

Collaboration Strategies to Support Leisure and Physical Activities for Children and Youth with Disabilities: A Rapid Review

November 2018

Summary

It is important that policy makers address barriers families of children with disabilities and organizations face in accessing and providing services related to leisure and physical activity.

The four included studies show several collaboration models for different initiatives (see reverse side for more details). However, **the nature of results does not allow us to analyse the impact of these collaboration strategies on participation** of youth and children with disabilities in physical and leisure activities.

Implications

The results of this review will be conveyed to organizations and policymakers involved in developing and implementing resources and initiatives related to provincial policies and regulations that are inclusive of youth with disabilities.

Given the nature of results obtained and the limitations associated with rapid review methods, **more studies are needed** to identify successful collaboration strategies leading to an increased participation of youth and children with disabilities in physical and leisure activities.

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What is the current situation?

- Youth with disabilities are at risk for lower participation in leisure and physical activities despite demonstrated health benefits.
- In order to develop programs and policies that support health through participation in physical and leisure activities, decision makers need to know the existing evidence supporting changes in practices and policies.

What is the objective?

- To inform decision makers **on evidence-based collaboration strategies** supporting participation in physical and leisure activities for children and youth with disabilities.

How was the review conducted?

- A protocol developed according to the rapid review methods proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- A comprehensive, peer-reviewed literature search was conducted in electronic databases from 2008 until 2018. Time constraints and selected criteria led to exclusion of gray literature.
- Any type of study referring to a collaboration strategy supporting participation in leisure or physical activities was included.
- Study selection, data extraction, and quality appraisal were conducted by pairs of two reviewers independently. Discrepancies were resolved by discussion or a third reviewer.
- Knowledge users were involved throughout the process.

What did the review find?

- The search yield 1707 citations with 4 articles identified as relevant.
- **Included studies failed to report details on the strategies used or provide any measures of impact**, limiting our ability to draw any conclusions on outcomes of interest.
- Collaboration mainly pertained to association between the community, research, and public sector and included activities such as community participatory research, knowledge transfer partnership, and capacity building model.
- While all these models have unique challenges, they also offer potential to develop method-based partnerships aiming to be more meaningful for stakeholders involved.

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Youth Unified Sports Programme of Special Olympics

Europe
[2012]

Program Description : A program for the participation of youth with an intellectual disability in a sports team with other youth with or without disabilities.

Collaboration Mechanism : School and community environments.

Collaboration Details : Community associations in partnership with schools, special olympic clubs, and other local sports clubs.

Highlights : Strong partnership established for several years now. Good reputation of the organization worldwide. Inclusion culture. Catalyst role of coaches.

Challenges : No information was provided in relation to challenges faced.

Knowledge translation partnership

Canada
[2017]

Program Description : A community-based approach to promote physical activity in youth with cerebral palsy led by a collaboration between researchers and knowledge users.

Collaboration Mechanism : Research, city, school and community environments, and associations.

Collaboration Details : Online consensus consultation, Delphi study, roundtables.

Highlights : Various knowledge users involved. Allows for just-in-time needs assessment from knowledge users. Cost of establishing this partnership was very low.

Challenges : No information was provided in relation to challenges faced.

Community-partnered initiative with urban school districts

United States
[2017]

Program Description : Community-partnered initiative with disadvantaged urban school districts to develop and evaluate interventions for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Collaboration Mechanism : Research, community and school districts.

Collaboration Details : Creation of three distinct partnership groups to develop the intervention, and then adapt and implement this intervention in their respective community.

Highlights : Gives a voice to more vulnerable populations. Facilitate participation and engagement. Friendly and accessible meeting place.

Challenges : Partnership was long to put in place. Establishing trust is essential to the partnership.

Ecological model of community

Canada
[2002]

Program Description : Ecological model of community-focused therapeutic recreation and life skills services for youth with disabilities.

Collaboration Mechanism : Healthcare and community environments.

Collaboration Details : Create partnerships with the community to provide rehabilitation services for youth with disabilities. Support the community capacity, building toward sustainability.

Highlights : Emphasizes existing community strengths. Services and resources are offered in partnership. Change of vision to a community-based capacity building model.

Challenges : Only an initial support is provided and then autonomy is encouraged. Setting priorities remains a challenge to strike a balance between equity of access to resources and their distribution according to the needs of the population.