

Charter of Physical Activity, Sport, Play and Well-Being for all Children and Youth in South Africa

(YOUTH FITNESS & WELLNESS CHARTER)

Preamble

The children and youth of South Africa are our future. This Charter aims to contribute to nation building, to enhance the general well-being and to improve the quality of life of all young South Africans by ensuring that:

- (i) All South African children and youth have the right to be physically active,
- (ii) Opportunities and facilities to participate in physical activity, sport and play should be equally accessible and available to all,
- (iii) Children and youth are active participants in promoting participation in physical activity, sport and play,
- (iv) The diversity of South African children and youth is recognised and embraced, and
- (v) The successful promotion of this message is achieved through partnerships among parents, sporting organisations, provincial, local and national government, non-government and non-profit organisations, higher education institutions, clubs, schools, faith-based organisations, the youth sector, the private sector and other key role players.

Aligned with the South African Constitution, this Charter has been developed for all South Africans and should be adopted by all South Africans to improve the quality of life for all citizens and free the potential of each person. Physical activity, sport and play are meaningful channels through which South Africa can embrace its people and achieve this goal.

Article 1: FUNDAMENTALS

All South African children and youth have a fundamental right to participate in physical activity, sport and play.

- 1.1 Every child and youth should have the opportunity to participate in physical activity, sport and play regardless of their gender, disability or ability, HIV/AIDS status or socio-economic, nutritional and/or cultural backgrounds.
- 1.2 Policy makers, legislators, town planners, administrators, parents, educators, the youth sector and the private sector should take into consideration the implications and consequences that their decisions could have on the opportunity for children and youth to participate in physical activity, sport and play.

Article 2: DIVERSITY AND NATION BUILDING

Physical activity, sport and play can assist in nation building and in overcoming barriers to integration and the de-racialisation of our society.

- 2.1 Recognition of diversity in physical activity, sport and play should ensure that the special circumstances surrounding the participation of people distinguished by language, culture, religion, gender and disability are dealt with sensitively.
- 2.2 Diversity, in all forms, is a source of strength in South Africa and interaction among young people should be promoted in a manner that is beneficial to all.
- 2.3 Team selection in all types of sports, physical activity and play at all levels should be based on equity and equal opportunity as highlighted by the South African Constitution.

Article 3: WELL-BEING

Physical activity, sport and play form an essential element of integrated development and growth, leading to lifelong positive lifestyles.

- 3.1 Participation in physical activity, sport and play should be encouraged to enhance the holistic well-being for all children and youth.

- 3.2 The value of all physical activity, sport and play for children and youth should be recognised and acknowledged, and participation encouraged.
- 3.3 When promoting participation in physical activity, sport and play, emphasis should be placed on safety, variety, enjoyment, fair play, positive attitudes and the need to accommodate and accept individual differences and abilities.
- 3.4. The promotion of participation in physical activity, sport and play for all children and youth should be conducted in a suitable and safe environment and in a caring, encouraging and supportive manner.
- 3.5. Leaders in sport and recreation should act as role models, both on and off the field to support and facilitate fair play, respect for others, and a sense of right and wrong for all children and youth.

Article 4: HEALTH

All children and youth should be encouraged to participate in physical activity, sport and play to improve physical fitness and, as a way to (i) prevent chronic diseases of lifestyle, (ii) develop knowledge and life skills, (iii) to encourage optimal nutrition and (iv) to foster health promoting behaviour.

- 4.1 Physical activity, sport and play should be used effectively to promote health and well-being among all children and youth and to make a key contribution towards addressing and preventing chronic diseases of lifestyle.
- 4.2 The beneficial outcomes of being physically active, playing sport and healthy eating on all aspects of healthy living and well-being should be promoted and encouraged as an alternative to a sedentary lifestyle.
- 4.3 Nutrition education, nutritional life skills as well as the provision of adequate nutrition should be considered a priority by key role players.

Article 5: PARTNERSHIPS

Parents, sporting organisations, provincial, local and national government, non-government and non-profit organisations, higher education institutions, clubs, schools, faith-based organisations, the youth sector, the private sector and other key role players (collectively referred to hereafter as 'key role players') should work together to provide opportunities for children and youth to participate safely in physical activity, sport and play.

- 5.1 Educators, parents, guardians and care-givers should encourage and exert a positive influence on all children and youth to participate in physical activity, sport and play.
- 5.2 Physical activity, sport and play within the school, home environment and community, should be promoted and conducted in ways that contribute to positive holistic development.
- 5.3 Key role players should recognise the importance of a balance between both organised sport and recreational activities for the physical, social and emotional development of all children and youth.
- 5.4 Key role players responsible for the organisation and conduct of physical activity, sport and play for children and youth should adopt good governance practices to both uphold and ensure the achievement of the benefits of physical activity highlighted by this Charter and to minimise risk of physical and psychological injuries.
- 5.5 Key role players should recognise the need for qualified professionals and volunteers. These professionals and volunteers should have a commitment to continually educate themselves. Government, the private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGO's) and service providers should collaborate to provide opportunities for training of staff and volunteers through new or existing training programmes. All training programmes should be appropriately accredited and presented by service providers registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), a Centre for Higher Education (CHE) or an agency within the current educational framework of Government.
- 5.5 Key role players should recognise the need for integration and collaboration in order to provide opportunities and facilities for all children and youth to participate in physical activity, sport and play.

Article 6: EDUCATION & TRAINING

The education system should assume responsibility for the provision of appropriate formal movement education programmes, physical activity, sport and play for all children and youth in safe and healthy environments.

- 6.1 All tiers of the education system should promote participation in physical activity and recognise and emphasise the central role that this participation has on both individual and community development and well-being.
- 6.2 Formal movement education, physical activity, sport programmes and play should be assigned a prominent and meaningful place in the school curriculum and should be given sufficient time in the weekly timetable.
- 6.3 Qualified professionals and trained volunteers undertaking the instruction of formal movement education, physical activity and sport programmes for children and youth should be suitably trained and fully understand and appreciate child growth and development, as well as all issues related to all aspects of diversity, including religion, gender and disability.
- 6.4 Formal movement education, physical activity and sport programmes should be designed to ensure the positive holistic development of all children and youth. These programmes should be available to those from marginalised groups, including children and youth in rural communities, females and those with disabilities.

Article 7: FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Government, in partnership with the youth sector, the private sector, communities and key role players should provide a sustainable infrastructure that includes safe access, facilities, equipment and, where appropriate, transport for all children and youth.

- 7.1 The South African Constitution obligates local government to provide accessible, safe and healthy environments which would facilitate equal access to sporting facilities for physical activity, sport and play for all children and youth.
- 7.2 Organisations involved in rural and urban planning should provide the infrastructure, facilities and equipment for formal and informal physical activity, sport and play, for all children and youth, including those with disabilities.

- 7.3 Key role players should ensure that adaptations made to facilities, equipment and/or rules and regulations of any activity should be appropriate to the developmental age, gender, culture and ability of all children and youth.
- 7.4 Individuals, communities and key role players should co-operate to promote the sustainable use and maintenance of facilities.
- 7.5 Communities that have sporting facilities should be strongly encouraged to share the use of their facilities with less equipped communities. Schools or similar institutions should be encouraged to become “hubs” for sports participation and needs-based programmes in their community.

Article 8: PROTECTION

National Sporting Federations and regulating bodies should provide guidelines for key role players to support the delivery of programmes that have a positive impact on physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being on all children and youth. These guidelines should address the protection of children and youth participating in organised physical activity and sport at all levels, including those performing at an elite level.

- 8.1 National Sporting Federations and regulating bodies, in consultation with appropriate role players, should provide national guidelines that govern all levels of organised physical activity and sport.
- 8.2. All children and youth have the right to report any situation that they believe places them at risk or that they perceive may have a negative impact on their physical, mental, social and emotional well-being and development.
- 8.3 Children and youth participating at all levels of physical activity and sport should be protected against all forms of abuse, including physical, psychological and sexual abuse.
- 8.4 Qualified professionals and trained volunteers instructing children and youth in physical activity, sport and play should apply appropriate methods in practice and competition, the appropriate use of all equipment and the adherence to the rules of fair play, in order to reduce the incidence of injury.
- 8.5 The provision of first aid facilities and medical personnel should be considered a priority by key role players in order to reduce the consequences of injury to children and youth.

- 8.6 Children and youth involved at all levels of physical activity and sport should be educated about and protected from the use of illegal performance enhancing substances, inappropriate use of prescribed drugs and performance enhancing supplements.
- 8.7 Children and youth involved at all levels of physical activity and sport should be educated about and protected from exploitation for political, commercial and financial purpose.
- 8.8 Children and youth involved at all levels of physical activity and sport should have their legal rights determined and protected by governments, government bodies and sporting organisations.
- 8.9 Children and youth participating in physical activity and sport, especially those performing at an elite level, should be protected against inappropriate and/or excessive training and competition.
- 8.10 Children and youth involved at all levels of physical activity and sport should have access to mediation and independent counselling for conflicts that may arise with coaches, parents, fellow athletes and/or other role players.

Article 9: MEDIA

Recognising the value of communication, all media should strive to become a positive influence on participation of children and youth in physical activity, sport and play.

Through responsible reporting, the media should:

- 9.1 Promote the social importance and health benefits of participation in physical activity, sport and play by all children and youth.
- 9.2. Promote the positive moral values associated with participation in physical activity, sport and play by all children and youth
- 9.3 Promote participation in physical activity, sport and play and a balanced diet as an essential part of healthy daily living and well-being.
- 9.4 Inform and educate the public about the negative consequences of sedentary lifestyles, risky behaviour and an unhealthy diet for all children and youth.

9.5. Address issues of stereotyping of sport in marginalised groups including children and youth in rural areas, females and those with disabilities.

9.6 Promote a positive environment for participation in physical activity, sport and play that can contribute to sustainable nation building.

Article 10: RESEARCH

Research should inform the decision-making processes surrounding the provision of facilities, equipment and development of appropriate physical activity, sport and play guidelines and programmes for all children and youth.

10.1 A research campaign should be initiated and sustained by key role players that address the issues identified in the Charter

10.2 National and international funding organisations should be approached to support a research campaign relevant to the Charter.

10.3 Monitoring and evaluating strategies should be implemented as part of the research campaign.

10.4 Reporting of research outcomes should be presented in ways that make the results accessible and understandable to the public.

GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

Children and Youth

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and welfare of the Child and the South African Constitution define a child as someone under the age of 18. However, in the context of this Charter, the definitions of Children and Youth are as follows:

Children: those individuals from pre-school to grade 7 (equivalent ages of 3 to 12 for those who do not attend school)

Youth: those individuals from grade 8 to grade 12 (equivalent ages of 12-18 for those who do not attend school).

Chronic Illness

An illness persisting for a long time (i.e. 6 months), including all chronic diseases of lifestyle and HIV

Collaboration

To work with other role players to achieve the same aims and objectives

Communities

All the people living and/or working in a specific geographic locality and sharing common values

Disability

Partial or complete impairment of physical, psychological, social or cognitive functions that have an impact on the individual's ability to perform selected tasks

Elite sport

Competitive sport that is performed at the national or international level by professional athletes

Equal

Having the same rights or status

Equity

Being awarded benefits based on the principles of fairness and justice

Exercise

Planned, structured and repetitive bodily movements usually performed to improve one or more components of health and physical fitness

Fitness

Good health and physical condition, especially as the result of an active lifestyle and appropriate nutrition, improving the capacity to perform work

Holistic

A concept used to refer to the whole person and not only one part of the individual

Institutions

Formally organised bodies for the promotion of educational, scientific or similar objectives

Integration

To join a group of people who may need to adapt and share their way of life, habits, values, language and customs to one another to ensure that all parties can contribute and participate

Key role players

A term used in this Charter referring, but not limited to: sporting organisations, higher educational institutions, clubs, schools, health professionals, provincial, local and national government, faith-based organisations, the youth sector, the private sector, health professionals, communities, parents and the family unit

Movement

Any musculo-skeletal activity performed by a person to achieve a particular goal

Participation

Involvement (take part in)

Physical Activity

Bodily movement that is produced by the action of skeletal muscle, which increases energy expenditure

Play

Any movement that is performed freely and spontaneously, consisting of no formal rules with fun, enjoyment and satisfaction as its primary purpose

Regulating bodies

Organisations involved in the facilitation, delivery and structure of sport and physical activity in South Africa

Sedentary

Participating in little movement where there is little or no increase in energy expenditure

Sport

A structured physical activity with certain traditions, rules and procedures in which the outcome is based upon physical skill, usually with elements of competition present

Well-being

The state of feeling healthy and positive about one's life

Wellness

The state of being physically, mentally and socially (holistic) healthy and is associated with positive lifestyle behaviours and choices