



8 Strategies to Increase Participation in Physical Activities

Want to increase the number of kids participating in your physical activity program? Here are eight strategies that have been shown to provide kids with a positive attitude towards physical activity and increase their participation:

1. **Show enthusiasm and energy!** As a leader and role model, your enthusiasm and energy for the games transfers to the kids and sets the tone for the day. Keep the smile on, be animated, and show them how FUN being active can be.
2. **Positive feedback is KEY:** Provide positive feedback for kids who participate. Words of support such as "great job with tagging today, Thomas!" or "Wow, are you running fast today Anna!" or, "I am so glad you played today, Tim, it made the game so much more fun!" encourages kids to play again.
3. **Activity from the get go:** "Activity from the get go" is one of the BASICS of CATCH Kids Club. Starting with a more sedentary activity may decrease enthusiasm for being active at the end of a long school day. So start them moving right away and make it part of your routine.
4. **Modernize the game names:** Try using more modern names for the games that kids can identify with (i.e. make them "cool"). For instance, instead of "Sherlock Holmes," (card #140) maybe use "Harry Potter" or another popular character. For Blob Tag, play Orb Tag! The more water (kids) they soak up (tag and link to), the bigger they get!
5. **Engage the KIDS in the process:** Have the kids rate the games. Give them a score sheet! If they say a game is "boring," ask them how they would make it more FUN. Remember to make sure suggestions implemented follow the CATCH principles (non-elimination, focus on fun vs. winners/losers, etc.). Empowering the kids to help increase the fun factor of games is a great way to get them invested and increase participation!
6. **New game day:** Once a week (for instance, "New Game Wednesday"), have a child pick a game out of the box to play that day. Who gets to pick it? Put names in a hat and pick the names one by one. The first picked gets week #1, the second picked gets week #2, and so on. Once you play the game, ask the kids what they thought. Now see #8!
7. **Pre-activity session energy burst!** Try starting your activity session with 2-3 minutes of crazy running around. Two of our sites have said that when they let the kids burst and run around, it helps them let off steam (a.k.a. getting their "ya ya's out) in an unstructured way. The result? Restless kids are more ready to listen and kids feeling tired are more ready to be active.
8. **Consistency:** Come up with a schedule that works for you and the kids and stick with it. Changing it too often can make it harder to keep the kids on track.



Children at the Penacook Community Center enjoying one of the many CATCH Kids Club games in a morning activity session.