of girls believed that sport was too competitive which acted as a barrier for their engagement. This statistic provides further evidence for the differences that exist between girls – whilst some enjoy competitive environments, others do not.

In school PE, Clark (2012) identifies that competitive spaces lead to a focus on 'talent' and 'ability'. This focus can be inherently problematic for many girls who are taught from a young age that a physicality that encompasses competitiveness, aggression and a desire to win is considered masculine. Other challenges for girls that are created by competitive environments include feeling pressure to perform well, feelings of being judged by others, and a lack of confidence in their skill level (Yungblut et al., 2012). The focus on performative outcomes in PE has also been found to increase as children progress to secondary school (Clark, 2012). Whilst this may not be an issue for girls who feel confident about their physical skills and abilities, for others it is likely to act as a deterrent from being physically active (Bean et al., 2012). Therefore, a key message for practitioners working with girls in the 5-8 age range is to develop environments where girls can build their skills and confidence in a non-threatening environment, before exposing them to competition and other practices where they feel on display and judged.

This point is further reinforced by Cote (1999) who argues that the best learning and motivational climate for children in sport often changes as they grow older. Cote's Developmental Model of Sports Participation identifies the ages of 7-12 as the 'sampling' years, with children progressing into the 'specialising' phase as they reach adolescence. Importantly, Cote et al. (2003) demarcate between 'deliberate play' and 'structured practice'. Deliberate play is understood as an activity which can be led by a child or coach alike, but the goal is fun and enjoyment, with little focus on immediate correction or improvement of specific skills. While deliberate play has obvious links with enjoyment and fun, it also builds a range of fundamental movement skills by allowing and encouraging children to experiment with different movements (Cote et al., 2003). These types of practices can be crucial in building athletic ability and confidence as children move through the sampling phase, into the specialising phase. Alternatively, structured practice is focused on improving performance and is closely monitored by coaches to correct mistakes. The overarching goal of this type of practice is skill development with a focus on competition and winning. With it being widely recognised that children in the sampling phase are primarily motivated by fun and enjoyment (Allender et al., 2006; Cote, 1999; McCalpin et al., 2017), it is recommended that the environment for the Playmakers Project should utilise 'deliberate play' approaches. Structured practice will be more useful and relevant as and when girls enter the specialising phase, where they may begin to be more motivated by competitive success (Cote, 1999).

These understandings are beginning to take hold in football spaces. For example, the FA have introduced the England DNA Foundation Phase priorities, which guide coaches working with boys and girls aged 5-11. They further split resources and teaching for children aged 5-8 and 9-11, showcasing an awareness of differences in maturation and development. Key messages of this approach include prioritising fun and enjoyment over competition and winning, the power of play, and providing a supportive environment (The FA, 2018b). These ideas are embedded within coach education courses to ensure they are transmitted to grassroots coaches across the country. This shift in emphasis is also being seen in the way youth football is structured. A study by McCalpin et al., (2017) explored modified youth soccer in Canada for girls. Changes such as smaller pitches, less players and not keeping score, meant that even when girls were playing matches against other teams, the emphasis was on their enjoyment. Many of the girls in the study stressed that the non-competitive environment and fun experienced contributed to their overall enjoyment of playing.

#### **4.5 Summary – Features of Positive Environments for Girls in Football**

Please see table 4 overleaf.

Finding	Implications for the UEFA Playmakers Project
Girls who define themselves as sporty enjoy playing sport with boys, whereas girls who are less confident prefer single-sex environments	Prioritise girls-only spaces for projects which aim to engage girls who are 'beginners'
Girls who are confident in their ability are more likely to engage in sport	Provide opportunities at a young age (5-8) for girls to develop their abilities and confidence in a non-threatening environment
Competition may put some girls off sport	<p>Consider the emphasis placed on winning and losing. Games/matches/competitions can be included without it being the sole focus</p> <p>Recognise differences between girls – some may be motivated by competition and some will be put off by it. Manage differences within groups</p>
Merits of deliberate play in the 5-8 age group	<p>Prioritise fun and enjoyment</p> <p>Consider creating a coach education guidebook which offers practical ideas and/or session plans relating to deliberate play</p> <p>Think about the long-term development of girls as football players, athletes and people rather than just specific skill development</p>
Girls are positioned as the problem for not engaging with sport and football	<p>Critically assess the structures and environment we create. Can we create a context that is relevant for girls aged 5-8?</p> <p>Engage girls in the decision-making process – what do they want/need?</p> <p>Can this project challenge and change this narrative to inspire and empower girls?</p>

Table 4 – Summary of Features of Positive Environments for Girls in Football

## 5. Imaginative Play and Storytelling

### 5.1 Section Aims

The following section introduces the idea of imaginative play and storytelling as a means of supporting positive engagement in physical activity and sport. It is noted that play is a natural activity for children and can be extremely beneficial in terms of development and learning across a range of settings. Importantly, children's 'free-play' still incorporates rules and boundaries, and so can be utilised within coaching for beneficial outcomes. For example, the use of co-constructed activities is encouraged to promote a pedagogy of imaginative play. This type of approach incorporates elements of free-play and ownership for young children, allowing creativity and originality of thought.

### 5.2 What is Imaginative Play and Storytelling

In beginning to understand the idea of imaginative play and storytelling it is first important to understand the notion of play. Johnson et al. (2005) believe play can be defined as intrinsically motivated activity where children play for their own satisfaction, learning and needs. Although adults will claim they do not engage in imaginative play, Bulkeley (2019) highlights how dreaming is imaginative play. However, imaginative play is usually a process that children naturally engage with during day and night. Indeed, play is as natural to children as it is breathing and can transcend differences in ethnicity, language, or other aspects of culture (Drewes, 2006; Russ, 2007; Schaefer and Drewes, 2011).

According to Paley (2004, p.8) imaginative play in early childhood "is the glue that binds together all other pursuits, including the early teaching of reading and writing skills". Learning4kids (2011) describe imaginative play as children role-playing and acting out various experiences they may have had or something that is of interest to them. In doing this they are experimenting with decision-making, on how to behave, and are also practicing their social skills. Furthermore, imaginary play is an essential part of the process of developing creativity during early childhood, and involves early interactions between parent and baby (O'Connor, et al., 2017). Interestingly, play can be often misunderstood. According to Stone (2017), active play may be labelled 'play' when actually it is teacher (or coach) directed and forms part of active learning which serves an important purpose, but it is not play. With this point in mind UEFA and other sports organisations perhaps need to further consider what they understand by the idea of imaginative play and the extent to which the proposed programme is really imaginative play and/or guided play.

Storylines are also part of imaginary play. Indeed, imaginary play is where children create original storylines which are embedded in their creative skills, by playing with evolving ideas and hidden fantasies (O'Connor et al., 2017). Fler (2011) has highlighted that imagination has traditionally been viewed as an activity that is fulfilled by an individual and is not shared and just contained within that individual. In contrast, imaginative play and storytelling requires original thinking and this is communicated and expressed, as opposed to being concealed (Bruce, 2004). Of course, as Norrick (2010) points out, for a story to be told, there needs to be both a storyteller and story recipient(s). Indeed, when children's agendas are followed, their storytelling may be both "richer and more ambitious" (Nicolopoulou, 1996, p.371). This in turn provides opportunities for children to begin to

understand the social world around them including their lives (Paley, 1981; Theobald, 2016), identity (Rönnlund, 2015), and culture (Perry, 2008).

### 5.3 The Benefits of Using Imaginative Play and Storytelling

Recently, Fler (2018) has argued that imaginative play is foundational for imagination in visionary learning, and therefore, play-based programmes make a key contribution to the development and learning of the child. Worryingly, Gray (2011) highlights a sharp decline in play over the past 50 years and links this to a sharp rise in psychopathology in children. According to Gray (2011, p.443) as play, especially outdoor play, has declined, “anxiety, depression, feelings of helplessness and narcissism have increased”. Furthermore, without play, children “fail to acquire the social and emotional skills necessary for healthy psychological development” (Gray, 2011, p.444). It would seem then that the physical activity related dimension of play can contribute positively to psychological health.

For some time, the benefits of outdoor play have been known and include children growing emotionally and academically by developing an appreciation for the environment, developing initiative, and acquiring an understanding of ideas such as how to use simple tools to accomplish certain tasks (Guddemi and Eriksen, 1992; Singer and Singer, 2000). It is also increasingly recognised that given the right environment for children to play, imaginative play becomes a natural process to children. Ridgers et al. (2012) observed children in a forest school<sup>2</sup> and found that the activities offered incorporated much imaginative play and this benefited the children’s learning experiences.

Interestingly, Berk (1994) found that whenever there is an imaginary situation, there are still rules made up by the children. Thus, free-play is not actually as ‘free’ as it may appear to adults. More recently, Balk (2015) has similarly argued that imaginary play is characterised by rules for behaviour that the children must follow in order to successfully act out the play scene, preparing them for transition to adulthood. Cole et al. (2009) also support this outlook and highlight that imaginary play teaches children to cope with social rules such as waiting their turn and other daily routines that delay enjoyment; and prepares children for brief thought and real-world situations. To some extent imaginative play can be considered to have its own internal logic that is recognised and worked towards by those engaging in imaginative play. The benefits for supporting imaginative play are wide ranging and include promoting emotional, social skills and learning. It is important to also note that watching children partake in imaginary play can tell others, including adults such as teachers or social workers, a great deal about their emotional wellbeing. Hendy (2001) points out that while in the safety net that is imaginary play, children will let us witness both their fears and anxieties.

### 5.4 Coaching and Pedagogy Promoting Imaginative Play

The use of pedagogy in promoting imaginative play is more prominent within education settings and in particular supporting young children in schools either within the curriculum (Devi et al., 2018; Jordan and Libby, 2011; Loizou, 2017) or during play/break times (Hyndman, 2015; Hyndman et al., 2016). Wood (2004) has provided some indicators as to how to develop a pedagogy of imaginative

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<sup>2</sup> Forest schools are known for offering young people regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and their self-esteem, through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment.

play. These include opportunities for co-construction between children and adults. This co-construction could include promoting shared thinking, encouraging joint involvement in activities, supporting informal interactions through children's self-initiated activities, and offering opportunities for free-play activities. More recently, the idea of co-construction and collaboration has been promoted within physical education and physical activity settings with girls. It is claimed that approaching activity engagement in this way can empower girls to make decisions about the type of activities they undertake and how these activities are delivered (Oliver and Kirk, 2015; 2016). It should be noted that this focus is underpinned with the purpose of engaging and sustaining physical activity rather than concerned with promoting imaginative play.

Of course, for coaches to facilitate imaginative play they need to support an approach to coaching that may be different or challenge more traditional views of how to coach and relate to participants. Coaches also need to grapple with how they can encourage parents to support imaginative play. A study by Watchman and Spencer-Cavaliere (2017) found that parents may not recognise the benefits of free play and that participation in a particular sport is often prioritised over play for development reasons. Both sport and imaginative free play can develop a child. Therefore, it is recommended that there needs to be greater collaboration between parents, governing bodies and coaches to support the co-existence of sport and play rather than seeing them as separate, or unrelated, activities (Watchman and Spencer-Cavaliere, 2017).

There is a small but growing body of research that proposes that coaches should use technology more in order to promote imaginative play. Studies by Nevski and Siibak (2016) and Pempek and McDaniel (2016) have focused on pre-school children's tablet usage and conclude that this resource can effectively promote play and creativity by offering visual stimulation that is animated and retains the attention of children. According to Marsh et al. (2018) *Apps* can promote imaginative and fantasy play by role-playing their favourite characters from films and television programmes. Gaming, through the use of certain Apps such as Angry Birds and Minecraft, can also promote rule-bound imaginative play. That is, the children playing may need to strategize and be creative to escape or progress through various obstacle or challenges (Marsh et al., 2018). Interestingly, Marsh (2017) found children are able to switch between digital and non-digital resources as part of their play. For example, playing with toys featured within the games of Apps.

Despite the above, imaginary play is very often physical and is a way for children to be active, to exercise and develop their motor skills (Homan, 2016). This author advises that even in situations where physical imaginary play may be seen as becoming too 'physical', it is deemed that imaginary play involving 'rough and tumble', provided that this is well monitored and does not go too far, can help in the development of the frontal lobe, that controls behaviour (Homan, 2016). Overall, a coach needs to be proactive in creating play or learning environments. In doing this a coach needs to be responsive to children's choice, interests and patterns of learning (Wood, 2004).

In terms of the link to football, a recent initiative from Heart of Midlothian Football Club, called 'Play the Game' supports imaginative play. Hearts' manager Craig Levein believes in this way of promoting the sport to children by suggesting "children are more creative and imaginative than adults. It's important that today's organised football provides them with the space and opportunity to use that imagination and lead to developing players who are confident and inventive" (Hearts FC, 2018). With



regards to how a coach promotes imaginative play for children, Hearts' Head of Community indicates that "we are not saying 'don't coach', but simply endorsing the fact that kids need to be allowed to be kids" (Hearts FC, 2018, n.p.). In part, this outlook reflects the need highlighted earlier for coaches to adapt their coaching in ways that support shared thinking, joint involvement in activities, and opportunities for free-play activities. This example from the Heart of Midlothian Football Club is not supported with research evidence. Indeed, in relation to football, or girls and football, little attention has been given to the role of imaginative play in supporting participant development.

## **5.5 Summary – Imaginative Play and Storytelling**

Please see table 5 overleaf.

Finding	Implications for the UEFA Playmakers Project
Imaginative play consists of children role-playing	Use known literature or cinematic characters to enable children to role-play, acting out that characters experiences in a football setting
Imaginative play is not an isolated practice	<p>Build in elements of imaginative play whereby children are encouraged to work/role-play together</p> <p>Imaginative play allows children to practice their decision-making and social skills (this links to PYD approach)</p>
Storytelling encourages originality of thought	Encourage the children to communicate and express their imagination. Children are very creative and this needs to be encouraged and facilitated
Imaginative play can be a very structured activity	<p>Understand the parameters of what consists of imaginative play</p> <p>Children, engaging in imaginative play make their own rules to abide by. This promotes ownership of the activity. Build this element in to the sessions</p>
Coaches can promote and facilitate imaginative play	This can be achieved by supporting shared thinking, encouraging joint involvement in activities and offering opportunities for free-play activities. Props such as using toys could be one way to initiate/provoke imaginative play

Table 5 – Summary of Imaginative Play and Storytelling



## 6. Appropriate Coaching Behaviours for Girls Aged 5-8

### 6.1 Section Aims

The previous sections of this review have signposted the importance of the coach in influencing girls' engagement in sport and physical activity. This section elaborates on the coach's role in creating a positive experience for girls aged 5-8. First, consideration is given to Achievement Goal Theory (AGT). AGT differentiates between task-orientated and ego-orientated motivational climates within sport. With previous sections highlighting the importance of fun, enjoyment, and a low focus on competition, a task-orientated climate thus seems to be more applicable in this context. Different coaching behaviours linked to this approach will be highlighted. These include providing internal objectives, positive reinforcement, encouraging autonomy and ownership and developing personal relationships. Finally, coach education and strategies for training coaches, including the merits of training more women coaches to deliver on girls' only sessions and projects will be discussed.

### 6.2 Achievement Goal Theory

Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) conceptualises the motivational climate cultivated in sporting contexts (Nicholls, 1989). Although this links strongly to positive environments, the motivational climate is understood to be highly contingent upon the behaviours of significant figures within sport, including coaches and teachers (Atkins et al., 2011). Within AGT, two different motivational climates are introduced - task-oriented and ego-oriented - and these can be understood by the ways in which coaches and teachers define success (Nicholls, 1989). In a task-oriented environment internally located standards are valued, such as individual effort, learning, and improvement (Johnson et al., 2017). Conversely, an ego-oriented environment is characterised by success criteria linked to winning and outperforming others (Johnson et al., 2017). Research which considers the experiences of children, and the experiences of girls, has highlighted that task-oriented climates have more positive outcomes (Atkins et al., 2011; Brieger et al., 2015; Goncalves et al., 2011). This conclusion is perhaps unsurprising when considered in relation to previously reviewed research which identifies the gendered nature of sport, the potential issues with competition, and the motivations of young people. The specific coaching behaviours which foster a task-orientated environment for girls aged 5-8 will now be explored.

### 6.3 Coaching Behaviours

We will now introduce a range of specific behaviours which can foster a task-oriented environment. Providing internal objectives focuses on the ability of the coach to see success more broadly than winning. Forms of communication have been widely debated, and positive encouragement is consistently highlighted as crucial for young children. Allowing children some ownership over the direction of the session can also help inform the success criteria that the coach utilises. Finally, developing personal relationships with players, and seeing them as more than a footballer, is encouraged. While these practices can be difficult to achieve in coaching contexts, where the coach may be faced with a number of children with different needs, wants and motivations, being mindful of these ideas can be useful in developing a task-oriented environment.

### 6.3.1 Internal Objectives

A task-oriented environment is portrayed by a focus on effort, learning, and personal improvement (Johnson et al., 2017). Therefore, it is important for coaches to provide objectives in their coaching sessions that focus on these internally defined outcomes. McCalpin et al. (2017) provides practical examples of what this means for 8-11 year old girls in football settings. For example, focusing on a girl's willingness to pass to teammates, encouraging other players to get involved, or personal improvement in particular skills. Girls stated that these kinds of foci removed the emphasis to pass to the best player and score goals and were instrumental to their enjoyment of the game. Similarly, Weiss et al. (2009) found that girls who played football enjoyed the game more when their coaches set them intrinsic goals. The focus here, on independent mastery rather than winning, created higher levels of motivation for the game. It is important therefore for coaches to consider what they ask their players to achieve. To develop a task-oriented environment it is recommended that coaches focus upon and praise girls' efforts, teamwork, and individual improvements.

### 6.3.2 Positive reinforcement

According to Battaglia et al. (2017) young people rely heavily on external feedback from significant others. In sporting contexts, the coach is a key point of reference for children. A wealth of research has considered the effects of the communication strategies coaches utilise with young children (Battaglia et al., 2017; Santos et al., 2017; Weiss et al., 2019). Much of this considers the difference between negative or positive reinforcement. Punitive coaching practices including shouting, criticising mistakes, and using exercise as a punishment are often justified on the grounds of building character, teaching respect, and preventing errors (Battaglia et al., 2017). When faced with this type of communication, young girls (aged 11-13) reported that they considered quitting, felt negatively towards their coach and/or other players, and felt embarrassed and ashamed (Battaglia et al., 2017). These types of coaching behaviours contribute to the creation of an ego-oriented environment, as 'success' is defined as not making mistakes and winning.

In order to create a task-oriented environment it is important that coaches use positive reinforcement and supportive communication. Norman (2015) has found that women in particular prefer positive communication in sporting contexts. Examples of how this can be achieved are plenty and varied. Encouragement is often identified as a key aspect of positive communication (Bean and Forneris, 2017; Schaillee et al., 2017). Santos et al. (2017) showcase how respect shapes the ways in which coaches communicate with their athletes. For example, the coaches ensure they never shout or yell if a player does something wrong, but instead respectfully explain why they may have chosen a different option. If things are not going well, or a player is struggling within a sporting context, Reynders et al. (2019) suggest that coaches should offer comfort and support, rather than punishing or using negative communication. All of these examples demonstrate how a better environment for young players to engage in sport can be created. A study by Weiss et al. (2019) translates these types of coaching behaviours to football settings. Overall, they found a task-orientated climate, where the coach utilised positive communication strategies, was more beneficial and enjoyable for girls who play football.

### 6.3.3 Empowerment and Ownership

Norman (2015) identifies that positive coaching environments can also be created when coaching becomes a joint effort involving both the coach and the player. The coach should be seen as a guide and mentor, rather than the singular authority (Norman, 2015). Athletes have identified their frustrations when they feel a lack of control yet can be empowered through their relationship with their coach (Norman and French, 2013). Similar arguments have been made with specific reference to working with young people. In a PE context, Sanchez-Hernandez et al. (2018) promote the use of co-operative learning environments, whereby students work together to define and achieve success. This type of practice encourages the coach to relinquish some control and empowers the students to achieve their goals. In this regard the teacher can be positioned as a supporting act.

Similarly, Bean and Forneris (2017) advocate for giving young people a voice in sport settings. They encourage practitioners to strike a balance between 'following the manual' and remaining responsive to the needs of the young people in their care. This need for flexibility can be seen by building children's requests into practice and not assuming that, as adults, the coaches know best (Bean and Forneris, 2017). This will be an important consideration for the UEFA Playmakers project, as it will be important to balance the direction given to coaches with the needs of a range of children in any given moment. Regardless of the challenge, offering young people ownership is a crucial coaching behaviour in building a task-oriented environment. It ensures young people have more say over how success is defined and achieved and promotes overall enjoyment in the activity.

### 6.3.4 Personal Relationships

Research identifies that coaches can positively influence young people in their care, by viewing the participants as more than athletes, and themselves as more than a coach (Lara-Bercial & McKenna, 2018). Research by Norman (2015) and Norman and French (2013) with high performing women athletes, identifies that coaches who understand their participants as people, rather than just athletes, and know their preferred learning style are highly valued. When talking about learning styles, it does not necessarily relate to the notion of Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic (VAK) learning, which has widely been challenged (Bailey et al., 2018). Norman and French (2013) do however discuss the need to be available for one-to-one discussions, offer tailored, personal feedback, and understand the personal lives of the athlete (Norman and French, 2013). Similar findings have been found with research conducted in PYD settings. In youth dance sessions with young girls, a key strength of the coaches and leaders was their willingness to hold informal chats, rather than always focusing on the activity at hand (Schaillee et al., 2017). Bean and Forneris (2017) also identify that developing personal relationships with young people is key to their engagement and enjoyment of sport. This was achieved through multiple means, including speaking to them individually (not always as part of the whole group), finding out about their personal lives, asking them how their week has been, and sharing their own experiences.

## 6.4 The Development of Coaches

Another discussion point in relation to the behaviours and approaches of coaches in creating a task-orientated environment, relates to the ways in which they are developed and educated. Returning to

the previously discussed gender stereotypes in sport, coaches play a pivotal role in either reinforcing and maintaining them or challenging them (Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2011). If coaches are to be responsive to the needs of young girls, it is important that they have the right knowledge, understanding and tools to be able to work effectively with this target group (whilst being aware that girls aged 5-8 are not a homogenous group). There are two pertinent factors to discuss here:

- Who the coaches are.
- How they are trained.

As already identified, football is a sport dominated by men, particularly in relation to management, leadership and coaching (Norman, 2016). It is highly likely that women and girls will be coached by men, which means that football continues to be defined by men's standards (Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2011). Norman and French (2013) found that the relationship between male coaches and female athletes is highly gendered, often leading to a trivialisation of the women's abilities. Furthermore, Fasting and Pfister (2000) found that women footballers preferred the coaching style of fellow women, as men were perceived to be too aggressive. As such, it is recommended that wherever possible, women coaches, or men who display appropriate motivational, communication and pedagogical strategies, be used to deliver on the Playmakers Football project. This would have two benefits: a) challenging the masculine-dominated stereotypes and standards that pervade coaching and football (Fielding-Lloyd and Mean, 2011); and b) creating better relationships and positive environments for the girls to engage in football (Fasting and Pfister, 2000).

No matter who is doing the coaching, the ways in which coaches are trained is also a crucial aspect to consider. Norman (2016) identifies coach education as a significant factor in coaches' ability to work with both men and women (and boys and girls) in sport. Importantly she argues for courses to move beyond a one-size-fits all approach to working with athletes, and begin to consider their background and identity, including their gender (Norman, 2016). While this refers to formal coach education courses, the same principles can be applied to the Playmakers Project. It would be worth considering some form of training or Continuing Professional Development workshop with coaches prior to them beginning to work on the project. Embedded within this training should be education relating to understanding differences between people, rather than just technical information about practices and drills to be delivered. The [www.icoachkids.eu](http://www.icoachkids.eu) free coach education programme developed by Leeds Beckett University and the International Council for Coaching Excellence is a prime example of a non-traditional coach development opportunity focused on the understanding of the WHO and the HOW over the WHAT.

## **6.5 Summary – Appropriate Coaching Behaviours and Approaches for 5-8 Year Old Girls**

Please see table 6 below

Finding	Implications for the UEFA Playmakers Project
Task-oriented environments are more beneficial for girls and young people	<p>Educate coaches to understand the differences between task and ego-orientated climates</p> <p>Consider how this may influence the design of the sessions and practices</p>
Definition of success leads to different climates	<p>Encourage coaches to focus on effort, personal improvement and teamwork, rather than winning</p> <p>Consider how this will influence the aims of the sessions and practices that are designed</p> <p>Educate parents as well as coaches</p>
Benefits of positive communication	<p>Use positive reinforcement as much as possible</p> <p>Consider multiple ways coaches can transmit messages about 'success' and 'failure' e.g. verbally, body language, high-fives/handshakes</p>
Benefits of player ownership	<p>Give players a voice where possible – ask them what they enjoy and what they want to do</p>
Benefits of personal relationships	<p>Be aware of the value of building personal relationships and encourage this where appropriate.</p> <p>See the girls as people as well as footballers</p>
Women who play football prefer to be coached by women	<p>Recruit and train women coaches to deliver the project</p> <p>Consider working with relatives of participants to get involved (e.g. mothers or sisters)</p>
The use of coach education to inform work with girls and women	<p>Consider what form of information is embedded within training for coaches – encourage to include some elements of differentiation between different groups of people, as well as technical/tactical information</p>

Table 6 – Summary of Appropriate Coaching Behaviours and Approaches for 5-8 Year Old Girls

## 7. Summary of Key Messages

Designing the Programme	<b>Session Plans:</b> important to stress the need for flexibility and not force coaches to follow these to the letter, but to adapt based on participants.
	<b>Coach Education/Training:</b> include more than just ‘what’ to coach – what are the challenges girls face? How can coaches create a task-oriented environment? How can they encourage ownership?
	<b>Child-Centred Design:</b> Is the programme designed around an adult-centric view of fun? What does fun look like to a 5-8 year old girl? Consider ways to get their input into the session design.
	<b>Consider Exit Routes:</b> – how does this 8-week programme translate into club football? Are clubs/coaches involved in delivery? Are the sessions hosted at a club? Do the club coaches know about the importance of fun/ownership? Or will the girls be faced with the ‘same old’ challenges once they join a club?
Delivering the Programme	<b>Coach Flexibility:</b> Importance of striking a balance between ‘following the guide’ and coaching what is in front of you.
	<b>Child-Centred Pedagogy:</b> Understand the need for ownership and empowerment – what does the coach want it to look like, and what do the girls want it to look like? These may be different.
Evaluating the Programme	<b>Research Gap:</b> Use this programme to conduct research into 5-8-year old girls in football – address research gap(s).
	<b>Evaluation Methods:</b> Consider how the programme is evaluated – are the focus and methods adult or child-centric?
Future research	Very little research has been conducted with girls aged 5-8 in football, physical activity and sport settings.
	Recognise challenges relating to gender that girls have to overcome in order to engage in sport and football contexts.
	Understand differences between girls and across European contexts. Different challenges and opportunities will arise when working in different places, with different people.

Table 7 – Summary of Key Messages

## **8. Increasing Girls' Engagement in Sport and Physical Activity: Successful Programmes Using Alternative Approaches**

The following section provides the findings from a scoping exercise of best practice initiatives, programmes and/or strategies in sport and physical activity. This initially focused upon the under 8 age group but yielded limited results. Therefore, the parameters were extended to include primary school aged children, and older girls and women to gather additional examples.

The scoping review considers 27 local, national and international examples. Some of the previous examples provided in the literature review have been included. A summary of the key features of good practice is provided at the end of the table.

### **8.1 Results of Scoping of International Best Practice**

Please see extended table 8 overleaf.



Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
TOP Start	Youth Sport Trust, United Kingdom	4-7 year olds	Resources for teachers to improve PE in primary schools. The programme focuses on exploring the development of stability, locomotion and object control through PE.	To support primary school teachers to deliver PE and develop physical literacy for children.  To improve primary school teachers' confidence when delivering PE.	TOP Start encourages children to first of all explore movement before applying their new repertoire of skills into 'games like' situations. The programme includes resource cards, one-day training and a movement assessment App.	After 2 years of the programme research indicated that 60% of children enjoyed this movement-based approach in PE. It was also reported by teachers that children enjoyed PE more as their movement quality improved.	<a href="https://www.youthsporttrust.org/TOPStart">https://www.youthsporttrust.org/TOPStart</a>
Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Dads and Daughters Exercising and Empowered (DADEE)	University of Newcastle, Australia	Fathers as change agents and their daughters aged 0-14	Involvement of key family member in encouraging girls to be active.	Improve girls' physical activity levels, sport skills and socio-emotional wellbeing.	9 weekly 45 min sessions which includes separate dads and daughters' educational sessions and practical sessions with dads and daughters together.	Improved physical activity levels for both fathers and daughters.	Dadee.net.au



					<p>Dads' education focuses on emotionally connecting with daughters; girls' sessions develop socio-emotional skills (self-control, persistence, critical thinking, resilience, self-reliance).</p> <p>Practical sessions focus on rough and tumble play, fun fitness, and fundamental movement skills.</p>	<p>Improved quality of relationships.</p> <p>Improved sport skills, confidence for girls</p>	
Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
'Have a go' All Stars Cricket	England and Wales Cricket Board, UK	Girls and boys aged 5-8	Free	Increase participation in the sport through sessions based on developing movement and coordination skills, learning to be part of a team, understanding the importance of respect and having fun.	<p>Free taster sessions at 150 venues offered on back of World Cup success. Aims to encourage children into All Stars Cricket.</p> <p>All Star Cricket delivered nationwide at over 2,000 centres includes 8 x 1 hour sessions over 8 weeks. Emphasis on fun and being active, developing movement skills. Parents encouraged to take part.</p> <p>Register online where nearest venue is identified.</p>	37,000 took part in year one across 1500 venues (2017). Now in third year	<a href="https://www.ecb.co.uk/play/all-stars">https://www.ecb.co.uk/play/all-stars</a>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
*GoGirlGo!	Women's Sports Foundation, USA	Girls with a focus on three key age ranges: 5-7, 8-10, 11-13	Resources produced, different target age ranges, whole community approaches.	Get more girls active through education and network of school and community-based programmes.	Started in 2001. Offers communities support and resources through a curriculum, grant programme and networking opportunities to get girls moving. Links sports involvement to increasing self-confidence and self-esteem through building of safe and fun spaces, trusting environments and role models.	\$5.6 million donated and over 1 million girls helped.	womenssportsfoundation.org
Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Real Play	Creative Development, United Kingdom	Supports a range of practitioners working in Early Years Foundation Stage (birth to 5	Involvement of family members in encouraging young people to be active with their family.	To improve:  Children's Personal, Social and Emotional skills.	Part of a broader portfolio of 'Real' programmes that primary and secondary schools across the UK can buy into. This includes training, innovative resources and an online learning platform.		<a href="https://jasmineactive.com/solutions/real-play/">https://jasmineactive.com/solutions/real-play/</a>

		years), Key Stage 1 (5 to 7 years).  This includes PE practitione rs, Teaching Assistants, SENCOs and Family Support Workers/  Family Link Teachers.	Training, innovative resources and an online learning platform.	Parents'/ carers' engagement and confidence.  Family activity levels.  Children's physical development.			
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Developers/ Country</b>	<b>Target audience</b>	<b>Key positive features</b>	<b>Programme goals</b>	<b>Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Further details</b>
Girls Active	Youth Sport Trust, United Kingdom	Staff	One day training makes it accessible for teachers.  Reflection, action planning and development	Empower girls to design and deliver PE and sport.  Develop role models for future.	Since 2013, insight and case studies have been gathered which inform the development of Girls Active.  One-day teacher training workshop for two staff.  Takes a long-term approach to engaging girls by: putting	Over 600 schools now part of the Girls Active network.	<a href="https://www.youthsporttrust.org/girls-active">https://www.youthsporttrust.org/girls-active</a>

			<p>of a school programme that is unique to needs of the each school.</p> <p>Resources for teachers and girls.</p> <p>Annual national awards.</p> <p>Seed funding.</p>		<p>self-confidence at heart of PE; making PE relevant to girls' lives; and acknowledging importance of friendship.</p> <p>Programme extended to 'Stepping up for Change' (supporting primary and secondary schools to work together); and the 'Girls Active Coaches Camp' - a residential opportunity, most recently held at Loughborough University in April 2019, for 150 girls aged 15-17.</p>		
Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Active Kids Wyndham City programme	NSW Govt/ Wyndham City, Australia	Children aged 8-10 and their families	<p>Involvement of schools, families and community partners.</p> <p>Record of progress maintained by child.</p>	Raise awareness of healthy eating and encourage engagement in physical activity due to concerns around rising levels of obesity.	Participating schools get free school activity days delivered by community partners. Days are used to introduce children to new activities and make links between school and clubs. Examples of activities include lacrosse, badminton, football, tennis, basketball,		<a href="https://wyndham.vic.gov.au/active-kids">https://wyndham.vic.gov.au/active-kids</a>

					<p>bowls, dance, performing arts, and cricket.</p> <p>Children receive a passport to record daily activities and healthy eating habits, with rewards and certificates available.</p>		
Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Rethink Role Models	Netball Diamonds, Australia and Samsung	Aspiring young female athletes	<p>Easily accessible online, series of mini videos to reach wider audience.</p> <p>Brings an honesty to the stories behind elite women athlete's achievements.</p> <p>Representation of women as tough and athletic.</p>	To inspire young women through the use of role models' stories.	<p>Series of personal empowering videos that trace the backstory to five elite netballers' successes.</p> <p>Focus on toughness, courage, skill and determination to re-present women athletes.</p>		<a href="https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/zela/article/2016/06/01/powerful-womens-sports-campaigns-encourage-us-rethink-our-role-models">https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/zela/article/2016/06/01/powerful-womens-sports-campaigns-encourage-us-rethink-our-role-models</a>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Go Sisters	EduSport Foundation, Zambia	Girls and young women	<p>Using sport as an alternative medium to deliver key messages to girls and communities.</p> <p>Developing girls to become role models and advocates on women's rights.</p> <p>Scholarships offered to enable coaches and players to complete school education.</p>	<p>Empowerment of girls to fight discrimination and challenge traditional gender perceptions.</p> <p>Develop champions, leaders and role models on key issues including HIV awareness and women's rights.</p> <p>Encourage girls to stay in education.</p>	<p>Community based leagues where girls are given leadership opportunities through coaching, refereeing, team building and playing techniques in soccer, volleyball, basketball and netball.</p> <p>Skills focus on developing: competent, inspiring leaders and role models; confidence to educate peers and communities beyond sport; life skills; literacy and access to vocational training; champions on key issues (women's rights &amp; HIV awareness).</p> <p>Community base enables trust to be established with families, raising awareness of girls' rights in safe spaces.</p>	<p>91 girls awarded scholarships.</p> <p>Over 1,000 girls in 22 disadvantaged communities have benefited.</p>	<p><a href="https://united-purpose.org/go-sisters">https://united-purpose.org/go-sisters</a></p>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
US Girls	StreetGames, United Kingdom	Girls and young women (16-25)	Targets disadvantaged communities and girls who do not participate in traditional sport.	To increase and sustain young women's participation in sport and physical activity within some of the nation's most disadvantaged communities.	<p>Two key programmes operate within US Girls:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. US Girls Rocks festivals: Girls try traditional and non-traditional sport and fitness sessions and are given lifestyle advice.</li> <li>2. US Girls in Colleges: Physical activity sessions are offered in informal ways and these target girls not interested in traditional sports.</li> </ol> <p>Activity organisers have access to templates, logos and guides to setting up events. There are also seventeen 'How to guides', for example, 'How to .... Ensure sport and physical activity sessions for young women are affordable'.</p>		<a href="https://network.streetgames.org/our-work/us-girls">https://network.streetgames.org/our-work/us-girls</a>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
*On the Move	Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, Canada	Inactive girls and young women aged 9-18	<p>Structured time-lines and rigid program design are avoided to allow communities to respond to their unique needs and interests to allow a wide demographic of participants to be reached.</p> <p>Collaboration between service providers and participants whereby girls are involved in program planning and implementation</p>	Work towards attaining gender equity by increasing opportunities for inactive girls and young women to participate and lead in sport and physical activity, through education, collaboration and communication.	<p>Works at the organizational and behavioural levels to address barriers and create positive environments.</p> <p>Two main approaches:</p> <p>Innovative programming through fun-filled, supportive, female-only, sessions. On the Move Handbook provides information about program design, implementation, leadership, promotion, and building community support.</p> <p>A national network of practitioners is a resource for information, sharing research, events and program successes and challenges.</p>		<a href="https://www.caaw.s.ca/onthemove/e/index.htm">https://www.caaw.s.ca/onthemove/e/index.htm</a>



Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Go out and Lead (GOAL)	Mathare Youth Sports Association, Kenya	Adolescent girls	<p>Variety of programmes, curriculum topics.</p> <p>Development of girls' skills to grow programme through peer training and mentoring.</p>	To empower girls and their community.	<p>A curriculum that covers topics not covered in school and home (gender, sexuality, child protection, HIV/AIDS, healthy relationships) and a series of programmes that develop skills (employability, sport, advocacy and peace, youth exchange).</p> <p>Growth of programme, curriculum and activities takes place by developing girls' leadership, management and communication skills to enable them to become peer trainers and mentors.</p>	15,000 girls taking part in leagues and activities.	<a href="http://www.mysakenya.org/programsgirls-">http://www.mysakenya.org/programsgirls-</a>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Lil Miss-Hits (strand of *She Rallies campaign)	Judy Murray & LTA, UK	Sessions aimed at non sporty and sporty girls aged 5-8 and women (parents, teachers, mums, students who may not be technically gifted at tennis but wish to get girls involved) to run programme.	<p>Creating a network of non-tennis playing females to get girls involved initially.</p> <p>Cartoon characters used to design and deliver sessions to girls.</p>	<p>Empower and expand the number of women and girls coaching and playing tennis in the UK.</p> <p>Attract and retain women and girls in tennis by inspiring and empowering the female workforce to create opportunities.</p>	<p>Workshops run by She Rallies Ambassadors throughout the UK for women who wish to get involved in running the programme. The 6 x 45 minute workshops can be booked via website.</p> <p>Workshops give the skills needed to run and introduce girls age 5-8 to starter tennis in a fun environment.</p> <p>Ongoing support provided from an Ambassador to help set up and run the programme.</p> <p>Sessions for girls focus on making friends, learning new skills, and building confidence in a fun environment. Sessions revolve around a series of Miss-Hits characters each of whom has a signature tennis shot, tips, tricks, dance routines and games.</p>		<a href="http://sherallies.com/lil-miss-hits/">http://sherallies.com/lil-miss-hits/</a>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Bolly Cric-Hit	Leicestershire County Cricket in the Community, UK	South Asian women and girls	Combines an activity that is more likely to attract women and girls (dance) with an activity they have not previously tried.	To engage with unique female participants who previously have not had access to cricket by getting to the heart of the community through the introduction of Bolly Cric-Hit.	90-minute session that incorporates a Bhangra fitness workout followed by softball cricket.  During the cricket session the focus remains on fitness to ensure the women are having an effective but fun workout.	250 women engaged in Bolly Cric-Hit.	<a href="https://www.lrspo.org/events/2018/09/bolly-cric-hit-womens-softball-festival">https://www.lrspo.org/events/2018/09/bolly-cric-hit-womens-softball-festival</a>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
FAB - Fit Active Beautiful programme	FAB Foundation, Canada	Youth girls in socially deprived area	<p>Sense of belonging, empowering through physicality, self-esteem.</p> <p>Girls returning as a FAB coach to positively influence future generations.</p>	To end the poverty cycle amongst youth girls through helping them to: become strong women; to dream and live big; and to develop their goal setting, leadership and self-confidence.	<p>5k Challenge &amp; the Empowerment Programme.</p> <p>5k Challenge - 12-week, running program combines with goal-setting to provide an empowering space for girls to become more physically active, healthy, and develop teamwork. Free program includes running shoes, t-shirt, transportation, entry into community runs, goal setting journal, healthy snacks.</p> <p>Empowerment Programme - 12-week program led by volunteer coaches continues to develop goal-setting skills, physical abilities, &amp; empowerment to make confident life choices and create a positive future.</p>	13 programmes in 10 locations, over 600 girls taking part.	<p><a href="https://www.fitactivebeautiful.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/FAB-Storybook.pdf">https://www.fitactivebeautiful.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/FAB-Storybook.pdf</a></p>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Street20 Cricket	Magic Bus India	Children (recognise s girls are significantly underrepresented).	Programmes delivered in communities with limited resources.  Storytelling to deliver messages.	Deliver health, education and gender messages through sport to change behaviours and attitudes.	Works with and in local communities to change attitudes.  Uses storytelling to deliver messages around health, education and gender.	9 fold increase in number of girls taking part in the first two years of programme and 26 female leaders identified in one community.	<a href="https://www.magicbus.org/">https://www.magicbus.org/</a>
Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Ongoing sports and activity programmes e.g This Is Me	Get Away Girls, Leeds, UK	Young women and girls living in Leeds (This is Me involved girls at primary school)	Variety of activities.  Based in heart of the communities it serves.  Appeals to different kinds of young women and girls with	Empowerment of girls and young women to build confidence, develop new skills and take positive risks in an environment which offers cooperation and support.	Based in the heart of the community this organisation's longevity (30 years) and variety of activities ensures they are accessible to different young women and girls.  Through supportive, fun and challenging activities that encompass sports, dance, creative arts, day trips, festivals and parties, girls and young women are		<a href="https://getawaygirls.co.uk/">https://getawaygirls.co.uk/</a>

			differing needs (e.g. those at risk of early pregnancy, sexual exploitation, looked after/ in care, low self-esteem).		taught to raise aspirations and celebrate equality, diversity and female empowerment.  This is Me combined dance, poetry, music and art to enable girls to celebrate their diversity and what it means to be a girl in Leeds.		
Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Levelling the Playing Field	Yorkshire Sport Foundation	Women and girls	Working in partnership with Together Women Project and the YWCA.  The programme is located in drop-in centres and community groups rather than traditional sports centres or facilities.	Empower women and girls to develop confidence through physical activity and sport.	This programme is based in three areas of Yorkshire and includes 'Confidence and Resilience Days' where women are taken out of their comfort zone and introduced to activities they never thought possible. Support is provided to access sport and physical activity sessions, qualifications and eventually some women progress into facilitating activities for their friends and family.	Since 2017 over 200 women have engaged in regular activity. 90% say they feel more motivated to be physical active and also motivated to make positive changes in their lives.	<a href="https://www.yorkshiresport.org/what-we-do/in-the-community/levelling-the-field/">https://www.yorkshiresport.org/what-we-do/in-the-community/levelling-the-field/</a>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Girl Power Go Programme	Girl Power Go, LLC, USA	Girls aged 6-14	Age appropriate fitness and life skills.  Focus on confidence building and getting girls to recognise their own power.	To develop girls to feel strong, self-confident, independent, healthy and beautiful.	An 8 week empowerment programme that uses fitness and life skills alongside confidence building exercises delivered in a fun and thought provoking way.  Education takes place on making good food choices, being a good friend, navigating relationships, valuing yourself and knowing your own power.		<a href="https://www.girlpowergo.com">https://www.girlpowergo.com</a>
Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Mini Mermaid Running Club	Mini Mermaid Running Club, UK	Girls aged 7-10	Use of characters (Mini Mermaid and Siren) who represent our inner voices both positive and critical.	Teaching girls to lead a balanced life by listening to their inner voice, valuing their uniqueness, and loving movement.	8 week structured programme that trains participants for a local 5K challenge with focus not on speed and being first but finding own pace and developing lifelong love of movement regardless of size, shape or ability.		<a href="http://www.minimermaiduk.com">www.minimermaiduk.com</a>



			Four progressive curriculums.		<p>Programme uses small group work and use of characters to develop self-confidence, resilience and mindfulness leading to greater compassion and empathy.</p> <p>Characters represent the voices we hear in our heads and around us (our inner cheerleader and inner critic).</p>		
Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
G4G football development programme	Goals4Girls, UK	Girls aged 5-16	Consultations with girls about the kinds of support and services they need prior to programme starting.	To enable young women to fulfil their potential and have their voices heard through sport and education.	Aimed at empowering disadvantaged young women through sports and education. Focus on developing communication, confidence and motivation to positively affect their teamwork, problem solving, physical and mental health.	Started with 7 girls and now has over 900 participants.	<a href="https://goals4girls.co.uk">https://goals4girls.co.uk</a>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Getting out for Good	Manchester Metropolitan University, UK	At risk young women and girls in across Greater Manchester	<p>Action research project.</p> <p>Nationally recognised accreditations.</p> <p>Part of wider transnational project - I define me.</p>	To better understand life challenges and build positive social networks.	<p>Through sports (boxing, football and fitness) and art (drama and film making) girls can achieve nationally recognised accreditations.</p> <p>Activities are aimed towards educating girls how to minimising harm from negative peer relationships, youth violence, gang influence to build confidence to move away from risky situations and behaviours.</p> <p>Part of a wider transnational Comic Relief project - I define me - where learning from all projects will feed into a research informed framework aimed at bringing about social and personal change in different cultural contexts.</p>	80 women in area.	<a href="https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/mcys/current-research-activities/getting-out-for-good/">https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/mcys/current-research-activities/getting-out-for-good/</a>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Move My Way - part of Changing the Game: Increasing Female Participation in Sport programme	VicHealth, Australia and Gymnastics Victoria	Women and girls that are inactive or somewhat active	Choice and flexibility over when and where to be active.  Videos allow participants to build confidence before going to a class with others.	To encourage more women and girls to be more physically active and to champion more women sports leaders and managers.	Move My Way aims to engage and inspire women to try simple, fundamental movements to improve their wellbeing, strength and flexibility. The program allows women to choose how they learn the activities either through following short videos online in their own homes, in their own time, or by participating in a fun and social club program.		<a href="https://movemyway.com.au/about/">https://movemyway.com.au/about/</a>
Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
BigKid Sports Foundation programme	BigKid Foundation	Young people living on inner city estates in Lambeth	Range of activities outside football.  Using sport as a hook to educate on other issues.  Encouraging young people	Through Community Engagement, Mentoring and Leadership Programmes to equip young people at risk of social exclusion and youth violence to take control of their	Football coaching, training and competitions run throughout week. Young people also mentored as part of the programme to encourage trust, teamwork, broaden horizons and break down relational barriers.  Participants are encouraged to gain FA Level 1 and to		<a href="https://www.bigkidfoundation.org/sports-engagement">https://www.bigkidfoundation.org/sports-engagement</a>

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Girls in Sport	Nike and Youth Sport Trust, UK	Girls through teachers	Underpinned by research.  Holistic approach - school wide.  Toolbox of initial ideas.	To equip secondary school teachers with the appropriate skills and ideas to provide forms of physical education and sport opportunities that would foster long-term change in girls' involvement in sport.	A five-part approach for schools – a training workshop for PE department staff, a user manual for secondary schools, assistance in developing a tailor-made action plan, research support through the Institute of Youth Sport, and a national award scheme.  Aims to provide schools with a framework to develop policy, planning and practice to increase participation and enjoyment in sport for girls.		Kirk, D., Fitzgerald, H., Wang, J.C.K., & Biddle, S. J.H. (2000) Towards girl-friendly physical education The Nike/YST Girls in Sport Partnership Project final report

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Gaelic4Girls	Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA), Ireland	Girls aged 8-12	Focus on fun and enjoyment  Non-competitive environment	Increase the number of girls playing gaelic football for clubs  Provide a fun, 12 week programme of gaelic football activities to attract girls aged 8-12  Support clubs to increase their numbers of players, and integrate new players into existing teams  Develop athletic and social skills in a safe and nurturing environment	Delivered through existing clubs and partner institutions (e.g. schools and universities)		<a href="https://www.gaelicgamescb.com/gaelic4girls#!">https://www.gaelicgamescb.com/gaelic4girls#!</a>  Farmer, O., D. Duffy, K. Cahill, D. Lester, S. Belton and W. O'Brien. (2018) Enhancing the Evidence Base for Irish Female Youth Participation in Physical Activity—The Development of the Gaelic4Girls Program. <u>Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal</u> , 26, pp. 111-23.

Programme	Developers/ Country	Target audience	Key positive features	Programme goals	Key features (recruitment and delivery strategies)	Impact	Further details
Play the Game	Heart of Midlothian FC, Scotland	Grassroots footballers	<p>increasing player ownership and responsibility</p> <p>Focus on fun and enjoyment</p> <p>Principles of play embedded within the programme</p>	Encourage 'play' and 'game-centred' activity within grassroots football - bring essence of street football and freedom back to grassroots football	<p>Schools: promoting playground football</p> <p>Centres: Increasing opportunities to play</p> <p>Street games: Creating dynamic sessions</p> <p>Clubs: Supporting local clubs</p> <p>Expo: Showcasing grassroots football</p>		<a href="https://www.heartofmidlothianfc.co.uk/community/about-play-the-game">https://www.heartofmidlothianfc.co.uk/community/about-play-the-game</a>

Table 8 – Results of Scoping Review of International Best Practice

## 8.2 Summary of Key Findings from Scoping Review

The scoping review of 27 local, national and international examples of good practice highlighted that effective sports programmes for women and girls should consider the following:

- Whole community approaches that recognise the importance of considering the needs of, and collaborating with parents, friends, teachers, coaches and community workers.
- Removing barriers of cost, transport, kit, equipment, prejudice, stereotypes and negative attitudes.
- Promoting fun through non-competitive games and/or storytelling.
- Education of key issues that affect young women and girls' lives e.g. peer pressure, sexual health, grooming, body issues, pregnancy.
- Offering a broad and varied range of activities.
- Recognising girls as experts in their needs and encouraging them to help design, deliver and evaluate programmes.
- Developing girls to become role models, leaders and mentors for future programmes.
- Offer activities that develop skills that enable young women and girls to take control of their lives - confidence, self-esteem, resilience, leadership, communication and empowerment.



## 9. Areas for Further Research

Table 9 below offers a brief overview of topics highlighted by the review as key areas for further exploration and research.

Topic / Area of focus	Links to report sections
Specific benefits of sport/football for girls aged 5-8	2.2 What are the benefits of girls participating in football, sport and physical activity?
A more rigorous understanding of how PYD benefits translate beyond sporting spaces	2.1.2 Positive Youth Development
A better understanding required for differences between and amongst girls across different European contexts, in relation to challenges to participation in football	2.3.3 Intersectionality
A more specific focus on the motivations, needs and influences for girls aged 5-8 within football settings	3 Motivations, needs and influences for girls to take part in sport and football
More information regarding parental behaviour in football settings, particularly during recreational settings and not formal matches and competition	3.3 Needs: Parental support
Different types of, and the effectiveness of, parental intervention strategies to promote positive support (and minimise negative behaviours). For example, information on the effectiveness of The FA's 'We Only Do Positive' or information about similar interventions.	3.3 Needs: Parental support
Research looking at peer dynamics among 5-8 year old girls in football – is gender performativity as important at this age, or does this start to become more of an issue as they reach adolescence?	3.4 Influence: Peer support
How can practitioners work more effectively with girls (e.g. participatory action research approaches) to positively influence sporting environments and enhance their participation?	4.2 The 'Same Old Story'
In what ways are girls-only and mixed sex football spaces beneficial and problematic for different age groups?	4.3 Girls only spaces
What conditions are needed for mixed sex interventions/strategies to be successful and to actively challenge gender stereotypes?	4.3 Girls only spaces
In relation to football, or girls and football, little attention has been given to the role of imaginative play in supporting participant development	5 Imaginative play and storytelling
Specific focus on girls in football aged 5-8, and their opinions on their coaches	6 Appropriate coaching behaviours and approaches for girls aged 5-8
Working with young girls aged 5-8 to create their ideal coaching session	6.3.3 Empowerment and ownership
Exploring effective coach interventions that develop task-oriented climates	6.4 The development of coaches
Use of coach interventions/education strategies to develop an awareness of the influence of gender in football, specifically when coaching girls aged 5-8	6.4 The development of coaches

Table 9 – Areas for Further Research

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## Appendices

### Appendix A – Search Overview

For each theme, the project team established the following specific search terms:

Theme	Theme Specific Search Terms	
Girls Participation in sport – benefits and challenges	Benefit or outcome or impact	Challenges or issues
Girls’ needs, influences and motivations in sport	Needs or influences of motivations	
Creating a positive environment for girls in sport	Environment or context	Enjoy or positive
Imagination-based play/storytelling in coaching sport	Storytelling or imagination	
Coaching behaviours and approaches with girls 5-8 years old	Pedagogy or coaching	

Once decided, the project team ran three specific searches as detailed below:

- Search One: Theme specific search terms AND girls or women or females AND football or soccer AND youth
- Search Two: Theme specific search terms AND girls or women or females AND sport or recreation or physical activity AND youth
- Search Three: Theme specific search terms AND girls or women or females AND education AND youth

For illustration purposes, the full process for one search can be seen below:

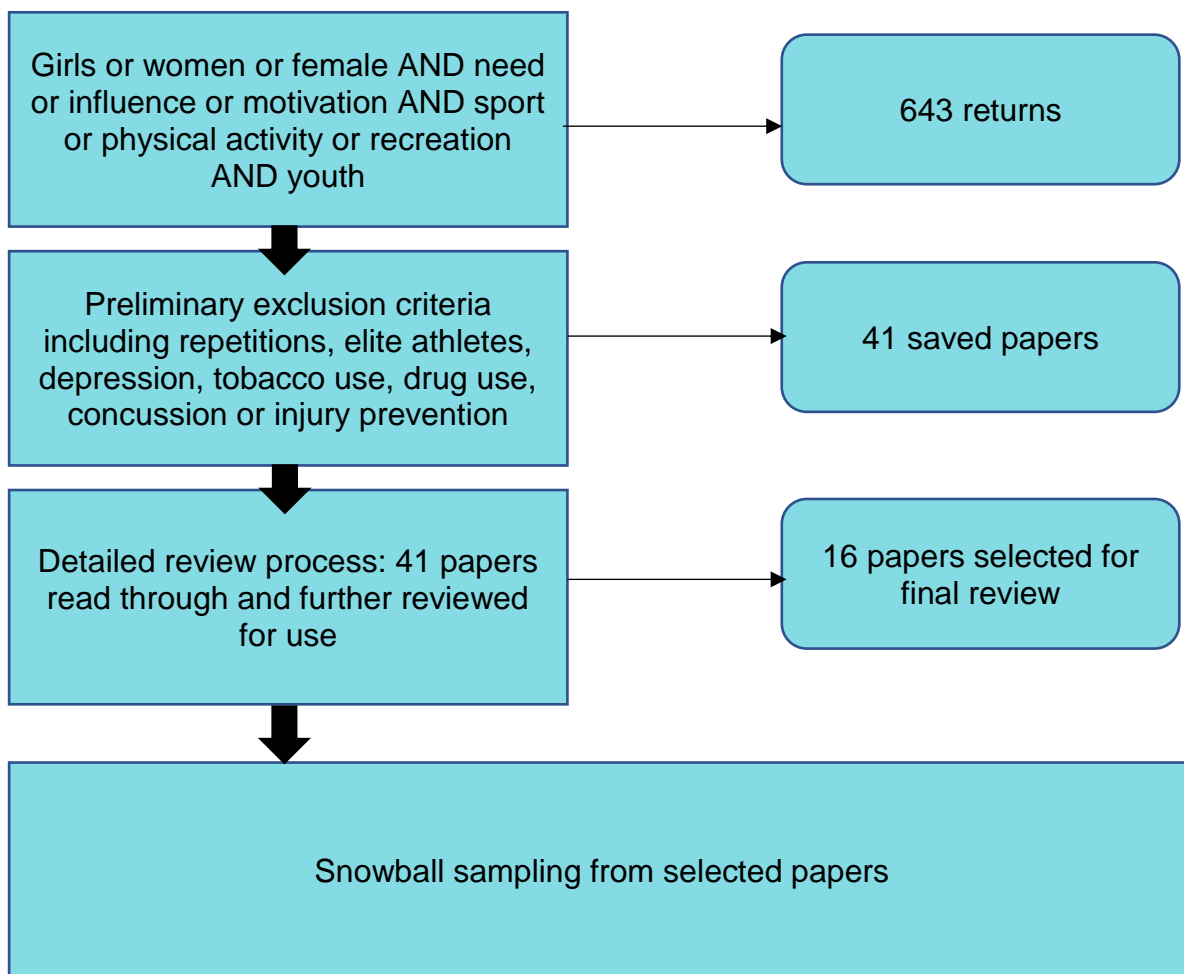


Figure 2 – Search example

## Appendix B – Research Overview

### B1 – Benefits and Challenges of Girls’ Participation in Sport

Author(s)	Year	Sample	Location	Findings
Armour and Sandford	2013	Four-year corporate-sponsored PA intervention (youth development)	UK	Presence and quality of adult relationships in PYD is crucial to foster developmental outcomes. Connections with others understood as one of the key outcomes. Caution against the assumption that skills learnt in sport will easily transfer to other spaces
Beltran-Carrillo, et al.	2012	20 adolescents (boys and girls) aged 17-18 in Spanish High Schools	Spain	Reliance on competition and performativity in PE, means that it is a key site for young people to learn about gendered discourse. Showcases the close links between PE experience and wider activity levels
Clark	2012	6 physically active girls as they move from year 5 to year 8 (ages 10 to 14)	UK	Outlines key processes related to notion of ability, including team selections, competitive bias and performative expectations. Often underscored and influenced by gendered expectations
Fagrell, et al.	2012	Observations of PE lessons in one school	Sweden	Showcases the ways in which stereotypes about boys and girls capabilities influence a teachers style and interaction with their students
Gruno, et al.	2018	‘Girls in Action’ programme	Canada	Girls in Action provides girls in HPE with a relatedness-supportive learning environment. Girls who experience a relatedness-supportive learning environment in and beyond HPE are better positioned to become good communicators, team members, leaders and more active individuals
Hamzeh	2015	Five women football players from Jordanian national team	Jordan	The paper highlights how structural barriers (in this case, the hijab ban) create difference and exclude certain members of the community
Hay and Macdonald	2010	2 teachers and 22 students	Australia	Discourse linked to traditional and gendered conceptions of ability often have negative consequences for girls participation in PE
Lopez	2019	78 Latina girls, aged 12-15	USA	Themes emerged linked to ‘not wanting to be the centre of attention’, ‘gender based teasing’ and ‘treating girls like a “delicate flower”’, as well as resistance and coping strategies
Norman	2016	Review of coaching literature	NA	Summarises current literature which considers the coach-athlete relationship in relation to

				gender. Much identifies that women/girls prefer the coaching styles of other women
Pfeiffer, et al.	2006	429 adolescent girls	USA	Participation at younger age groups, has direct links to long term participation through school years
Rauscher and Cooky	2016	Review of PYD literature	USA	Gender based YDP must be carefully designed and managed in order to avoid reproducing negative gender based stereotypes and conditions. Recommendations include emphasising the individual and immediate context and using postfeminist narratives
Sackett, et al.	2018	Five girls aged 11-13 from a local girls scout troop	USA	A range of barriers were identified for outdoor PA, such as the prevalence of social media and electronic entertainment and lack of time
Schaillee, et al.	2017	Three urban dance programmes for girls aged 5-25	Belgium	Participants described benefits across four main areas including sport-related skills, positive identity, social competencies and positive values
Stride, et al.	2018	11 women who engage in a weekly football session, aged 30 to 50	UK	Women in this research reflect back on positive youth experiences of football, highlighting the freedoms associated with unstructured play as well as the importance of friends and family
Stevenson	2008	Pre- and post-Title IX cohorts	USA	A 10% rise in girls sport participation in high school is linked to a 1% increase in women's college attendance, and a 1 to 2% increase in the labour force
Telford, et al.	2016	155 girls aged 8-16	Australia	Shows the direct correlation between activity levels and body fat % among girls
Van Doodewaard and Knoppers	2016	11 teachers who taught secondary school PE	Netherlands	Showcases the ways in which boys and girls are taught differently in PE (and how immigrant status further differentiates)
Vierimaa, et al.	2017	12 volunteer basketball coaches working in PYD programmes	Canada	Coaches highlight what they think the values of participation are for players, including respect, teamwork and communication skills. They describe techniques they use to instil these values, for example, role modelling

## B2 – Motivations, Needs and Influences

Author(s)	Year	Sample	Location	Findings
Allender, et al.	2006	Review of literature regarding PA participation	NA	Key motivator for young children in sport is fun and enjoyment, whereas structure and competition can be off-putting. Financial issues also important and act as a barrier.
Atkins, et al.	2011	227 girls aged 10-14	USA	Task-oriented environment crucial, and parents role in creating this



Bean, et al.	2012	90 Third-to-Fifth grade (age 8-11) girls who participated in 'Girls on the Run'	USA	Importance of self-efficacy and positive environments which foster this among girls. Linked to this, heavy influence of peers and parents
Clark	2012	6 physically active girls as they move from year 5 to year 8 (ages 10 to 14)	UK	Outlines key processes related to notion of ability, including team selections, competitive bias and performative expectations. Often underscored and influenced by gendered expectations.
Clark and Paetcher	2007	9-11 year old girls who engage in playground football at school	UK	While playing football, girls are often held to feminine standards around restraint and niceness, therefore are discouraged from taking it too seriously
Collumbien, et al.	2019	15 girls aged 12 to 16 in a deprived 'slum' in Mumbai	India	Importance of girl-centric environment, and the role of parents in implementing change at home. This intervention points to the importance of local context and designing around the needs of that space and participants.
Eliasson	2011	43 children aged 11-12 (26 girls), 8 coaches and 52 parents involved in youth football	Sweden	Children and adults occupy 'different sports worlds' with different motivations and enjoyment factors
Farmer, et al.	2018	331 girls aged 8-12 who took part in 'Gaelic4Girls' programme	Ireland	Motivators for PA include fun, enjoyment and friends, whereas barriers to PA include lack of time, fear of injury (linked to competitiveness of others) and fear of comparatively weak physical skills.
Flintoff and Scraton	2001	21 girls aged 15	UK	Children with active parents are more likely to be active themselves: parents as role models
Goncalves, et al.	2011	6 women aged 20 – 21 currently playing sport.	Portugal	The importance of a task-oriented climate emerges as the most important factor for keeping women involved in sport throughout their childhood and adolescence.
Goodman and James	2017	34 children, aged 8-15, who play football, and their parents	UK	Parents don't recognise the frequency with which they engage in behaviours their child perceives to be negative
Harwood and Knight	2008	123 parents of tennis players	UK	Financial stressors were mentioned by 79% of parents
Jeanes	2011	13 girls aged 10-11 who play football at school	Australia	While girls engage in football, they are in some ways restricted in how they play by traditional gender norms. Forms of self-regulation among girls was identified.



Keathley, et al.	2013	11 current, and 11 former soccer players (aged 15-17) and their parents.	USA	Girls who discontinued playing were much more likely to attribute their decision to coaching than boys who discontinued.
Knight, et al.	2011	36 girls (12-15 years old) who play team sports	Canada	Discusses preferred parenting styles, before, during and after competition as it relates to girls involvement. During play, girls did want parents to encourage, focus on effort rather than results, and did not want parents to coach or argue with officials.
Light and Yasaki	2017	12 girls aged 13-16 (6 in Japan and 6 in Australia) who played in a basketball team	Japan and Australia	Peer relationships and a sense of learning were highlighted as two key factors that encourage girls to stay involved in organised sport, at an age when drop-out is high.
McCalpin, et al.	2017	17 girls aged 8-11 who played youth soccer	Canada	Themes relating to 'emphasising fun', 'supportive coaching', 'strong friendships' and 'family influence' are used to explain the girls motivations for playing soccer
Phillips and Awotidebe	2015	55 adolescent girls, between 15 -18 years old	South Africa	Key findings include the need for safety and parental support, as well as barriers relating to financial constraints and competing responsibilities
Rehrer, et al.	2011	100 boys and 73 girls aged 12-13	New Zealand	A combination of environmental and social factors is important in both encouraging and discouraging PA and should be taken into account when seeking to enhance PA of young people.
Ross, et al	2015	8 coaches and 4 administrators	Australia	A range of positive and negative parents behaviours were identified, including providing support, offering constructing feedback and encouragement, as well as interfering in coaching, disapproving of performance and lack of involvement
Satija, et al.	2018	174 students (48% girls), aged 12 -16 years	India	Barriers and enablers identified across 'personal', 'socio-cultural' and 'environmental' factors. Key issues highlighted include lack of social support for girls PA and lack of opportunities available.
Schaillee, et al.	2017	Three urban dance programmes for girls aged 5-25	Belgium	participants described benefits across four main areas including sport-related skills, positive identity, social competencies and positive values.
Stride, et al.	2019	11 women who engage in a weekly football session, aged 30 to 50	UK	Women in this research reflect back on positive youth experiences of football, highlighting the freedoms associated with

				unstructured play as well as the importance of friends and family.
Vissek et al.	2015	142 soccer players, 37 coaches and 57 parents	USA	Fun conceptualised around 4 tenets, 11 dimensions and 81 fun determinants.
Yungblut, et al.	2012	15 early adolescent girls (age 12-14) and 20 girls in late adolescence (age 15-18)	Canada	Five themes were identified relating to adolescent females' engagement in PA: friends or don't know anyone, good or not good enough, fun or not fun; good feeling or gross; and peer support or peer pressure.

### B3 – Features of Positive Environments

Author(s)	Year	Sample	Location	Findings
Allender, et al.	2006	Review of literature regarding PA participation	NA	Key motivator for young children in sport is fun and enjoyment, whereas structure and competition can be off-putting. Financial issues also important and act as a barrier.
Bean, et al.	2012	90 Third-to-Fifth grade (age 8-11) girls who participated in 'Girls on the Run'	USA	Importance of self-efficacy and positive environments which foster this among girls. Linked to this, heavy influence of peers and parents
Beltran-Carrillo, et al.	2012	20 adolescents (boys and girls) aged 17-18 in Spanish High Schools	Spain	Reliance on competition and performativity in PE, means that it is a key site for young people to learn about gendered discourse. Showcases the close links between PE experience and wider activity levels
Casey, et al.	2014	125 girls from year 7-9 (age 12 to 15)	Australia	Evaluation of a school-based intervention for girls. Discussion pinpoints the

				importance of the ways in which the programme is interpreted and delivered by the individual teacher/school and the potential benefits of using single-sex groupings.
Clark	2012	6 physically active girls as they move from year 5 to year 8 (ages 10 to 14)	UK	Outlines key processes related to notion of ability, including team selections, competitive bias and performative expectations. Often underscored and influenced by gendered expectations.
Cote	1999	15 individuals from 4 different family groups	Canada	Developmental model of sport: sampling phase (age 7-12) and specialising phase (age 13-15). Focus on deliberate play in the sampling phase.
Cote, et al.	2003	NA	NA	Differences between deliberate play and structured practice
Ennis	1999	Seven teachers and 15 girls involved in curriculum innovation	USA	Sport for Peace curriculum seen to improve girls' experiences by promoting ownership and co-operative environments
Farmer, et al.	2018	331 girls aged 8-12 who took part in 'Gaelic4Girls' programme	Ireland	Motivators for PA include fun, enjoyment and friends, whereas barriers to PA include lack of time, fear of injury (linked to competitiveness of others) and fear of comparatively weak physical skills.
Kirk and Oliver	2014	Summary of literature	NA	Girls often positioned as the problem, rather than unfavourable structures
Lopez	2019	78 Latina girls, aged 12-15	USA	Themes emerged linked to 'not wanting to be the centre of attention', 'gender based teasing' and 'treating girls like a "delicate flower"', as well as resistance and coping strategies.
McCalpin, et al.	2017	17 girls aged 8-11 who played youth soccer	Canada	Themes relating to 'emphasising fun', 'supportive coaching', 'strong friendships' and 'family influence' are used to explain the girls motivations for playing soccer
Oliver and Hamzeh	2010	5 girls aged 10 at one elementary school	USA	Girls self-identified barriers highlighted that gendered (and ethnic) stereotypes create very real barriers for their participation.
Sanchez-Hernandez, et al.	2018	Five PE classes in one secondary school	Spain	Critical pedagogy and co-operative learning in practice to challenge traditional gender roles in co-ed PE.
Spencer-Cavaliere, et al.	2017	9 women ultimate frisbee players, aged 16-19	Canada	As an alternative sport, Ultimate Frisbee aims to challenge the masculine, hyper-competitive nature of sport which puts many women off by relying on an ethos of care throughout the game.
Stride, et al.	2019	11 women who engage in a weekly	UK	Women in this research reflect back on positive youth experiences of football,

		football session, aged 30 to 50		highlighting the freedoms associated with unstructured play as well as the importance of friends and family.
Yungblut, et al.	2012	15 early adolescent girls (age 12-14) and 20 girls in late adolescence (age 15-18)	Canada	Five themes were identified relating to adolescent females' engagement in PA: friends or don't know anyone, good or not good enough, fun or not fun; good feeling or gross; and peer support or peer pressure.

**B4 – Imaginative Play and Storytelling**

Author(s)	Year	Sample	Location	Findings
Berk	1994	Review of literature	NA	The research suggests that Vygotsky's theory has much to say to teachers about the importance of promoting make-believe in pre-school and child care programs.
Devi et al	2018	60 children and 7 teachers from 2 preschools	Australia	Teachers' development of children's imaginative play tends to be minimal. Therefore, focusing on teachers' involvement in children's play is an important but under-researched dimension of play-based pedagogies in early childhood education.
Drews	2006	NA	USA	Filial Therapy and Parent Child Interaction Therapy, which have been shown to be effective in resolving poor parent-child attachment, increasing parental behavioural management, and decreasing child oppositional defiant and externalizing behaviours were highlighted.
Fleer	2011	Overview of Conceptual Play	Australia	How cognition and imagination work in unity and develop in complexity, with imagination acting as the bridge between play and learning.
Fleer	2018	Conceptual Play overview	NA	Imagination in play is foundational for imagination in conceptual learning, and therefore play-based programs make a key contribution to the development and learning of the young child.
Gray	2011	Review of literature	USA	5 functions of play: (1) Develop intrinsic interests and competencies. (2) Learn how to make decisions, solve problems, exert self-control, and follow rules (3) Learn to regulate their emotions (4) Make friends and learn to get along with others as equals. (5) Experience joy.

Guddemi and Eriksen	1992	Overview of outdoor learning environments	NA	Lists several indoor activities which can also be used as outdoor activities.
Hyndman	2015	Review of Literature	NA	The author provides commentary on a range of school playground interventions to encourage both structured and unstructured active play opportunities.
Hyndman et al	2016	Review of literature	NA	The authors look at studies of individual and social play, the effect of physical environments on active play, and the impact of school policies on children's active play on school playgrounds.
Loizou	2017	Data collected from planning documents, journal reflections and videos.	Cyprus	Teachers need explicit pedagogical support to begin to develop sophisticated epistemology on play and implement play pedagogy.
Marsh et al	2018	Surveyed 2000 parents of under-5s. Ethnography case studies of six families and over 17 hours of videos were analysed.	UK	Apps can enable children to engage in creativity and creative thinking which demonstrate exploration, involvement and enjoyment and persistence.
Nevski and Siibak	2016	Analysed the attitudes and practices of 198 parents who allowed their 0–3-year old children to use smart devices.	Estonia	Parents give three main reasons when rationalising their child's touch screen use, related to education, entertainment and behaviour regulation.
Oliver and Kirk	2016	Activist approach literature review	NA	There are four critical elements of an activist approach to research and advocacy for girls and physical education: Student-centred pedagogy, creating spaces in the curriculum for girls to critically study their embodiment, inquiry-based education centred-in-action and sustained listening and responding over time.
Pempek and McDaniel	2016	358 mothers were surveyed who had children between 12 and 48 months old on media use and wellbeing.	USA	In the sample, children 12-24 months used tablets less frequently than those 25-48 months, with 66% of younger children never using compared to only 45% of older children.

Perry	2008	3 young men, refugees from Southern Sudan. Ethnographic methods such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and artifact collection	USA	Results indicated that participants acted as storytellers and also talked explicitly about storytelling's cultural importance.
Ridgers et al	2012	Seventeen children (6 boys, 11 girls) aged 6-7 years participated in small focus groups before and after a 12-week Forest School.	UK	Found that Forest School had a positive influence on children's natural play and their knowledge of the natural world around them.
Rönnlund	2015	Swedish primary school.	Sweden	A spatially diverse and multi-characteristic schoolyard is likely to meet various and parallel ways of processing gender identity.
Stone	2017	Review of literature.	USA	This article affirms the essential role of play for the well-being of children within the school context. The article explores the definition of play, why play is so important, gives examples of play in schools, and advocates for a child-centred approach to learning.
Theobald	2016	24 children aged between 4 and a half and 5 and a half years took part and 1 teacher. 26 hours of video was recorded of the children in the playground and classroom.	Australia	Findings show how children as storytellers and story recipients use voice-related markers, gesture and physical actions to invoke and achieve competence within their peer group.
Watchman and Spencer-Cavaliere	2017	12 parents of children aged between 8 and 10 years were interviewed.	Canada	Parents may not recognise the benefits of free play in middle childhood.
Wood	2004	Literature review.	UK	Author provides recommendations of how to incorporate play in pedagogy.

## B5 – Positive Coaching Behaviours and Approaches

Author(s)	Year	Sample	Location	Findings
Atkins, et al.	2011	227 girls aged 10-14	USA	Task-oriented environment crucial, and coaches and parents' role in creating this.

Battaglia, et al.	2017	12 competitive hockey players, aged 11-13 (5 girls)	Canada	Punitive practices hinder development of young athletes, including sense of self and relationship with others.
Bean and Forneris	2017	Two programme leaders from a girls-only (age 10-12) PA mentoring programme	Canada	Key strategies for building individualised relationships with youth and allowing youth a voice.
Brieger, et al.	2015	99 male and 93 female athletes age 10-14 playing youth basketball	USA	Importance of task-oriented climate for girls in sport.
Fasting and Pfister	2000	38 high-level women footballers	Europe and USA	Coaching is still dominated by men. Issues with male coaches include aggressive communication styles and the feeling of not being taken seriously.
Fielding-Lloyd and Mean	2011	11 County FA staff members (6men, 5 women)	UK	Discusses the engrained nature of masculinity at a structural level, and how the responsibility for change is often placed with women. Lack of women at leadership positions is naturalised.
Goncalves, et al.	2011	6 women aged 20 – 21 currently playing sport.	Portugal	The importance of a task-oriented climate emerges as the most important factor for keeping women involved in sport throughout their childhood and adolescence.
Johnson, et al.	2017	290 students between 6 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade. 140 boys, 150 girls.	USA	Motivational climate more conducive to higher participation levels.
McCalpin, et al.	2017	17 girls aged 8-11 who played youth soccer	Canada	Themes relating to 'emphasising fun', 'supportive coaching', 'strong friendships' and 'family influence' are used to explain the girls' motivations for playing soccer.
Norman	2015	27 high performing women athletes	UK	Four key themes: support as a performer and a person; joint endeavour; positive communication; significance of gender.
Norman	2016	Review of coaching literature	NA	Summarises current literature which considers the coach-athlete relationship in relation to gender. Much identifies that women/girls prefer the coaching styles of other women.
Norman and French	2013	16 women athletes, aged 18-28.	UK	Examination of the coach-athlete relationship based on the voices of women athletes. Gender found to be a relevant topic of discussion which influences this relationship. They also call for a better power balance between coaches and athletes.
Reynders, et al.	2019	43 coaches, 346 athletes involved in	Belgium	The findings suggest that coaches can train to adopt a need-supportive style, to benefit athlete motivation and engagement.

		an intervention programme		
Sanchez-Hernandez, et al.	2018	Five PE classes in one secondary school	Spain	Critical pedagogy and co-operative learning in practice to challenge traditional gender roles in co-ed PE.
Santos, et al.	2017	12 youth field hockey coaches	Portugal	The perceived importance of PYD when coaching younger age groups, and how these values can be implemented in Coach Educations Courses.
Schaillee, et al.	2017	Three urban dance programmes for girls aged 5-25	Belgium	participants described benefits across four main areas including sport-related skills, positive identity, social competencies and positive values.
Weiss, et al.	2009	141 young women playing soccer between the ages of 13-18	USA	Results show that girls who experience positive communication more frequently, and play in a motivational climate, have higher enjoyment of soccer.



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