

# COEDUCATION

# Coeducation

Coeducation involves having gender-diverse students – girls, boys, non-binary youth, trans, etc. – share the same space, participate in the same activity, or join the same team. This sheet aims to support your reflection on coeducation, with the understanding that the subject must be handled with care and tact.

## Important

- 1 Create practice contexts that take into account obstacles to physical activity among girls. For example, many teenage girls avoid being active in the presence of boys, which can hinder their engagement and by extension their learning progress.
- 2 Resist the temptation to establish rules that perpetuate gender stereotypes for purposes forcing girls to integrate. For example, in team sports, rather than giving more points for a goal scored by a girl, let's require that all members of the team have scored before being allowed to count again.
- 3 Keep in mind that gender-diverse youth also encounter obstacles to the practice of physical activity, many of which are similar to those experienced by girls.

## It's not the same with girls!

The proportion of girls who meet the recommended level of physical activity is far lower than it is for boys. Some teenage girls may have difficulty mastering basic skills, while others tend to avoid competition, with the result that many of them are not particularly fond of traditional sports. A variety of activities that meet the preferences of girls should be offered so that they, too, learn to enjoy being active for life.



## Separating girls and boys not always the solution

While the presence of boys can be an obstacle for some girls, others enjoy sharing the field with them. They may be motivated by their male counterparts and appreciate their competitiveness. What's more, the non-coed approach presents a number of organizational challenges for schools, often interfering with its implementation, even when it seems more appropriate (rooms, schedules, availability of teachers, etc.). Consequently, separating boys and girls at all times is probably not the best way to meet the students' needs.



## Gender identity

During adolescence, youth learn to assert their identity. In terms of gender, a young person may identify as a boy, a girl, neither or both, or may even see themselves elsewhere on the continuum. What's important is to respect each student and make them feel heard in situations involving their relationship to gender.



## Paths for reflection

- Is it possible to bring together youth for certain activities based on criteria other than gender (skill level, interest in competition, age, etc.)?
- Have you tried bringing together girls in certain situations? Do you think that this is more conducive to learning? Participation? Engagement?
- Do you plan to include a certain number of girls-only activities in the regular or extracurricular schedule in order to attract those who would find them more fulfilling?
- Do you let youth decide, on occasion, whether or not they want to practice their activity as part of a mixed group?

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