

Caroline Barakat
Ontario Technical University
Insight Grants Supplement 2022

Steps to enhance evidence-informed parental decision-making in relation to sport participation for girls

Although research has long linked benefits related to sport participation to social contextual factors, including young athletes' interactions with parents (Teques et al., 2018; Neely & Holt 2014), there is a research gap in exploring parental influence on sport participation for girls and addressing this relationship through the provision of evidence-informed tools that assist parents in navigating the sport experience for their daughters. Given the importance of parental roles in influencing sport participation for girls, it is essential to create and evaluate an evidence-informed toolkit that can assist parents in making good effective decisions that have the capacity to increase sport participation for girls. Therefore, the objectives of the proposed research are to:

- i. Explore parental perceptions in relation to sport participation for girls (e.g., ideal age, competitive versus recreational, ideal sport);
- ii. Develop an evidence-informed toolkit that can assist parents in making decisions related to sport participation for girls;
- iii. Evaluate the effectiveness of the developed toolkit for three groups of participants: parents and daughters enrolled in recreational sport programs, those in competitive sport programs, and those not enrolled in sport programs.

We will implement a 5-phase approach to this research. Phase I consists of conducting semi-structured interviews on a sample of parents, in order to explore parental perceptions in relation to sport participation for girls. This phase also consists of developing a data collection questionnaire for baseline and follow-up data in relation to the parents and girls' sport experiences. Phase II consists of creating the sport participation toolkit intervention, based on in-depth knowledge on parental perceptions in relation to sport participation that was gathered in Phase I, as well as existing tools from the literature. Phase III consists of quantitative data collection, as well as presenting the toolkit to a sample of participants from each group. Phase IV consists of follow-up data collection in order to gather information that allows for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the sport participation toolkit intervention. The last phase consists of disseminating this knowledge to end-users and policy makers.

This research is important for several reasons. Primarily, the knowledge will lead to the creation of an evidence-informed toolkit that targets parental criteria in making decisions related to sport participation for girls. It is anticipated that the knowledge generated will be used to increase sport participation among girls and reduce sport attrition. Understanding parental perceptions and developing a toolkit that assists in their decision-making in relation to their daughters' sport participation will allow for greater successes in sport participation among this

population, and thus will lead to related development benefits. This research also has the capacity to make the sport system more equitable and effective to the public by addressing sport participation.