

new!

WOMEN'S
SPORTS
FOUNDATION

Go Girl Go!

leader's guide
ages 5-7



everything counts!!

acknowledgements

About the Women's Sports Foundation

The Women's Sports Foundation—the leading authority on the participation of women and girls in sports—advocates for equality, educates the public, conducts research, and offers grants to promote sports and physical activity for girls and women. Founded by Billie Jean King in 1974, the Women's Sports Foundation builds on her legacy as a champion athlete, advocate of social justice, and agent of change. We strive for gender equity and fight discrimination in all aspects of athletics. Our work shapes public attitude about women's sports and athletes, builds capacities for organizations that get girls active, provides equal opportunities for girls and women, and supports physically and emotionally healthy lifestyles. The Women's Sports Foundation is recognized worldwide for its leadership, vision, strength, expertise, and influence.

Thanks To...

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The Women's Sports Foundation would like to thank the following staff for their contributions:

[Sarah Axelson](#) Program Coordinator
[Candice Dixon](#) National GoGirlGo! Coordinator
[Jennifer Eddy](#) Senior Director of Programs
[Elizabeth Flores](#) Program Officer
[Lindsay Hock](#) Web Editor
[Stacy Holand](#) Athlete Marketing Manager
[Kathryn Olson](#) CEO
[Marjorie Snyder, Ph.D.](#) Research Director/ Program Consultant

The Women's Sports Foundation also thanks its expert review panel:

[Kate Ackerman, M.D.](#) Sports Medicine, Children's Hospital Boston
[Mariah Burton Nelson](#) Executive Director, American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation
[Diane Dahm, M.D.](#) Orthopedics, Mayo Clinic
[Anne Davis](#) National Manager, Rec Coaches & Programs, United States Tennis Association
[Sumru Erkut, Ph.D.](#) Associate Director and Senior Research Associate, Wellesley Centers for Women
[Karen A. Ford](#) National Manager, Tennis in the Parks, United States Tennis Association
[Nancy Gruver](#) Founder, New Moon for Girls

[Janet Malley, Ph.D.](#) Associate Director, Academic and Research Program Officer, and Assistant Research Scientist, Institute for Research on Women and Gender, University of Michigan
[Jennifer McIntosh, M.Ed.](#) Director, Women's Health Program, University of Michigan Hospitals and Health Centers
[Eleni Rossides](#) Executive Director, Washington Tennis and Education Foundation
[Don Sabo, Ph.D.](#) Professor of Health Policy; Director, Center for Research on Physical Activity, Sport & Health, D'Youville College; Senior Sport & Health Policy Advisor, Women's Sports Foundation
[Michelle Segar, Ph.D., M.P.H.](#) Research Investigator, Institute for Research on Women and Gender, University of Michigan; Founder, www.essentialsteps.net, *Transforming exercise from a chore into a gift™*
[Helen Siegel](#) Executive Director, Girls First
[Tina Sloan Green, M.Ed.](#) President/Executive Director, Black Women in Sport Foundation
[Maryann Tomovich Jacobsen, R.D., M.S.](#) nutrition consultant; Founder, RaiseHealthyEaters.com
[Jean Wiecha, Ph.D.](#) Chair of the Coalition, Healthy Out of School Time (HOST)

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Women's Sports Foundation / 424 West 33rd Street, Suite 150 New York, NY 10001
info@WomensSportsFoundation.org / www.WomensSportsFoundation.org/GoGirlGo

introduction by Laila Ali



Dear Program Leader,

Chances are you've seen the value of girls being involved in sports and physical activity firsthand. For many of you, there is nothing more rewarding than witnessing a shy eight-year-old blossom into a vocal social leader because of skills she learned on the soccer field. And certainly you've known an inactive girl with little confidence and poor classroom performance. Suddenly, her confidence and grades soar simply because she is exposed to dance.

Our GoGirlGo! program is designed to help develop these exact kinds of transformation through an educational, activity-centered curriculum with an emphasis on reducing and preventing the potential hazards of dealing with childhood and adolescent issues in unhealthy ways.

Not only have I seen transformations like these, I experienced one of them personally. Many assume that as the daughter of a beloved public figure, my life was always simple and successful and that I was always driven to be my best. But what they don't know is that until I found my passion in boxing, I was involved in some of the dangerous behavior that we so desperately want to keep today's girls away from.

Our goal is that you use this course to do two things: 1) introduce the fun of physical activity to girls who may be sedentary and 2) nurture an honest conversation about the social and health-risks that girls face today. As a Program Leader or a coach, you hold an extremely influential place in a girl's life, one that is often second only to her parents'. Your guidance, paired with your girls' desire to achieve for you, is the ideal combination for serious motivation, and hopefully, change.

Many of my fellow elite athletes have similar stories to mine; these stories are the foundation of GoGirlGo!. While topics can be sensitive and difficult, they are introduced by some of the best-known and most-effective athletes in the world. Testimonials from everyday girls are also included as a way for your girls to connect personally to each story.

Girls are also introduced to the GoGirls. The GoGirls, each with her own distinct personality and look, are cartoon characters designed to catch the eye of and be fun for the 5-7 age group.

For all ages, each topic has a dedicated session and provides you with expert information, activities, ideas, discussion topics, and resources for further exploration.

Billie Jean King, the founder of the Women's Sports Foundation and the inspiration behind the conception of our GoGirlGo! program, is a long-time champion for social change and individual development through sports and physical activity. By her wise guidance, woven into this entire curriculum, because of our expert contributors' knowledge and through your desire to advance every girl in your life, we can come together to give all girls the power to succeed in a healthy, happy life.

Sincerely,

Laila Ali
President, Women's Sports Foundation
World Champion athlete, celebrity host and correspondent

P.S. Sometimes sharing ideas meant solely for adults can make children feel very special, like they are privy to something not necessarily meant for their eyes. Please feel free to share my above message with your girls, as I would consider reaching just one of them through my words a total success.

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endorsements



awards



2004

2006

2008

2011

introduction

Everyone is concerned about the challenges facing girls these days—from the pressure to smoke and drink to dealing with bullies and intolerance to being stressed out about how they look and if they fit in. We want girls to stay healthy, be active, eat right, and feel good about themselves. Sometimes girls don't have anyone to talk to about tough issues, and even when they do, the message may not be clear and does not always get through.

Most girls will turn to their friends or the media for information. And a lot of issues they will just keep to themselves. That's why your role is so important. There are some tough issues discussed in this curriculum. Research shows us that girls want a caring adult to talk to about the tough stuff. You have a great opportunity to develop an open environment for sharing and listening.

SOME BASIC GUIDELINES

- The materials in this guide are directed at girls ages 5–7 years old. Please visit www.WomensSportsFoundation.org/GGGCurriculum to download or order materials for other age groups.
- Be prepared to guide the girls through this curriculum. This curriculum is designed to be delivered by adult program staff, leaders, coaches, professionals, etc., and is meant to be integrated into a sport or physical activity program.
- You may find yourself in the challenging position of providing a safe place where girls may say things they want kept confidential. One common code for confidentiality is to tell the girls at the beginning that anything they disclose that poses a threat to the safety of themselves or others will not be kept secret. In some cases, this is required by law.
- It's important to understand that this material serves a wide range of communities and populations throughout the country. What may be a pressing topic in one community, or for one girl, may not seem appropriate to a parent, depending on a family's particular values or beliefs. We've carefully presented this material based on what research has shown to be the issues most relevant to this age group, but we recommend making parents and guardians aware of the content before you begin. Parents may review sessions by visiting www.WomensSportsFoundation.org/GGGCurriculum. It's OK for a parent to have her/his daughter opt out of a particular session.
- Focus on *cooperation*, not competition. Although the competitive aspect of sports can be valuable, these sessions are designed to make all girls feel included and comfortable to participate. When there is a heavy focus on competition, girls who have less experience with physical activity may feel discouraged. In general, we recommend encouraging girls to work cooperatively and help each other during the activities throughout the sessions. Know the girls in your group. As a Program Leader, you should make your own determination about whether or not your group would benefit from a bit of healthy competition.
- These materials can be adapted for use with girls with disabilities. For more information on how to engage girls with disabilities in physical activity, visit www.aapar.org or see Appendix C: Resources.

Facilitation Tips

- Be supportive. Give positive feedback. Look for qualities and behaviors to praise. Avoid being judgmental. Most girls get enough of that already.
- Create a safe environment for the girls to share their feelings and ideas. Try to structure the conversations so that even the quiet girls have a chance to share their thoughts. Make a casual announcement before the discussions that all ideas and comments should be respected and that there is nothing too weird or silly to say. You may also want to occasionally break into small groups to have discussions about the stories because some girls may not be comfortable speaking up in a large-group setting. Make eye contact, smile, have an open body posture, and thank each girl for sharing her ideas.
- If you don't know the answers, it's OK to say so. Plan to research the answer yourself or do it as a group activity. Use the Women's Sports Foundation contacts and resources, such as those found in Appendix C.
- Maintain an upbeat attitude. Be patient. Some girls take longer than others to feel comfortable.
- Be creative. Keep in mind that there is no one way to deliver the program. You should implement it in a way that makes sense for your program. However, we hope you'll make time for all of the activities so that you and your girls can feel the full effect of the learning experiences included. By doing the activities, the girls are practicing new skills with you and reinforcing the messages from the sessions.
- Be a healthy role model. If you are making healthy changes, share your experiences. Eat well, exercise, rest, don't smoke, don't swear, and don't be quick to anger!

Messages To Girls

- "You are not alone." These are common worries and problems.
- "You have the right to feel good and be healthy." Help them understand that there are choices they can make and things they can do to feel better.
- "Being physically active brings positive results." Physical activity can lead to all kinds of benefits from better overall health to higher self-esteem to increased leadership skills.
- "Everything counts!" You don't have to work out for an hour at a time to meet your goal of getting 60 minutes of physical activity each day. You can do it in shorter increments. *Every* physical activity you do counts, from sweeping the floor to walking to the store to dancing around in your room.
- "There are lots of people who can help." Encourage girls to find a trusted adult to talk to.

For more tips on creating a positive experience for girls, check out Appendix B: Tools for Facilitators. You can also find the following resources at www.WomensSportsFoundation.org/GGGCurriculum:

- Communication Skills
- Signals for Help
- Helping Girls With Stress
- Six Ways to Promote Girls' Positive Self-Esteem

For more information, see Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions.

the GoGirls!

There are four GoGirl characters present throughout these materials: Alex, Rosa, Tee, and Uni. These characters represent a cross-section of ethnicity, body types, athletic ability, and able-bodied-ness. Below you can see the character development and background for each.



alex

Alex is Caucasian and is an all-around athlete good enough to make the team, but not a star. She wants to win, but is more of a team player than a leader. She is tall, so she gets asked to play on teams a lot, and she struggles with her weight. She is friendly and good with younger kids. She's a little bit shy, especially around boys. She doesn't always feel very confident. She's a good student, but has to work hard in school to do well.



rOsa

Rosa is Hispanic and a natural athlete. Her main sport is tennis. She plays for her school, but also has a private coach and is competing on the amateur tennis circuit. Her heroes are Billie Jean King and Venus Williams. Rosa was born with a disability—she is missing a hand—but it doesn't keep her from competing—and winning—against girls with no disability. She could be a good student and gets A's when she tries, but she gets easily distracted. She sometimes has a hard time relaxing.



tee

Tee is African-American and likes noncompetitive activities such as hiking, aerobics, and yoga better than team sports. She loves to watch her friends play sports, though, and goes to all the other GoGirls' games. Tee is a vegetarian. Her friends like to go to her for advice. Tee is definitely the best student of the four—straight A's and headed for college—but she also puts herself under the most pressure.



uni

Uni is multiracial and probably the best all-around athlete of the four. She is a three-sport athlete at school: lacrosse, soccer, and basketball. Outside of school, she'll play anything, and loves going fast and jumping high: on her snowboard, inline skates, BMX bike, whatever. Uni likes doing her own thing and sometimes that gets in the way of her training and annoys her teammates. She loves junk food, and is loud, fun, rowdy, and certainly the risk-taker of the group. She is a good student, but has to work at it—B's and the occasional A.

chapter

1: building confidence / the girl

SESSION 1A (1 HOUR)

Session Objectives:

By the end of this session, girls will be able to:

- Understand what confidence means and identify things that make them feel strong and confident
- Understand the benefits of movement and physical activity
- Understand how much physical activity they should get every day (60 minutes) and that it can be accomplished in smaller increments

Physical Activity Skills Practiced:

- Running
- Muscle Strength
- Flexibility/Stretching
- (Brisk) Walking

Materials/Equipment Needed:

- “Try @ Home” card for each girl

Healthy Snack Suggestion:

- One of GoGirl! Alex's favorite healthy snacks is whole grain cereal with skim milk
- See Appendix E: Healthy Snack List for other ideas

Facilitator Tips:

- There may be girls in your group who are not used to exercising and the physical activities in this session may be challenging for them. Encourage girls to try their best and to not compare themselves with others in the group. Keep the focus on fun and cooperation rather than competition. Keeping the focus on the *fun* they are having will motivate them to keep going!
- Remember that the goal is for girls to work their way up to getting 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Rather than expecting girls in this age group to keep track of their activity in this way on their own, encourage them to focus on moving their bodies as much as they can. It will make them feel good and can be fun! Encourage them to play movement games (like tag or kickball) or to find friends to do daily physical activities with (like walking to school) to make it fun.
- Take time during the session to introduce girls to the GoGirls. Most of the stories in the curriculum are based on these characters, so it is important to take the time to properly introduce them to the girls on the first day. See “The GoGirls” on page 11 for more information.

Introduction (5 min)

Welcome girls to the session. Do a quick check-in and ask the girls how they are feeling. Explain that today's session is going to get us thinking about the things we can do to feel strong and good about ourselves.

Physical Activity: Where Are You Now/Where Are You Going? (20 min)

Physical Skills Practiced: *Running, Muscle Strength, Stretching*

Explain to the girls that as a part of the GoGirlGo! program, they will have a chance to try out lots of fun activities to help their bodies grow stronger and to help them learn about themselves and each other. Ask if anyone knows what "confidence" means. Take a few responses. Explain that confidence means feeling good about who you are. Tell them that one way to build confidence is by trying new things. Ask the girls if they've ever tried something new and felt good about themselves because of it.

ASK THE GIRLS: Why is it good to be active and move your body each day? Elicit that moving your body is fun, can help you express yourself, makes you feel good, and can make you strong! Tell them that over the next 12 weeks of the GoGirlGo! program they will get to try out lots of games that will help them get healthier and stronger. Today's activity will be a fun way of helping them see what their bodies can do right now. They will do it again on the last week to see how much progress they've made.

Explain to the girls that moving your body gets your heart beating and helps your heart and the rest of your body get stronger over time. Even the simple ways you move your body each day (like making your bed, walking to school, dancing in your room, or playing tag) help your body grow healthier and stronger!

Ask if anyone in the group has ever done any sports or other physical activities (like dance, yoga, cheerleading, etc.). Tell the group that one important step is to warm up before you do any physical activity. Doing a warm-up gets your body ready to move around and can help make sure you don't get hurt when you're playing sports or doing any kind of physical activity.

Safety Workout Tips:

- Stand with your feet hip/shoulder width apart and your toes pointed straight ahead. Slightly bend your knees and keep your hips in line under your shoulders.
- Flex your stomach muscles before beginning the movements. This should feel like you're pulling your belly button in towards your spine. Do NOT lean back and hyperextend your back!
- Always stare straight ahead so that you don't hurt your neck.
- When extending your legs and arms, keep them slightly bent at all times.

Explain that you're going to do a warm-up to get ready for today's activity. Start by having the girls spread out so they have room to move without bumping into anyone else. Then, lead the girls through the following warm-up, making sure to use the stopwatch or clock to keep track of the time:

- Take a deep breath in while stretching your arms out and up over your head as you inhale. Hold for a second. Then exhale bringing your arms back down to your sides. Repeat this three times.
- Jump up and down while wiggling your arms around for one minute.
- Hop on one foot for one minute.
- Hop on the other foot for one minute.
- Now, find a partner, hold hands and hop on one foot together for one minute.
- Next, keep holding hands with your partner and hop on the other foot together for one minute.

Next, tell the girls that you're going to give them a series of challenges. Lead the girls through the following exercises, making sure to demonstrate each one. Start by doing 10 of each without stopping:

- **Tuck Jumps:** Start standing tall. Jump up and tuck feet and knees up, then return with a soft landing.
- **Mountain Climbers:** Start in the same position as a pushup. Bring one leg up under the chest and then back. The other leg does the same motion, similar to running but with hands on the ground. Keep the body straight.
- **Supermans:** Lay flat on your stomach. Lift arms and legs up off the floor at the same time and hold, and then return them to the floor.

If time permits, repeat this sequence again, this time challenging girls to do it a little faster!

Afterward, lead the girls in a brief **cool down**. Explain that it's important to take a few minutes after you play hard or exercise to slow down while keeping your body moving, instead of just stopping all at once.

Lead the girls through the following cool down, making sure to use the stopwatch or clock to keep track of the time:

- Take a deep breath in while stretching your arms out and up over your head as you inhale. Hold for a second. Then exhale bringing your arms back down to your sides. Repeat this three times.
- March in place making sure to lift the knees up high and raise the arms up to the sky. Do this for two minutes. Encourage the girls to make big movements with their arms and legs. Challenge them to make their movements as silly as possible!
- Walk slowly in place for two minutes leaving the arms down by the sides or letting them swing gently. Encourage girls to exaggerate the slowness of their motions, like they're walking through mud!
- Take a deep breath in while stretching your arms out and up over your head as you inhale. Hold for a second. Then exhale bringing your arms back down to your sides. Repeat this three times.

Ask the girls...
how does moving your
body make you feel?

Story – Read and Discuss (15 min)

Before reading the story, take time to introduce the GoGirls. Explain that they are cartoon girls who will help us learn about how playing sports and being active makes girls healthy, happy, and strong. Read the descriptions of the GoGirls on page 11 and show the illustrations to the group.

Read the story “Alex Finds Her Confidence” (see below) aloud to the girls.

Alex Finds Her Confidence

Alex loved to play basketball. She was good at it, too. But she wasn't the best. Other girls on her team sometimes made more baskets than she did, or ran faster than she could. She also wasn't the tallest girl on the team and a lot of people said the tallest girls were the best players. Sometimes Alex wished she could make the most baskets or run the fastest, or that she were the tallest on the team.

One day after practice, Alex came home and told her Mom that she wanted to quit the basketball team. “But why?” asked her mom. “You love basketball, and your teammates would be so sad if you quit.”

“I don't know,” said Alex. “They don't need me. There are other girls that are so much better than me.” Her mom frowned.

“I hope you'll change your mind,” said Alex's mom.

The next day at school, Alex told her friend Uni that she was planning to quit the team.

“What?!” Uni shouted. “You can't quit! You have a big game coming up next week and the team needs you.”

“No they don't,” said Alex. “They'll probably have a better chance of winning if I'm not playing.”

“Honestly, Alex, you need to have more confidence. You're a really good player.”

“Thanks,” said Alex, looking down at her feet. “Sometimes I just don't think I'm very good.”

“But you are! You're good at lots of stuff. And you're a really nice person. You deserve to feel good about yourself,” Uni said.

“Thanks,” said Alex, starting to smile.

That night as Alex was getting ready to go to sleep, she remembered what Uni said. She started to think about all of the things she was good at. *I'm smart and I'm nice to people, she thought. And I am good at basketball, even if I'm not always the best. Besides, even the tallest girls miss baskets sometimes. No one on the team is perfect, but we're all good players... including me.* She felt much better as she drifted off to sleep.

Alex woke up the next morning feeling better. She had decided not to quit the team. When she got to practice that day, she worked very hard and made lots of baskets. After practice, the coach gave her a high five. “Great job today, Alex!” said Coach. Alex smiled and thought how glad she was to be a part of the team.

After reading the story, discuss the following questions with the group:

- Why did Alex want to quit? Why do you think she decided not to quit the team after all?
- Why is it good to feel confident?
- What kinds of things can someone do if they want to feel more confident? (Elicit that participating in sports is a good way to build confidence. Trying new things and moving your body are both good ways to make you feel strong and good about yourself!)

Physical Activity: Strong Like A... (10 min)

Physical Skills Practiced: *(Brisk) Walking, Running*

Tell the girls to think of an animal that is “strong.” Ask them to imagine that they are that animal and explain that when you say “Go!” they are going to move around the room (running or walking briskly) acting like that animal. They can also make the sound that animal makes. Tell them that their goal is to guess the animals of the other girls in the room. Once someone correctly guesses their animal, tell them to choose a new animal to act out.

When everyone is ready, say “Go!” Help the girls guess each other’s animals as they move around the room. Once everyone’s animal has been correctly guessed, ask how the girls were able to guess the animals.

take it to the next level / To make this activity more physically challenging:

Encourage girls to think of an animal that is “fast” and to move as quickly around the room as possible without stopping for several minutes.

Discussion (5 min)

After the activity, discuss the following questions with the group:

- What things do you like to do that make you feel strong?
- Do you think moving your body (like by playing sports or doing other physical activities) can make girls feel strong? Why?

Wrap Up (5 min)

Ask the girls to think of an answer to the following question: What happens in your body when you feel strong? Go around the room and give each girl a chance to briefly answer the question. If you are short on time, take a few volunteers rather than taking answers from each girl in the group.

Give out the “Try @ Home” activity card for the week and remind girls to do it on their own between Sessions 1A and 1B (or between Sessions 1A and 2A for programs that meet only once each week). Ask the girls to complete the challenge on the card before the next session.

Ask the girls...

what happens in your body when you feel strong?

chapter

1: building confidence / the girl

SESSION 1B (1 HOUR)

Session Objectives:

By the end of this session, girls will be able to:

- Identify activities that make them feel strong and confident

Physical Activity Skill Practiced:

- Varies depending on physical activity chosen (see below)

Materials/Equipment Needed:

- Paper
- Markers
- Appropriate sports equipment if you are using your own physical activity module or a GoGirlGo! Sport Module

Introduction (5 min)

Welcome girls to the session and remind them about the activities and discussions they participated in during Session A.

Extension Activity: Confidence Portrait (20 min)

Give each girl a sheet of paper and some markers. Tell them that they are going to draw a self-portrait (a picture of themselves) doing an activity that makes them feel strong and confident. It can be a sport they like to play, or dancing, running, jumping rope, or any other activity they like.

Give the girls about 10 minutes to make their drawings and then allow them to share what they drew with the rest of the group. As the girls are sharing, ask them why that activity makes them feel good. What other activities do they like to do that make them feel confident?

Physical Activity: CHOOSE ONE (30 min)

Choose one of the following physical activities to do with the group for 30 minutes:

- Repeat the “Where Are You Now/Where Are You Going?” and/or Strong Like A...” activities from Session 1A.
- Complete a GoGirlGo! Tennis Activity (see GoGirlGo! Tennis on page 6)
- Another sport/physical activity of your choosing (basketball, dance, running, etc.)

Wrap Up (5 min)

Thank girls for participating in the session. If time permits, go around the group and ask each girl to share one thing she feels confident about.

Try @ Home # 1:

Between Sessions 1A and 1B (or between Sessions 1A and 2A for programs that meet only once each week), give girls “Try @ Home” card #1 and ask them to complete the following physical activity-related challenge at home:

Find a friend (or a parent/guardian) and go for a walk around your block or walk around your home. Bring a watch and see how many times you can walk around your block or home in 15 minutes!