

# Understanding Parents' Experiences in Facilitating Physically Active Leisure for their Children who are Overweight: Results and Implications

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We know:

- childhood obesity is a growing concern
- free time use and physical activity are modifiable factors
- parental support, parental physical activity levels, and parents' ability to facilitate physically active leisure for their children influences children's activity levels

We need to know more about:

- challenges parents of overweight children face in facilitating active leisure
- whether and in what ways leisure education can play a role in assisting with challenges

# Results

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- Parents are not entirely aware of their child's leisure interests (including sport interests)
- Parents constrain children's sport and active leisure participation
- Children having negative first or early experiences with recreation and sport which impact on continued participation and interest
- Program structures create participation barriers
- Leisure education sessions can help with acquiring necessary knowledge and skills to improve parents' ability to facilitate active leisure and sport participation

# Implications

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- Enhanced Participation:
  - Parents need support (i.e., knowledge of resources, help with eliminating barriers, financial assistance) in facilitating active leisure and sport experiences for their overweight children
  - Introductory or beginner skill-level programs for older children
  - Family sport participation opportunities that involve skill development
- Policy Makers:
  - Making “safe” sport environments a priority
  - Training of sport leaders to create inclusive and positive experiences that support continued participation

# Implications

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- Practitioners
  - attention to designing and delivering positive first experiences
  - more “try it” opportunities
  - need for “drop-in” instructional programs
- Future research:
  - explore characteristics of settings in which youth indicate they are relatively free from victimization
  - identify characteristics or qualities of experiences in which overweight youth enjoy physically active leisure and sport;
  - collect overweight children’s perspectives on sport experiences