



NORGES  
IDRETTSFORBUND



# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN SPORT

## PROVISIONS ON CHILDREN'S SPORT

*Considered by the General Assembly on 11-13 May 2007.*

*Adopted changes incorporated and approved by the Executive Board on 28 August 2007.*

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NORWEGIAN OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE AND CONFEDERATION OF SPORTS (NIF)

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## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN SPORT AND PROVISIONS ON CHILDREN'S SPORT

Children are engaged in sports because they enjoy it. Together with their friends they have experiences and learn lessons that will last them a lifetime. This is the foundation that all coaches, managers and parents must safeguard and develop further.

Children's Rights in Sport and Provisions on Children's Sport are means to ensure the best possible unified organisation of children's sport in Norway. The objective is to contribute to ensure:

- The sport activities are organised according to the children's needs and that all children are included in the sports clubs regardless of their ambitions and needs.
- Activities are offered without any differential treatment and without regard for the child's and its parents' gender, ethnic background, faith, sexual orientation, physical development and disabilities.
- The sports clubs develop a wide and diverse range of activities and schemes.
- Coaches, managers and parents become even better at cooperating on facilitating activities for children.
- Good communication between the various sports, the parents and the community on which values Norwegian children's sport shall be based on.

### **The rights and provisions are closely linked together**

The rights constitute a political policy instrument which expresses the values which we would like to be the foundation for children's sport in Norway.

The provisions are absolute rules which must be complied with, obeyed and enforced in sports.

It is important to view the rights and the provisions as closely linked together.

### **Local and/or regional variations are not acceptable**

Establishment of separate provisions or guidelines in local or regional parts of the member organisation will not be permitted. The provisions and the rights must be presented in their entirety as adopted by the General Assembly.

There shall be *no exemptions* from the provisions.

# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN SPORT WITH PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT

Children's sport constitutes sport activities for children up until the year they turn 12 years of age. The Children's Rights in Sport apply to all children without any differential treatment and without regard for the child's and its parents' gender, ethnic background, faith, sexual orientation, physical development and disabilities.

## 1. Safety and security

Children have the right to participate in a safe and secure training environment without any inappropriate pressure or exploitation. Injuries must be prevented. Children under the age of 6 must be accompanied by an adult during the activities.

## 2. Friendship and well-being

Children have the right to participate in training and competitive activities which will facilitate development of friendship and solidarity. A sense of well-being facilitates learning and learning facilitates a sense of well-being.

## 3. Based on the children's needs

Children have the right to participate in training and competitive activities adapted to their age, physical development and level of maturity.

## 4. Mastery

Children have the right to experience a sense of mastery and to learn many different skills. They must also be granted opportunities for variation, training and interaction with others.

## 5. Influence

Children have the right to state their viewpoints and to be heard. They must be granted opportunities to participate in planning and execution of their own sport activities along with coaches and parents.

## 6. Freedom to choose

Children have the right to choose which sport, or how many sports, they would like to participate in – and decide for themselves how much they would like to train.

## 7. Competitions for everyone\*

Children have the right to choose whether or not they would like to participate in competitions, and be granted equal opportunities to participate. Children transferring from one club to another within the same sport have the right to participate in competitions for the new club as soon as the transfer has been registered.

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\* NIF would like to point out the importance of viewing Section 7 of the Children's Rights in Sport within the context of the competitive practice for the various types of sports. Section 7 stipulates that: «Children have the right to choose whether or not they would like to participate in competitions, and be granted equal opportunities to participate». This entails that children who do *not* wish to participate in competitions shall also have training opportunities on equal terms with others.

**Development plan:**

Everyone involved in children's sport should follow a common development plan to ensure the children have as much variation and as many opportunities for experiencing a wide range of movements as possible. The training plans and the coaches' practice within the individual sports should follow this development plan:

*Up to the age of 6*

Play and varied activities to stimulate the children's development and basic movements.

*7–10 years of age*

Good opportunities for exploration of and training within different physical activities or sports with different movement patterns in order to experience a wide range of movements. This will provide a good foundation for subsequent movement training. This may involve one or several sports, but each sport is responsible for providing varied activities adapted to the children's level of development.

*10–12 years of age*

The sport shall be characterised by a varied and high level of activity which will ensure good fundamental skills. An in-depth focus on one or a few sports may ensure a good foundation of techniques for subsequent development within the sport.

**Follow-up and enforcement**

The rights constitute a political policy instrument to safeguard the children's rights as individuals and active athletes. This entails obligations for parties other than the children themselves. The children are entitled to compliance with these rights, and coaches, managers, parents and the organisations themselves must follow up this in practice.

An example of a violation of these rights is if a child is pressured by the parents to participate in competitions against its will. Cf. Section 7 in the Children's Rights states: «Children have the right to choose whether or not they would like to participate in competitions».

The rights should be used as a reference in the dialogue between the children, coaches, managers and parents.

In the event the coaches or the sports clubs do not resolve violations of these rights, the next higher level in the organisation (regional sporting bodies, national sport federations or the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports) shall be contacted.

## PROVISIONS ON CHILDREN'S SPORT

- 1 Children's sport constitutes sport activities for children up to and including the year they turn 12 years of age.
- 2 The following apply for children's sport competitions:
  - a) Children may participate in local competitions and sporting events as of the year they turn 6, primarily within their own club.
  - b) Lists of results, tables and rankings may be used in competitions for children as of the year they turn 11, if this is appropriate.
  - c) Children may participate in regional competitions and sporting events as of the year they turn 11.
  - d) Children may participate in open\* sporting events in Norway, the Nordic countries and Northern Scandinavia as of the year they turn 11\*\*.
  - e) Children from the Nordic countries and Northern Scandinavia may participate in competitions and in sporting events in Norway as of the year they turn 11\*\*\*.
  - f) All children shall receive a prize if prizes are awarded during a sporting event.
  - g) Children cannot participate in championships such as NC, EC and WC up to and including the year they turn 12\*\*\*\*.



- h) National sport federations which organise children's sport shall appoint a board member responsible for the children's sport\*\*\*\*.

\* Open sporting events: No qualification required

\*\* Northern Scandinavia comprises Sweden, Finland and Norway. This also covers cooperation within the Barents Region (which also includes Russia).

\*\*\* Subsection 2 e) must be viewed in the context of subsection 2d) - as they apply to the same sporting events

\*\*\*\* And corresponding national and international championships / cups.

\*\*\*\*\* This only applies to clubs for a single sport, but it is also recommended for multi-sports clubs. The board of the club may appoint this member.

## FOLLOW-UP AND ENFORCEMENT

Each national sport federation is responsible for elaborating on the provisions based on the nature and distinctive character of its sport. An example of this may be to define what constitute local and regional competitions. However, this must be based on the intention behind and contents of the rights as well as compliance with the age limits stipulated in the provisions. Such an elaboration must be based on the consideration for the best interest of the children.

It is the hope of NIF that violations will be resolved through information and dialogue within the individual sports club. If this cannot be resolved at the lowest level within the organisation, the next higher level in the organisation must be contacted. In the event of gross violations of the provisions, the relevant level in the organisation may consider lodging a formal complaint regarding the matter under Section 11-2 – Acts/omissions subject to penal measures – of NIF's statutes. If so, the complaint must be submitted to NIF's Adjudication Committee.





**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
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**Sports insurance for children**

All children who are members of a club associated with NIF are insured by the insurance company if...

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