

Building Capacity and Partnerships to Deliver Physical Activity Programs, Services and Environments for Mothers and their Families



When delivering physical activity or sport initiatives targeting mothers and their children, it is important that organizations have the capacity to adapt, modify or develop programs, services and environments that respond to their specific needs and concerns. Knowledgeable and informed staff will develop initiatives that are interesting, safe, beneficial and appropriate.

Assess Your Organizational Capacity

Use the *Building Your Case: Investing in Physical Activity for Mothers and their Families* fact sheet to determine what you want to do, your rationale for doing it and whether it fits with your organizational mandate. Once you have established the fit, assess your current capacity to implement your proposed initiatives. If you need to build capacity in any area, here are some ideas that can help you.

Education

A number of groups can help provide the education needed to build capacity in issues such as nutrition, cultural, low-income, childcare, health, social problems, physical activity and sport.

- **Universities, colleges and high schools** - offer both full-credit (curriculum-based) and short-term (weekend/evening) courses. These groups will also develop education sessions (usually for a small fee) specifically for organizations as a professional development opportunity for staff.
- **Organizations and associations** - health-related organizations can educate about health concerns, including the benefits of physical activity. Cultural associations can educate about customs, sensitivities and modifications that can maximize participation. Social service organizations can provide information on social issues and how to structure subsidies, transportation support, childcare and outreach services to best meet the needs of vulnerable groups.
- **Conferences and seminars** - local opportunities are often found in newspapers or online in community bulletins. Provincial/territorial/federal government departments and organizations often host annual events so check their websites regularly, or ask to be added to their mailing lists so you don't miss any opportunities.
- **Partners** - groups in your community may have already built capacity in this area. Connect with them to learn about what worked, what did not, and the kind of training/education opportunities they provided.

Training

- **Health professionals** - physiotherapists, chiropractors, doctors, nurses, well-baby clinics, prenatal programs and others have specialized training in numerous health issues and the specific needs of pregnant or new mothers. Request their assistance to train staff about conditions, surgeries (pre- and post- options), postpartum depression, safe modifications/adaptations, etc. Developing this relationship can also increase referrals to your programs and services.
- **Formal physical activity training and certification programs** for pre and postnatal fitness specialists and instructors are offered through local, provincial, national and international organizations (e.g. BABY & ME FITNESS, Fit 4 Two®, canfitpro). Plan to contact them to see what they offer.

Next Steps

1. Assess the current organizational and staff capacity you have available to implement your plan.
2. Develop a strategy to build capacity where you need it to better serve the needs of mothers and their families in your community.

Helpful Resources

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) Mothers in Motion Website Resources - www.caaws.ca/mothersinmotion/e/

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) Resources including: Active Living During Pregnancy: physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines for mother and baby; Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Aged 5-11, 12-17 and 18-64; and PARmed-X for Pregnancy - www.csep.ca

Alberta Centre for Active Living Resources - More Than Child's Play; Physical Activity for Mothers and Babies...It's Not Just Physical; Promoting a Healthy Body Image Through Physical Activity; and, Promoting Physical Activity for Post Natal Mothers: The Role of Self-regulatory Efficacy - www.centre4activeliving.ca/resources.cgi?s=6;d=1

Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada: Exercise in Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period - www.sogc.org/guidelines/public/129E-JCPG-June2003.pdf

Canadian Public Health Association: Caring for You and Your Baby - <http://you-and-your-baby.cpha.ca/>

Women's Health Council of Ontario: Healthy Measures: A Tool Kit for Promoting Healthy Weights in Your Community - www.healthymeasures.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada: Healthy Pregnancy website - www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-gs/index-eng.php

Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) - www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/prog-ini/cpnp-pcnp/index-eng.php

Canadian Paediatric Society: Caring for Kids - www.caringforkids.cps.ca/

Safe Kids Canada - www.safekidscanada.ca/Parents/Home/index.aspx

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Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) Tel: 613-562-5667

For more information on CAAWS' *Mothers in Motion* project, please contact caaws@caaws.ca or visit the website at www.caaws.ca/mothersinmotion/e/.

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mothers *in* motion