



SPORTS BRA PLAYBOOK



Made
to Play



This playbook is designed to help adults offer support to girls during puberty and those who may need a sports bra regardless of their gender identity. Throughout, we refer to girls and use the pronouns she/her/hers and they/theirs, but it's important that coaches use the pronouns that the team member prefers.



THE POWER OF SPORT

All kids are made to play, yet not every kid gets the same opportunities to access and benefit from sport. Girls face complex cultural, social and economic barriers to participating in play and sport. As a result, they drop out of sport at twice the rate of boys – and have fewer sport opportunities overall.

Through Made to Play, Nike's global commitment to getting kids moving, we support over 100 community partners to remove barriers and expand girls' access to the many benefits of physical activity – including being healthier, more confident and more successful in school and in life.

Puberty is a time when girls are most likely to drop out of sport. We can play a role in preventing this, by providing girls with the right apparel and equipment they need to play. This includes sports bras. After all, a girl should never have to stop playing because she doesn't have the product she needs to play with confidence.

To help coaches and other caring adults create an informative and fun experience for girls receiving

sports bras, Nike developed this playbook, in partnership with leading experts in body image from the Centre for Appearance Research at UWE Bristol in the United Kingdom. Whether you've had bras donated, purchased for a team, or you're helping girls find the right fit, this playbook will set you up for success.

If we do this right, it will help girls stay connected and engaged in sport. We want girls to develop the skills to choose the right sports bra for their bodies so they feel comfortable and supported. And as part of this effort, girls can start to discover how body image and comfort affects their experience with sport and play

**THANK YOU FOR
ALL YOU DO TO
GET MORE GIRLS
MOVING.**



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS TIME IN GIRLS' LIVES

BODY CONFIDENCE MATTERS

Girls with *body confidence* or *positive body image* accept and appreciate their bodies and what they are capable of. They have better moods and self-esteem, are more likely to stay in sport and do better at school. Coaches can help girls by preparing, supporting and encouraging them, while delivering positive messages about girls' bodies, potential and performance.

PUBERTY CAN BE A TOUGH TIME FOR GIRLS IN SPORT

Breast development is a normal part of puberty, but that doesn't mean it's easy or comfortable. Girls often feel insecure about their bodies and compare themselves to others during this time – either because their bodies are changing or because they aren't (yet). Coaches or a parent can help to normalize these differences in development.



COACHES INFLUENCE HOW GIRLS FEEL ABOUT THEIR BODIES

Research shows that coaches can have both a positive and negative impact on girls' body image. This represents a significant opportunity for instilling body positivity. The key is to understand what girls are going through, and to help them feel accepted and comfortable with their bodies and the sports bra experience.

HOW GIRLS FEEL ABOUT THEIR BODIES AFFECTS THEIR PLAY

Only 15% of girls 11-17 years old move as much as they should according to the World Health Organization. They often worry about the way they look, have unrealistic beauty ideals, are provided with uncomfortable and objectifying uniforms, and experience teasing from others. Twenty years of scientific research shows that low body confidence is a key barrier to girls' participation and enjoyment in sport. It doesn't have to be this way.

HOW MUCH AND HOW HARD GIRLS PLAY AFFECTS THE REST OF THEIR LIVES

If girls keep playing, they're more likely to feel better, do better in school and keep playing in the future. Supporting girls while they find the apparel and equipment they need to build confidence and competence is an important step toward a lifetime of health and activity.

REMEMBER, EVERY GIRL IS UNIQUE

Just like sports bras, this playbook is not one-size-fits-all. There's a lot to consider in terms of girls' unique experiences.



UNDERSTAND GIRLS' DEVELOPMENT

Puberty is when girls' bodies mature. It usually begins when girls are between 8-13 years old. Breast development is a noticeable change during puberty that can prompt body image concerns and comparisons with others. It's natural and healthy for breasts to come in all shapes and sizes. Whenever it's appropriate, coaches and other adults involved with the team can normalize this diversity.

CONSIDER RELIGION AND CULTURE

In some religions and cultures, it's not appropriate to discuss all of the topics raised in this playbook or to engage in bra fittings outside of the home. Be mindful of which girls this may apply to on your team. If this is the case, create other options for girls to receive this information and support. For example, provide their mother, caregiver or older sister with this Sports Bra Playbook and, where possible, encourage them to try the bras on at home. Where appropriate, you might also share the Made to Play [Hijab Playbook](#) with families of hijabi athletes.

COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES

Reach out to parents in advance and let them know what's happening. Share this playbook with them, and encourage them to share the information at home. Invite family members to participate as appropriate. Of course, parents should provide consent (we'll talk about that later), but also let them know why this is an important moment in a female athlete's life.



DROP THE BODY TALK

'Body talk' usually refers to comments about appearance that reinforce beauty standards. Examples include:

"I LOOK SO FAT"

"I WISH MY BODY LOOKED LIKE YOURS"

"I'M SO SWEATY AND GROSS"

"YOU LOOK AMAZING, HAVE YOU LOST WEIGHT?"

Even compliments can reinforce appearance ideals and suggest that there is one right way to look. Let's help girls to focus on what girls can do, rather than what their bodies look like.

According to research, listening or engaging in just a few minutes of body talk can worsen girls' body confidence. So, let's focus on what girls can DO, rather than how they look. Tell girls they are strong and confident.

"Wow! You're doing great out there. The work you're putting in is showing up on the court."

"It's awesome to see how strong you are!"

Let them know that the right-fitting gear will help with their comfort and confidence.

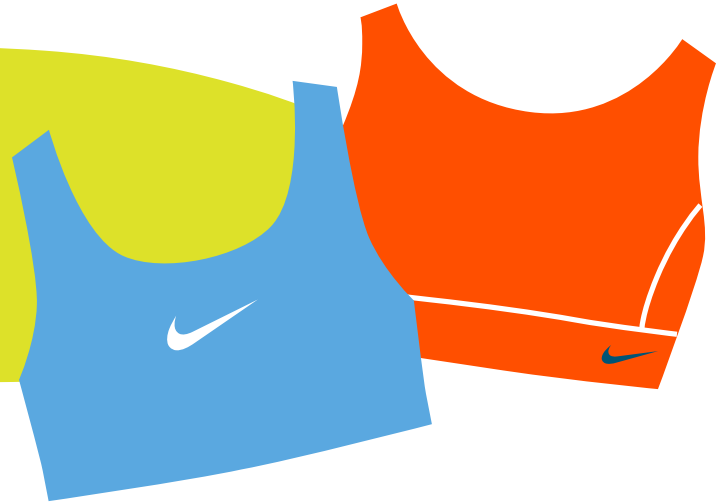
"You could run fast before. Just wait until you have the right gear!"



REMINDE THEM THAT THERE'S NO ROOM ON THE TEAM FOR BODY TALK.

SPORTS BRA FIT 101

To fully support getting girls into the right product, coaches and caring adults should have a basic understanding of sports bras. From support and coverage to sizes and styles, there are some key considerations to keep in mind.



SPORTS BRA FIT AND TYPE

It's important for girls to feel comfortable and supported as they head out to the field, court or pitch. Depending on where a girl is in her development, she may need more support or coverage. Sports bra styles vary: from front coverage and multi-layered fabrics to thicker, wide-strap or racerback-style straps, the style really play an important role here. Providing different sports bra types and educating the girls in style and support options can help ensure a positive experience and minimize negative body talk. See the [Sports Bra Distribution Guide](#) for more detailed guidance.

SPORTS BRA OPTIONS

Some girls might already know what style they find most comfortable. For others, it'll be a new experience. If you're organizing a fitting, make sure you have enough options available for all team members. This may involve ordering extra sports bras. If girls are unsure of which sports bra will work best for them, provide multiple options. This allows them to explore the different fits, without making assumptions.

THE OUTCOMES WE WANT

If we do this right, it will help girls stay connected and engaged in sport. We want girls to develop the skills to choose the right sports bra for their bodies so they feel comfortable and supported. And as part of this effort, girls can also start to discover how body image and comfort affects their experience with sport and how sports bras affect play.

This is also a great opportunity for coaches and caring adults to understand how body image affects girls' experiences in sport and in life. Creating safe, comfortable and empowering bra-fitting sessions is an important way we can help girls build confidence and feel good about themselves – the exact same things we want girls to gain from sport.



For all coaches and role models, including men who are caring adults in a girl's life, understand what girls need from you. Here's where they can be most effective:

WHAT COACHES SHOULD DO

IN GENERAL:

- Educate yourself and other (male) coaches about body image through these materials.
- Get comfortable with being uncomfortable: reflect on how you contribute to girls' body image – positively and negatively.
- Commit to supporting girls in creating safe and inclusive sporting environments.
- Challenge people who put girls at risk of developing body image concerns. This includes other girls, women, boys and men who objectify, give unsolicited feedback, or harass girls about their appearance.

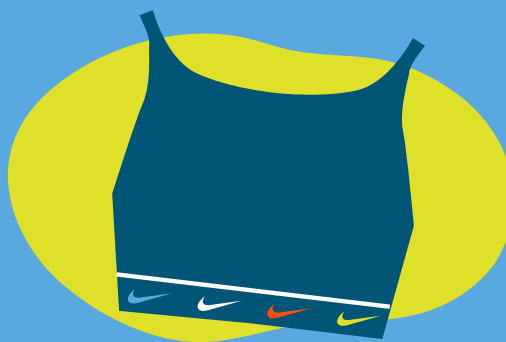
IN THE BRA-FITTING SESSION:

- If distributing sports bras to your team, develop a plan and gain parental consent and include a female teammate or parent.
- Identify a female coach, or trusted mentor or family member to support you with conversations with girls.

WHAT COACHES SHOULD NOT DO

IN GENERAL DON'T:

- Minimize girls' experiences.
- Overlook, dismiss or normalize behaviors that put girls at risk of developing body image concerns.
- Comment on girls' appearances.



IN THE BRA-FITTING SESSION, DON'T:

- Be present during any bra-fitting session.
- Provide opinions on sizing or need for any individual athlete.
- Be the only adult available to address concerns or answer questions.

RESOURCES

SPORTS BRA RESOURCES

**SPORTS BRA
DISTRIBUTION
GUIDE**

**SPORTS BRA
FIT CARD**



ON COACHING GIRLS

**COACHING
GIRLS GUIDE**

**HIJAB
PLAYBOOK**

**HOW TO
COACH
GIRLS
COURSE**

**COACHING
THROUGH A
GENDER LENS:
MAXIMIZING
GIRLS' PLAY AND
POTENTIAL**

