


Children and Sport

that you
should make
swimming
clubs free
because
everyone needs
to know how
to swim



Let everyone*
Have a chance
to try new
sports. 
Good teacher
= Good players

Children should
be respected
even if they
lose -
We should
all be respected
if we try



I think that
clubs should
be free or less
expensive and
you should get
a choice in what
you want to inle

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 Children's
Parliament

Children and Sport



“Playing sports is like having a common language. You speak with your feet and your body. Sport can bring people together.”

(Boy, 11)

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About this report

The Scottish Government wants children and young people to be able to take part in sport.

They are developing a new plan (called a strategy) to make this happen. When the Scottish Government speaks to people about the plans it makes this is called a consultation. A consultation is used to help the Government understand what people think of their ideas.

To make sure children had their say about their sporting chances the Scottish Government asked Children's Parliament to talk with children in primary school.

Children's Parliament staff visited 4 primary schools and met with children in P5, P6 and P7.

The children took part in a workshop on children's human rights.

After the workshop a Children's Parliament worker met with the children in twos and threes to find out from them about the sport they play and the sporting opportunities they would like to have.

50 boys and 46 girls took part in the consultation.

This is a report for all the children who took part in the consultation.

Children's Parliament would like to thank the children and staff from the schools who took part.

- **Auchinraith Primary School, Blantyre, South Lanarkshire**
- **Greenrigg Primary School, Harthill, West Lothian.**
- **North Primary School, Kirkcaldy, Fife**
- **St Ronan's Primary School, Innerleithen, Scottish Borders**

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The sports children play

The 96 children who took part say they are playing 34 different sports or sporting activities. Children play sports with friends or family or sometimes in a club. These are the sports children play:

- Athletics
- American Football
- Badminton
- Basketball
- Cycling
- Dance (ballet, contemporary)
- Dodge ball
- Football
- Fencing
- Golf
- Green Bowls
- Gymnastics
- Hill walking
- Hockey
- Horse riding
- Ice-hockey
- Informal sport (playing with friends)
- Karate
- Martial Arts
- Mountain Biking
- Mountain Biking (downhill at Innerleithen)
- Netball
- Parkour/street running
- PE/Games/physical activity at school
- Rugby
- Scootering
- Skateboard
- Skiing
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Trampoline
- Ten-pin bowling
- Touch Rugby
- Volleyball and Beach Volleyball

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Children's top messages for the Scottish Government

These are the most important things children want the Scottish Government to understand about their sporting chances.

- Being involved in sport should be fun. Taking part with friends is important. For children 'playing sports' is really just *playing*.

"If it's not fun why would we bother playing?" (Girl, 11)

- Children rely on adults in their family or at school or in clubs to introduce them to new sports and then to support them to play sports. Having to depend on busy adults can stop you taking part.

"How can we play them if we don't know what they are?" (Boy, 11)

"There's a dry skiing slope at Hillend Edinburgh. We need adults to take us. I'd like to try snowboarding and skiing." (Girl, 10)

- Children want adults to play sports *with them*, to take part and to have fun too.

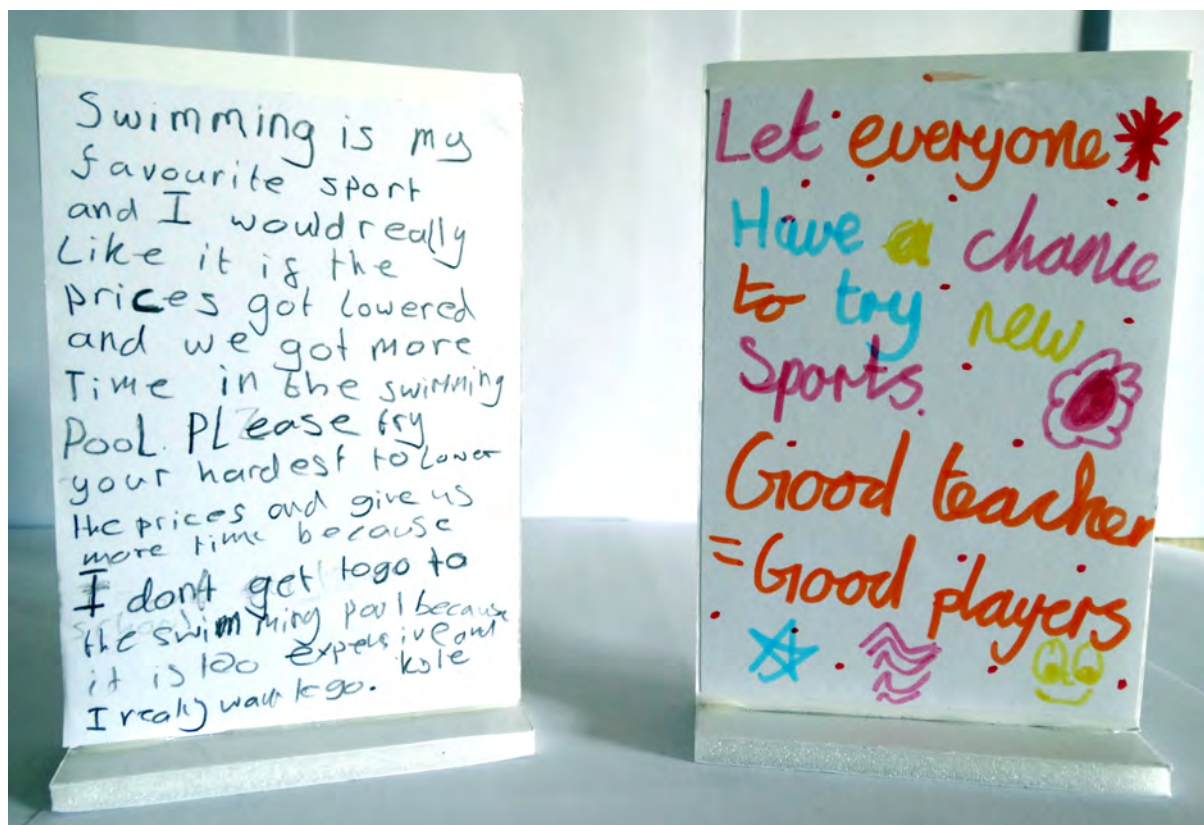
"It's good when adults and teachers take part with us. We learn better when people show us what to do. Get in the water with us." (Girl, 10)

"Swimming teachers should get in the water with us. They need to give us clear instructions. Standing by the side of the pool doesn't work." (Boy, 11)

- Great sporting opportunities for children are about friendship, learning, excitement, challenge, achievement and being fit and healthy.

"I like mountain biking. I like it because it's fast. I like the speed, it's thrilling and scary." (Boy, 11)

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“Makes you feel like you can run up mountains you feel so healthy. When I’m really healthy I feel like I can run up the highest mountain in the world” (Boy, 10)

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- Adults who teach or coach sports should be kind, patient, calm, knowledgeable and experienced. Most importantly teachers and coaches and parents should not shout at children.

“Don’t shout at me, it makes me feel sad. I feel like I’ve done something wrong. It puts your heid doon” (Boy, 10)

“Coaches should be someone who knows how you feel and remembers what it feels like to be a beginner. They should give you confidence.” (Boy, 10)

“Coaches are important. They can push you and help you. Push you to your limits. They should be kind honest and helpful. They should have a lot of knowledge about the sports they are coaching and they should show you by example how to take part and improve your skills. Children feel it’s ok for coaches to be a wee bit strict but not too much. Coaches who are too strict and shout at you put you off. You wouldn’t go back. Coaching should be fun, but taken serious enough so that you learn.” (Boy, 11)

- Children know adults worry about safety but they want adults to understand that sometimes it is the excitement, danger or risk that make playing their sport attractive and appealing.

“Wearing glasses has stopped me playing some sports. My parents are afraid that my glasses might get broken. I still want to play. Parents can be over protective.” (Girl, 10)

“I would like to ski. My parents think it would be too dangerous.” (Girl, 11)

“I like dirt biking but my parents are afraid that I’ll hurt myself. Parents can be over protective.” (Boy, 10)

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“Everyone’s taking part should be celebrated. Even if you lose you should have a party. You should celebrate as a team.” (Girl, 10)

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- Children say that sports clubs provide opportunities to have great teaching or coaching and to play a sport competitively. Being part of a club can take an interest or skill further than playing at school can. For some children great sporting opportunities mean being in competition; winning and losing is an important part of taking part. But if it's too competitive it takes the fun out of it.

“Our clubs need to make sport fun and not be so competitive. Having fun is really important.” (Boy, 11)

- Giving boys and girls different opportunities can be annoying. Girls and boys should have the same choices and opportunities to play sports.

“It's football for boys, hockey for girls.” (Girl, 11)

- Sometimes there is less of a chance for children with disabilities to take part.

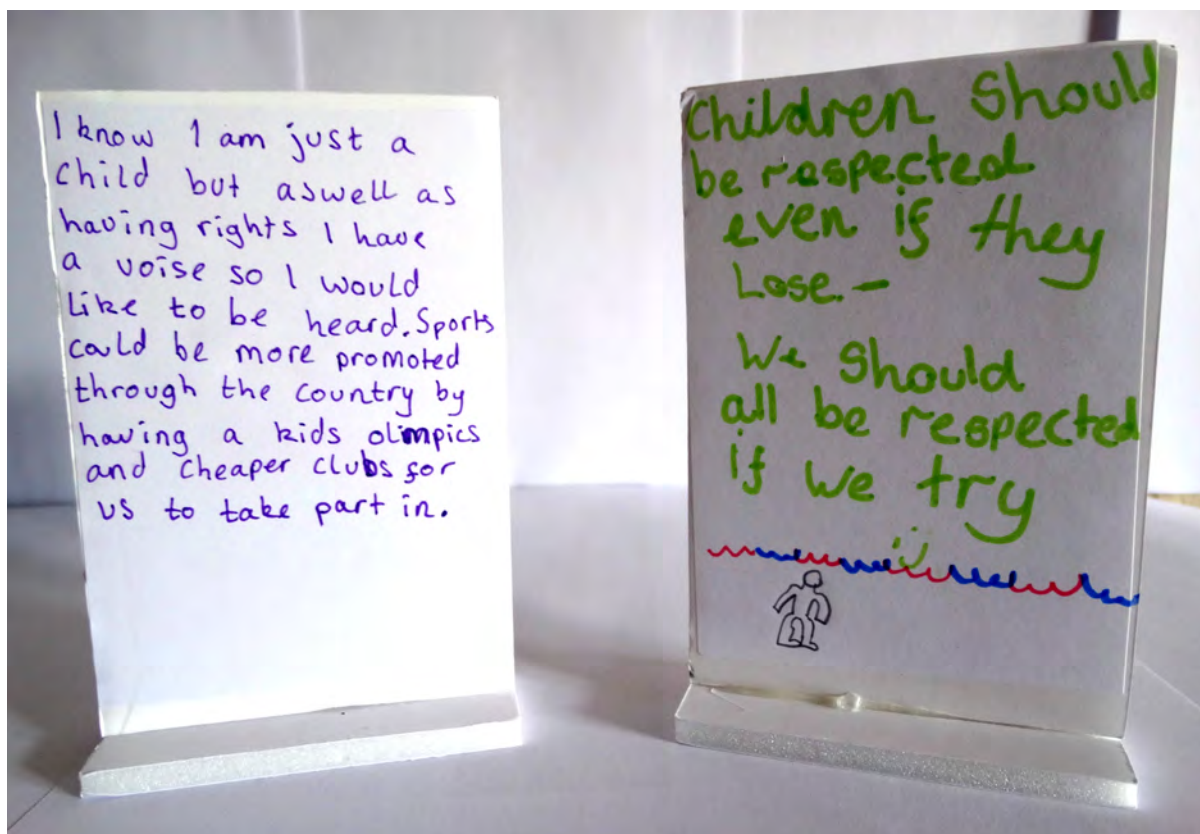
“I'd like to join but I'm scared. They don't have disabled access... Make all sports free and make them suitable for children with special needs and make all sports suitable for ALL children. Thank you.” (Girl, 9)

- If playing a sport costs too much then a family has to make choices. Maybe you can't take part. Or perhaps a family has to decide about which sports or the number of sports a child can participate in. Children like schemes which provide free activities for children – and not just young people. This should include free access to sports and leisure centres.

“I paid £30 to join a club before I really knew if I liked it.” (Boy, 10)

“Younger children should have a trial period before they have to join clubs. There needs to be more sports clubs. Sometimes there's a waiting list with not enough places” (Boy, 10)

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“Dear Government, I am a kid but I have a voice so please listen. There should be more clubs and there should be more FREE clubs with membership cards.” (Girl, 11)

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- Children want more PE at school. PE at school is best when children have a say about what they are doing and when specialist PE teachers or coaches are involved.

“More PE in school. Two 45 minutes isn’t enough. Sport is really important to us. It keeps you active and fit. Keeps you away from the X-box.” (Boy, 9)

- Children like extra after school, lunchtime and weekend sports at school as well as community-based opportunities.

“It would be great to play and learn about sports during the school day but we’re worried that it might interfere with our school work. We could play sport during lunchtimes and break time” (Girl, 11)

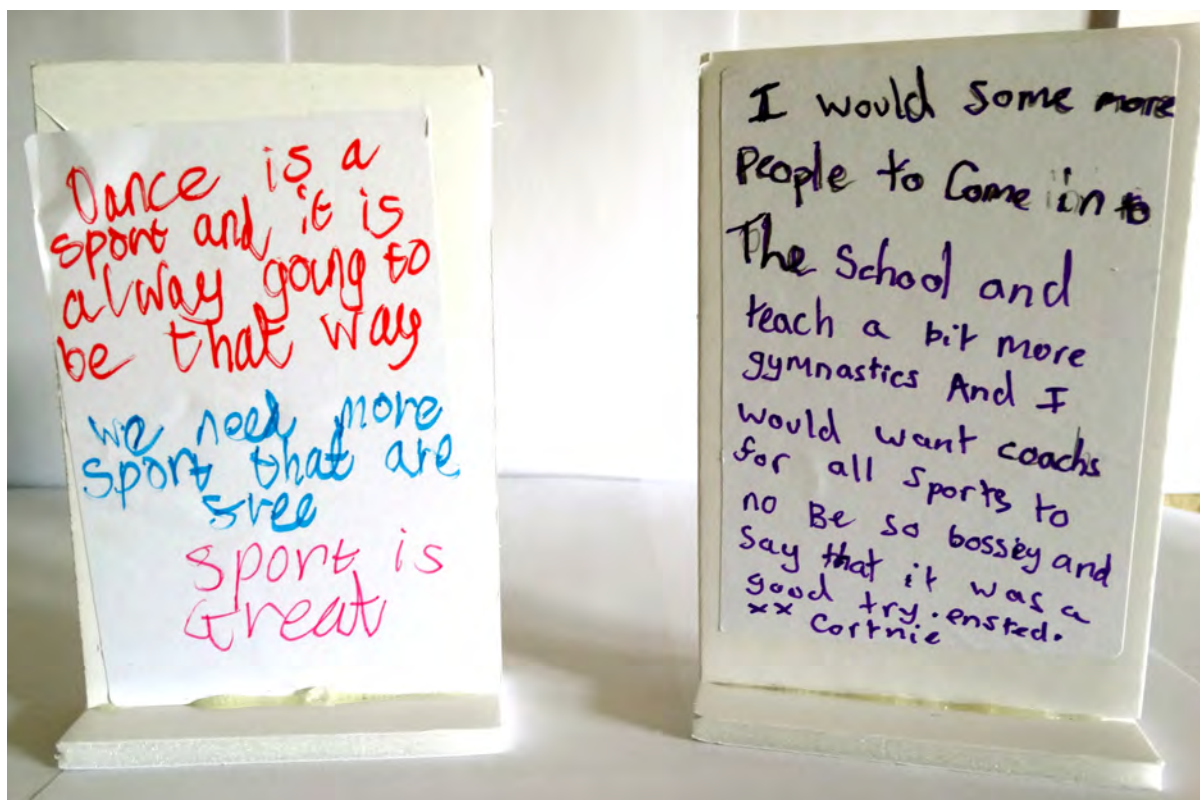
- Children say that facilities in Primary School need to be better. Children think that facilities in High Schools are better because teenager’s PE and interests are taken more seriously than theirs.

“We learn about sports at home from our family and friends but don’t always get the chance to try them at school. We have to wait until we go to High School. Our physical size can exclude us from trying new sports.” (Girl, 10)

“Secondary schools have more sports facilities than us. They have swimming pools and gyms. It feels like we have to wait until we go to High school before we’re taken seriously.” (Boy, 11)

“Primary schools should make better links with High schools so that they can use the facilities. If we experience support when we’re young we’ll be more confident to take part and try new things when we get to High school.” (Girl, 10)

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“People like sportsmen and women should come into school and talk to us and tell us how to take part in new sports.” (Girl, 11)

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- Children enjoy learning about new and different sports and sporting activities. But if this is part of a project which comes to an end this is frustrating.

“We enjoyed the Commonwealth passports scheme. It only lasted for 5 weeks though and we couldn’t play when it was finished. It would be better if we could keep on playing.” (Boy, 11)

- Children say that outdoor activity centres, which their whole class might visit, are exciting places where children can experience new sporting activities.

“Trips to outward bound centres are great. We get new experiences and to try activities we haven’t done before.” (Girl, 11)

- Children like to play and do sports in parks and want them to be clean and safe.

“The council needs to clean up our parks and play areas. Play parks can be dangerous with broken glass and young people hanging about drinking.” (Boy, 10)

“Should be grass in play parks not concrete. Play leads to sport. We need good play parks.” (Girl, 9)

- Children say it is important that adults speak with them and ask them about their sporting experiences, opportunities and aspirations. Children want adults to come see them play sports and help them celebrate successes.

“Adults need to take us more seriously. Come and ask us more often about what we’re doing. More children with disabilities should have the opportunity to play sports.” (Girl, 11)

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- Many children like to take part in tournaments or sports festivals as this allows them to meet new people and make new friends while competing with others. Children want their sports and achievements to be more recognised by everyone.

“Playing in tournaments raises the profile because people come to watch.” (Boy, 11)

“We had a basketball festival where we played other schools. We won and it felt great. Playing in tournaments is great, you meet new people.” (Girl, 11)

“It’s good to compete against other schools. It’s important to have trophies, a presentation night. It’s a social event.” (Girl, 10)

