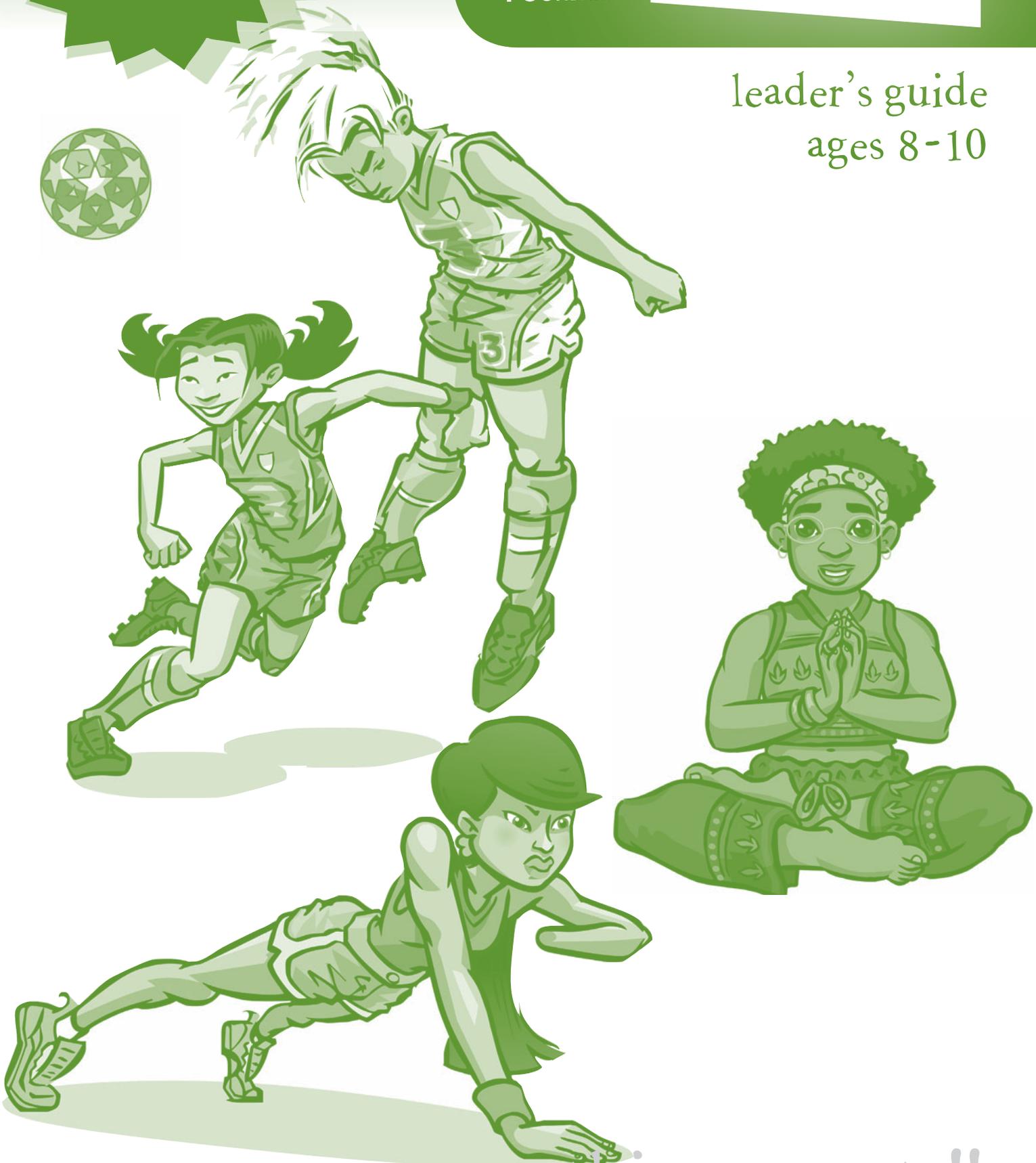


new!

WOMEN'S
SPORTS
FOUNDATION

Go Girl Go!

leader's guide
ages 8-10



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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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 8–10 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 8-10 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 non-competitive 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:

- Measure their aerobic fitness, flexibility, and muscle strength
- Understand the importance of warming up before exercising and cooling down afterwards
- Utilize the Activity Log in the GoGirls! *Scrapbook* for recording and monitoring physical activity
- Understand how much physical activity they should get every day (60 minutes) and that it can be accomplished in parts as long as an activity is at least 10 consecutive minutes in the “Fit Meter Zone” (see definition, below)
- Define confidence, articulate why it matters, and identify ways of building confidence

Physical Activity Skills Practiced:

- Running
- Muscle Strength
- Flexibility/Stretching
- Monitoring Heart Rate

Materials/Equipment Needed:

- GoGirls! *Guide to Life/Scrapbook* for each girl
- Stop watch or clock with a second hand
- “Try @ Home” activity handout

Healthy Snack Suggestion:

- The athlete whose story is featured in this session is Lisa Fernandez. Her favorite healthy snack is bananas.
- 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 not to 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!
- Convey the message that the ideal amount of physical activity girls should get each day is 60 minutes but that they can accomplish that in shorter increments. Every physical activity they do can count towards the total—even doing chores or walking for a few minutes at a time!
- Take time during the session to introduce girls to the GoGirls. Some of the stories as well as cartoons and tips included 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 13 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 different things we can do to feel strong and good about ourselves.

Activity: Where Are You Now/Where Are You Going? (25 min)

Physical Skills Practiced: *Running, Muscle Strength, Stretching, Monitoring Heart Rate*

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.

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.

Next, give each girl a GoGirls! *Scrapbook* and a pen or pencil. Explain that this is a book they will use to keep track of all of the things they accomplish during the program. You may want to keep the books on site because you will use them in every session. The girls will get to keep their book after the program ends.

Tell the girls that one important thing to measure is their **heart rate**. This is how many times your heart beats in a minute. Measuring your heart rate helps you know how hard you're playing. Playing hard, doing sports, or other exercise gets your heart beating and helps your heart and the rest of your body get stronger over time.

Explain that for people to be as healthy as possible, they should set a goal of getting at least **60 minutes** of exercise a day. They can do that all at once or in increments as little as ten minutes at a time. Every physical activity they do counts! It can be as simple as helping sweep the floor or walking to and from school.

Explain that your **resting heart rate** is the number of times your heart beats in a minute when you're at rest (not playing hard or exercising). Have the girls measure their resting heart rate. Start by having them find their pulse on their wrist. Tell them they are going to count the number of times their heart beats in ten seconds. Tell them to start counting and then after ten seconds ask the girls to tell you how many beats they counted. Tell them what the numbers mean:

**LESS THAN 20 = LIGHT ACTIVITY.**

Good for days when you're tired—you can do this forever!

20-26 = MEDIUM ACTIVITY.

Good for your heart and lungs. Try to do activities like this that add up to 60 minutes every day.

26 OR MORE = HEAVY-DUTY ACTIVITY.

Good for your muscles—you're breathing hard now!

Tell the girls that the important thing, whether you're moving your body for 10 minutes or 60 minutes at a time, is to play hard enough to get your heart rate up into the "Fit Meter Zone." That means your heart is beating at least 20 beats per minute (Medium or Heavy-Duty Activity).

Have them record the number of heartbeats they counted in the Activity Log in their GoGirls! *Scrapbook*. Ask the girls: When your heart rate goes up, what do you think happens in your body? (Elicit that when you are physically active you get warm and can start to sweat.)

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 stop watch 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.

Ask the girls...
has anyone ever
done any sports or
other physical activities?

Next, tell the girls that you're going to give them a series of challenges. Lead the girls through the following exercises, 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.
- **Push-Ups:** Start in a plank position on toes and hands. Lower body slowly toward the ground and return to the top. Keep the body straight.
- **Mountain Climbers:** Start in the same position as a push-up. 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.
- **Human Chairs:** Start standing tall. Squat toward the ground until thighs are parallel to the floor and return.
- **Airplanes:** Start standing tall. Extend arms out to the side and spin them in small circles, clockwise and then counterclockwise.
- **Bent-Knee Sit Up:** Start on floor with knees bent. Tighten abdomen and then sit up toward knees and return. Arms can go on the chest or behind the head, but do not pull the head up.
- **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.
- **Chair Dips:** Start with hands on a stable chair and with the body straight. Lower the body slowly down and then up to work the back of the arms.

Observe (10 min)

Immediately after the activity, have girls practice taking their heart rate again and record it in their Activity Log.

Afterwards, 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 bring your heart rate down slowly while keeping your body moving, instead of just stopping all at once.

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 cool down, making sure to use the stop watch 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 your 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: What does your body feel like when you are confident?

Story – Read and Discuss (15 min)

Explain that each time the group meets they will read a story together about a female athlete who talks about how playing sports and being physically active has made a difference in her life. Some of the athletes are well-known as athletes and some are students or professional women. The stories are in the GoGirls! *Guide to Life* and each girl will get a copy to take home with her at the end of the program.

Take a moment to introduce the GoGirls. (See “The GoGirls” on page 13 for detailed descriptions of each character.) Explain that the GoGirls are cartoon characters who will help us learn about how playing sports and being active makes girls healthy, happy, and strong. You may want to have the girls read the bios and look at the illustrations of each girl in the GoGirls! *Guide to Life* as an introduction.

Read “Feeling Fly” by Lisa Fernandez (see below). You can read the story aloud to the girls and encourage them to follow along on page 5 of the GoGirls! *Guide to Life*, or you can ask for volunteers to help you read the story aloud, assigning a short section or paragraph to each volunteer.

Feeling Fly

Lisa Fernandez

Softball

Three-time Olympic gold medalist;
struck out a record 25 batters in one game;
attended UCLA and majored in psychology.

“You run like a turkey,” my coach would yell, making my teammates explode with laughter. Needless to say, when I was 11 years old, my softball experience was a big girl’s nightmare. With foul sarcasm, my coaches were always busting on me because I was big and slow. It didn’t matter what kind of player I would one day become—all that mattered were my tears of embarrassment. Those days at practice I wanted to just shrink and disappear. I felt so down on myself that I wanted to quit the game that I loved all together.

Lucky for me, my parents were great at taking the hard stuff in life and morphing it into something positive. They constantly boosted me with confidence, reminding me that I was strong and worthy of my place on the team. Instead of making me embarrassed of who I was, they made me proud. “Flex those muscles for me,” Dad would always say. We’d watch sports on television, and he’d point out all the great athletes who were big and strong. At games he’d say, “See, Lisa, she’s not the fastest, but she sure is good.”



Instead of feeling bad about myself and my weaknesses, I learned to start depending on my strengths. It really helped that I had people I could trust. My parents motivated me to pinpoint my talents and run with them. I became a power-hitter and focused on improving my base running. My self-confidence began to shine. I changed from wanting to quit to trying to prove the coaches wrong.

There will always be critics. I am the person and player that I am because I learned to focus on what I know makes me strong, instead of what other people think makes me weak. Success, pride, and Olympic medals don’t come from listening to the critics; they come from inside of you.

chapter

1: building confidence / the girl

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

- How did Lisa go from feeling bad about herself to feeling confident?
- Have you ever felt confident about yourself? When?
- What can you do to help yourself feel more confident?
- How can participating in sports or physical activities make you feel more confident?
- Can you play sports or be physically active even if you don't have fancy equipment? (Remind them that the activity they did today didn't require any special equipment!)

Wrap Up (5 min)

Ask the girls to answer the following question: What activity do you like to do that makes you feel confident? 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 handout for the week (which can be found at the end of this chapter) 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 sheet, write down their answers to the question(s), and bring it back with them next time the group meets.

Educational Materials

GoGirls Tip:

Alex says: Confidence means feeling good about yourself.

You can build your confidence by:

- * Trying a new sport or activity for fun
- * Setting a goal and working to achieve it (like running a mile without stopping!)
- * Thinking of your best qualities. Are you a good friend? A good singer?
Do you always try hard in school? Give yourself props for all the great things about you!

Journal Ideas:

What makes you great? Write down some of your best qualities.

Do you ever feel down on yourself?

What can you do for a confidence-boost when you need one?

Resources

www.girlsinc.org

www.kidshealth.org

SESSION 1B (1 HOUR)

Session Objectives:

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

- Articulate how confident they feel in various situations, including sports settings

Physical Activity Skill Practiced:

- Varies depending on physical activity chosen (see below)

Materials/Equipment Needed:

- GoGirls! *Guide to Life/Scrapbook* for each girl
- Copies of "Buddy Interview" activity handout (which can be found at the end of this chapter)
- Pens or pencils
- 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: Buddy Interviews (20 min)

Tell the girls that this activity is going to help them get to know each other better and think about things that make them feel confident. Give each girl a copy of the "Buddy Interview" handout and a pen or pencil. Break the girls into pairs and tell them they will have a few minutes to interview each other by asking their partner the questions on the paper and writing down their partner's answers.

Give the girls about 10 minutes to work on this. Then, give some of the pairs a chance to share what they learned about each other. Ask the girls whether any of their answers were the same as their partner's. Were any of them different?

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?" activity from Session 1A.
- Complete a GoGirlGo! Tennis Activity (see GoGirlGo! Tennis on page 8).
- Try another sport/physical activity of your choosing (basketball, dance, running, etc.).

Have girls measure their heart rate immediately after the activity and record it in their Activity Log.

Wrap Up (5 min)

Thank girls for participating in the session. If time permits, go around the group and ask each girl to complete the sentence "I feel confident when..."

Ask the girls...
when do you feel
confident?

chapter

1: building confidence / the girl

Try @ Home # 1:

Make up your own 20-minute routine that includes jumping, hopping, twisting, lunging, walking, and running forwards and backwards.

.....

Measure your heart rate right after you're done

record it here:

.....

Measure your heart rate again 10 minutes after you're done with your physical activity.

record it here:

.....

How close to your resting heart rate is it?

record it here:

.....

Date completed:

record it here:

.....

How do you feel?



Buddy Interview

Your Name: _____

Your Partner's Name: _____

Ask your partner these questions and write down her answers on this sheet.

1. What is your favorite sport or physical activity? _____

2. Why do you like it? _____

3. How did you feel the first time you tried it? _____

4. Do you like trying new sports or activities? _____

5. Why do you like (or not like) it? _____

6. What other sport or activity do you want to try? _____

7. Do you feel confident when you try new sports or activities? _____

8. Why or why not? _____

9. What do you do to make yourself feel more confident when you need to? _____

