



# Involving Multi-sectoral Partners to Increase Physical Activity for Mothers and their Families



Getting more mothers physically active in a community is the collective responsibility of all partners. Creating the widest network will have the greatest impact because partnerships allow groups to do more together for the people in their community. Through partnering you have access to more resources, varied expertise and diverse networks to communicate and promote initiatives.

## Who are Your Partners?

### Access Partners

Access partners can give you access to mothers (to target your programs) as well as access to services that are needed for them to participate (childcare, transportation, etc.). Through these partners, you are able to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity and related opportunities available in your community as well as overcome barriers to participation.

Examples of access partners: workplaces; women's organizations; well-baby clinics; daycares; schools; pharmacies; grocery stores; health professionals (e.g. doctors, physiotherapists); women's centres and women's shelters; adult learning centres; community associations; church groups; etc.

### Support Partners

Support partners provide support for groups and organizations that deliver physical activity programs or services. Working with support partners can allow you to capitalize on their expertise or good will and do more with these additional resources.

Examples of support partners:

- **Businesses** - financial or in-kind support through donating merchandise, providing staff, space, childcare or sponsorship.
- **Schools, churches, offices, military bases, malls, etc.** - access to gyms, fitness facilities, playgrounds, parks, childcare, halls, places to walk, etc.
- **Libraries** - activity rooms, pedometer lending programs, etc.
- **Provincial/territorial/federal governments and foundations** - community grants for physical activity and sport development.
- **Organizations** - education or training around different health conditions (postpartum depression, etc.) or social issues (low-income, cultural issues, etc.).
- **Health professionals** - referrals for physical activity (e.g. doctors, public health) and training on safe techniques or adaptations (e.g. physiotherapists, chiropractors).
- **Media** - TV, radio and print communication access to promote, educate and showcase accomplishments.

### Program Partners

Program partners deliver physical activity programs or services. Working with program partners allows you to offer a greater variety of physical activity and sport options for mothers and their families. These partnerships also allow you to offer separate programs at the same time (e.g. one for mothers and one for children) to provide greater flexibility for mothers to participate.

Examples of program partners:

- **Organizations and associations** - deliver and manage physical activity programs, events or services for their members, clients and the general public (e.g. heart and stroke, churches, cultural associations, YWCAs, etc.).
- **Workplaces** - many workplaces have on-site facilities and offer programs.

- **Municipal/regional recreation departments** - deliver physical activity/sport programs and manage facilities.
- **Municipal/regional public health departments** - deliver physical activity programs.
- **Private fitness clubs** - access for members to physical activity programs, fitness facilities, private trainers, etc. (e.g. GoodLife Fitness, Curves, private fitness centre, etc.).
- **Sport clubs and leagues** - deliver sport opportunities to their members.
- **Provincial/territorial/national government departments and not-for-profit organizations** - deliver programs and provide valuable resources.

## Working with Partners

Partnering with others takes time and is not always easy so plan to be flexible and open to new ideas.

Steps to get you started:

1. Develop your draft business case.
2. Brainstorm on who your partners should be - access, support and program partners. You should have partners from each group. It is also important to include mothers as partners and include them in your early discussions so that they can also suggest partners.
3. Meet with each partner individually to share your business case, why you think their involvement is important and what you see as their role. This personal effort will be appreciated.
4. Once you have confirmed your partners, include their involvement in your business case, set up a partners meeting to share the overall plan and begin implementation.

## Successful Partnering Tips

- Communicate and involve partners regularly so they feel engaged.
- Recognize and thank them often for their contributions.
- Be on the look out for new partners and encourage existing partners to do the same.
- Partner with mothers on all aspects of your initiatives, including meetings with potential partners to help make your case - their testimonials of the need for their involvement will have a huge impact.

DEC. 2011

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For more information on CAAWS' *Mothers in Motion* project, please contact [caaws@caaws.ca](mailto:caaws@caaws.ca) or visit the website at [www.caaws.ca/mothersinmotion/e/](http://www.caaws.ca/mothersinmotion/e/).

Support for this project provided by:

Ontario Trillium Foundation  Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario

 Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity  
Association canadienne pour l'avancement des femmes du sport et de l'activité physique

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