



Family
Friendly Sport



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Family Friendly
SPORT

FFS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATIONS



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LOCAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT TO THE FAMILY FRIENDLY SPORT BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATIONS

Local policy recommendation contained within the document represent a set of policy measures that are supporting recognition, development and promotion of family friendly sport across Europe and starting from the grassroots level. Family friendly sport is seen as a platform for further enhancement of the societal role of sport and all benefits it brings, from strengthening intergenerational dialogue within families and promoting healthy lifestyle across generation, to supporting social cohesion within communities and inciting education in and through sport. These recommendations are designed by the newly established, pan-European, and cross-sectoral “Family Friendly Sport” network of stakeholders that are devoted to advancement of family friendly sport in Europe. As such, FFS local policy recommendations are made for all local authorities and national federations that are interested in family friendly sport and societal benefits that brings, and who are ready to integrate these recommendations into existing local policies and strategies concerning young people.

By acknowledging that:

- 1) Sport as neutral language, spoken across generations, has pivotal role in supporting intergenerational dialogue and boosting intergenerational understanding among family members. It helps to overcome generational prejudices, supports communication among them and strengthen family bonds.
- 2) There is a growing need for increasing the number of people in sport and physical activities across all generations as a tool for their mental and physical health, and family friendly sport concept unequivocally leads toward more people in sport and physical activities.
- 3) Cross-sectoral synergy between non-formal education and sport is a powerful driving force for establishing education in and through sport practices that will contribute to personal and professional development of citizens from all generations.
- 4) Sports is recognized for its contribution to the social cohesion, community building and overcoming social, economic, political and other differences between people of all ages.
- 5) Family friendly sport activities represent a platform for promotion of fundamental European values of peace, tolerance, solidarity, diversity and freedom.

Family Friendly Sport Network members are inviting local authorities and national federations to discuss and integrate below presented FFS local policy recommendations into relevant youth policies, action plans and strategies. More concretely to:

- 1) **Clearly recognize importance of strengthening bonds between family members and supporting family integration as a response to challenges that arise in the child / youth social development.** Hectic and intense way of living today made significant contribution to the shrinking space for high-quality family time and dialogue. Consequently, we are witnessing weakening of the family bonds and insufficient capacities of the families to support children / young people in their social and personal development. Therefore, there is an increasing importance for recognition of the family integration among topics and priorities of the local policies, strategies and action plans concerning young people and children.
- 2) **Emphasize and promote importance of fundamental European values in children and youth development.** Fundamental European values represent a focal points of children / youth personal and social development, and as such their recognition, promotion and dissemination in local action plans and strategies for children and young people are of high importance. This will lead toward greater number of quality actions and activities by all relevant stakeholders that are strengthening values of solidarity, tolerance, diversity, and many more.
- 3) **Clearly recognize lack of participation in sport and physical activities across all generations and all negative impacts it has on their development, physical and mental wellbeing.** There is no relevant policy and research on European and/or national level on public health, that is not stressing problem of lack of practicing sport among all generations, its rapid decrease with older generations, and its importance for maintaining or improving physical and mental health of citizens. Hence, addressing this issue of encouraging greater participation of all in sport and physical activities became a pressing priority that should be tackled from grassroot (local) to national and European level.
- 4) **Invite for greater intergenerational dialogue and understanding as a mechanism for addressing ever deeper generational gap that is leading toward prejudices, mistrust, and exclusion between generations.** Ageing of Europe, commonly addressed in the European policies and documents, is a forthcoming demographic challenge that is leading toward poor communication, understanding, trust and inclusion between generations. Challenge that becomes more worrisome with rapid technological development and change of habits, language and needs. This includes the intergenerational dialogue taking place within families. Local action plans, strategies and policies dealing with youth and children's issues should become a first instance in addressing this challenge and boosting intergenerational dialogue and understanding.

- 5) **Introduce concept of Family friendly sport as a tool for health, intergenerational dialogue, and family integration.** Family friendly sport is unique concept that allows children / young people to regularly practice sport together with their caretakers (parents), establishes effective intergenerational dialogue practices and contributes to the non-formal and informal education of children and young people. Wide application of this concept in local communities is contributing to the greater number of people across all generations in sport and physical activities, improved physical and mental health, strengthened family bonds and intergenerational understanding, and improved opportunities for social and personal development of young people and children. Thus, local authorities are invited to introduce this concept into their local policies and strategies and ensure institutional support to the popularization of Family friendly sport.
- 6) **Acknowledge importance, opportunities and benefits arising from education in and through sport.** Highly attractive form of activism across generations and universally understood by all despite the differences, sport is a fertile ground for non-formal and informal education. Synergy between the two (sport and non-formal education), represent a perfect mechanism for developing key social competences of young people and children, enhance communication and understanding among family members and in general between different generations, and empowering fundamental values of inclusion, solidarity, tolerance, etc. Having in mind its applicability and effectiveness, local authorities should promote and support all education in and through sport opportunities that would contribute to achievement of the societal development aims in their local communities.
- 7) **Dedicate financial resources for funding, promotion and support of the Family friendly sport activities of the grassroot sport clubs and organizations.** Facing consequences of the numerous challenges such are pandemic or economic inflations, many grassroot clubs and organizations are brought to the edge of existence, while its importance for the community and social development remains indisputable. Family friendly sport is a new concept that provides opportunity to all sport clubs and organizations to diversify and provide attractive programs to their members and to the community and achieve all the above explained benefits. However, they need to be financially and in any other way, supported by local authorities. Therefore, local authorities are invited to dedicate and/or increase funding of the Family friendly sport activities within their capacities.
- 8) **Support capacity building opportunities for the sport clubs and organizations to provide Family friendly sport activities in their work.** Being a newly established concept, Family friendly sport to be applied requires development of the set of competences by the staff of the sport clubs and organizations such are intergenerational sport activities, education in and through sport, inclusiveness, and conflict transformation, and many more. Hence, local authorities are invited to envisage support to all kind of capacity building activities that will empower sport clubs and organizations to integrate

Family friendly sport practices in their work, and through that support local authorities in achievement of their societal development goals.

- 9) Promotion of the Family friendly sport concept to the relevant stakeholders – sport clubs and organizations, and final beneficiaries – children, young people and their caretakers (parents).** With ambition to contribute to the further popularization of the Family friendly sport among both, sport clubs and organizations as providers and young people / children and their caretakers as beneficiaries of those programs, local authorities should engage in concept promotion. Sport clubs and organizations need to be faced with arising opportunities for their work and for contribution to the societal role of sport in the communities. From the other side, young people / children and their caretakers should be introduced into benefits that Family friendly sport is bringing to their physical and mental health, family integration and societal development.
- 10) Foster greater cross-sectoral synergy and cooperation between sport clubs and organizations doing non-formal education in advancing Family friendly sport (and similar) concept that will help resolving societal challenges of today.** Innovation is deeply rooted in the interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration for creation of the new concepts and solutions. Same applies to the fields of sport and non-formal education that both have ambition to further contribute to the societal and personal development of children and youth, as well as to the resolution and addressing of societal challenges. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage cooperation among these target groups and provide support for their activities and actions. This will contribute to the further advancement and exploration of the Family friendly sport concept and improve its application on local level.