Let's Move It! An Overview of a PSRM Program for Girls

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INTRODUCTION

There has been a plethora of research that has summarized the unique barriers to girls’ sport and physical activity (PA) participation (Wisbee-Blomstal & Lavoi, 2007) and specifically with girls in urban areas (Sabo, Miller, McNeill, & Haywood, 2004). Sabo and Valdis (2006) concluded that urban girls of color face a variety of challenges that prevent them from undertaking and/or sustaining sport and PA participation. In light of this, researchers (Sabo, Ward, & Cotton, 2009) and organizations such as Team Up For Youth have provided various best practices for urban girls’ programs to attract girls and sustain their sport and PA participation. Personal and Social Responsibility Model (PSRM) (Hellison, 1995) is a youth development physical activity program that aims to promote personal and social responsibility in sport. PSRM programs are participantly-directed and have specific emphasis on respect, empowerment, and self-direction, which reflect many of the characteristics of best practices identified in research for urban girls’ programs. Therefore, a PSRM program could prove to be extremely valuable with an at-risk population. An overview of a current girls’ PSRM program conducted in Detroit by the presenters is highlighted, with focus on program findings and suggestions for future PSRM programs with girls.

Legs Move It! (PMI) is a collaborative project with Let’s Move It! (LMI) (Get It Going, Keep It Going: A Resource for Sports & Exercise Programs for Urban Girls; Team-Up For Youth). Let’s Move It! is a 10-week, 6 to 10-year-old female program that is offered during the school year and in the summer (East Meadow, NY: Women’s Sports Foundation). Let’s Move It! is a PA program designed for at-risk and underprivileged girls in urban areas. This program is operated by the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, University of Minnesota. The program design includes the following components: communication, modeling respect, personal and social responsibility themes, and active participation. The evaluation of the program is implemented through the TARE tool, developed by Wright, P.M. & Craig, M. (2011). The TARE tool includes the following items: “Respect the teacher”, “Be willing to try new things”, “Not being bossy”, “Be willing to do Let’s Move It! again next year,” “I loved playing a new sport like football and I loved doing jump-rope and hula hoop”, “I loved everything in Let’s Move It!”, “I like yoga”, and “If I were to do Let’s Move It! again next year”. The TARE tool measures the personal and social responsibility themes of interaction, transfer, empowerment, and teacher-student relationships that are frequently applied in the program. Specific implementation with providing girls leadership roles and spending individual time with girls to promote the transfer of life skills in other settings were also noted. Regarding student responsibility, program leaders observed all students display self-control and most students displayed active participation, effort, self-direction, and caring. Most girls were willing to try every activity and often encouraged each other by providing positive feedback.

Evaluation by Participants

A post-program evaluation of the girls that were part of the PMI program revealed the following results: 75% of the girls indicated they would “like to do Let’s Move It! again next year”. The girls stated that the program was “fun”, “it was a different sport”, “it’s like a class”, “I learned things”, and “I want to return next year”.

Evaluation of Program

Two types of evaluation were completed: evaluation of program fidelity, implementation, and effectiveness (by program leaders and evaluation of program) and evaluation of program objectives. The Program Leaders Evaluation, developed by LaVoi, 2007) is a 20-item TARE tool that was found to be a reliable tool for assessing program fidelity (Olgren & Craig, 2011) and allows program leaders to assess their implementation of specific responsibility-based teaching strategies (Hellison, 1995). The TARE tool has five basic levels of responsibility: Level 1—Self-direction and have a specific onus on respect, empowerment, and self-direction, which reflect many of the characteristics of best practices identified in research for urban girls’ programs. Therefore, a PSRM program could prove to be extremely valuable with an at-risk population. An overview of a current girls’ PSRM program conducted in Detroit by the presenters is highlighted, with focus on program findings and suggestions for future PSRM programs with girls.

Background

Girls’ Sport and Physical Activity Participation: Challenges and Barriers

There are numerous barriers and challenges to getting girls involved in sport and physical activity including: dislike of certain sports or exercise (Griesser et al., 2006), concerns about safety (Dwyer et al., 2006; Griesser et al., 2006), competence in athletic skills (Slater & Tiggemann; Slater, 2011) and fear of embarrassment (Griesser et al., 2006). Slater, Tiggemann, Stewart, and Taylor, 2000) and poor experiences with a coach or teammates (Griesser et al., 2006). The unique barriers to girls’ sport and physical activity participation are numerous (Griesser et al., 2006; Slater & Tiggemann; Slater, 2011) and specifically with girls in urban areas (Sabo, Miller, McNeill, & Haywood, 2004). Sabo and Valdis (2006) concluded that urban girls of color face a variety of challenges that prevent them from undertaking and/or sustaining sport and PA participation. In light of this, researchers (Sabo, Ward, & Cotton, 2009) and organizations such as Team Up For Youth have provided various best practices for urban girls’ programs to attract girls and sustain their sport and PA participation. Personal and Social Responsibility Model (PSRM) (Hellison, 1995) is a youth development physical activity program that aims to promote personal and social responsibility in sport. PSRM programs are participantly-directed and have specific emphasis on respect, empowerment, and self-direction, which reflect many of the characteristics of best practices identified in research for urban girls’ programs. Therefore, a PSRM program could prove to be extremely valuable with an at-risk population. An overview of a current girls’ PSRM program conducted in Detroit by the presenters is highlighted, with focus on program findings and suggestions for future PSRM programs with girls.

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