

THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTHERS TO TEENAGE GIRLS

Support Network



A sense of place in the world

A strong support network is vital to give girls a sense of place and identity in the world, friends and mums in particular, are important influencers.

Our insight into what really matters in teenage girls' lives showed that mothers play a pivotal role in a girls' support network:

- We've seen growing trends to suggest that mothers are becoming more important to this generation of girls.
- Girls cherish time with their mums, trust them and look to them for constant guidance and support.
- Mum and family are a 'safe' space for teenage girls to be active as they feel less judgement and scrutiny, than when with their friends.¹

We spoke to a mums and daughters cricket team to see how this relationship is being harnessed and enriched through sport.

BEACON CRICKET CLUB MUMS AND DAUGHTERS TEAM

A club built on a love of sport, socialising and fun

The mums and daughters cricket team at Beacon Cricket Club in Shrewsbury started up in 2018 and it now includes 23 members ranging in age between 13 and 50 years old.

The team was the idea of Rebecca Davidson, who persuaded five friends to form a cricket team as part of the Shrewsbury summer festival. They were all pretty new to the game but loved it, and when the chairman of Beacon Cricket Club heard about their team, he invited them to be part of Beacon.

As the team grew, its foundation in friendship stayed strong with the bonds of socialising and spending time having fun together very much at the core of its success. Hearing about the team, and how much fun it was, inspired the mothers and daughters of members to join so the group quickly expanded to include family as well as friends, which made it even more special. Anyone over 13 with an interest in cricket can join so you don't have to bring along your mum or daughter but many do, especially once they have trained with the team a few times and have been able to see the fun between the generations.

Rebecca says it is the mother-daughter-friend dynamic and the warm welcome from everyone at Beacon, that keeps people coming back. The team trains together once a week if possible – sometimes more in the summer when there are more and longer fixtures.



¹ Reframing Sport for Teenage Girls: Building Strong Foundations for their Futures (2019) Women in Sport

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The perfect blend of camaraderie and competitiveness

The spirit of the team is based on a great balance of competitiveness, mutual support, and positivity. Rebecca talks of the “positively charged” mums and daughters who want to support each other to do their best, but do not judge anyone who might be less experienced than themselves. The team bond is so strong that one member still attends all the matches while recovering from an injury that means she cannot play – and the team love her emotional support!

The mums and daughters learn from each other and enjoy helping each other progress but, unlike some other teams and sports, there is no sense of hierarchy. The experienced players are very approachable and will happily help others improve their technique, but they are not patronising and there is no sense that one person is more important than the others. This way, everyone learns at their own pace through a blend of inspiration and more formal coaching. As Rebecca says, the team loves winning and getting better but “it’s more important that everyone is happy.”

It is this spirit that makes the team so appealing to mums and daughters. Rebecca said her own daughter so wanted to be part of the team that she joined as soon as she turned 13 and was eligible to sign up.

Celebrating the unique bond between mums and daughters

When asked what makes her team different, Rebecca said that it is the bond between the teammates and the individual mums and daughters.



The mums in the team are doing something that many of their mothers were not in a position to do – to enjoy physical activity and sport with their daughters. While social expectations held the previous generation back from getting involved in sport with their daughters, the mums in the team love the chance to grow their cricket skills while enjoying being active with their girls.

This sets a great example to the daughters in terms of supporting their own physical fitness and benefits the mums by helping them to keep active. This mutual motivation is a great way for mums and daughters to build on their changing relationship as the daughters mature from children to young adults. Participating in the team allows the daughters to express their own interests and capabilities and provides a shared activity to strengthen the mother-daughter bond. The dynamic between mothers and daughters on the team is one of friendship, mutual support and respect, with some healthy competition thrown in as well!

HOW DOES THE MUMS AND DAUGHTERS TEAM REFLECT WOMEN IN SPORT'S PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS?



NO JUDGEMENT

Take pressure off performance and give freedom simply to play.

This is at the heart of the team spirit. The warmth, welcome and mutual support of the members genuinely means there are no judgements; *“if someone doesn't bowl right, it's okay, nobody judges.”*



OPEN EYES TO WHAT'S THERE

Redefine sport as more than school sports.

The team is not what many people would expect from a sport associated with tradition, rules and hierarchy. Experiencing the fun of cricket and the warmth of the team is an eye-opener to those who thought it was a rigid, traditional sport.



CHAMPION WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM

Make it much more than just about health.

The club supports members in finding their own reason to enjoy cricket and to focus on whatever motivates them. Many of the girls' love developing new skills and getting active with their mums – this makes participating very special and keeps them motivated.



EXPAND IMAGE OF WHAT 'SPORTY' LOOKS LIKE

Create truly relatable role models which inspire.

You don't have to be 'sporty' to find a warm welcome in the team. Women and girls from all backgrounds and levels of experience, and with all kinds of body shapes and sizes, are valued members of the team. What they all share is positivity and enthusiasm for getting stuck in and supporting each other.

Visit our [Reframing Sport for Girls Toolkit](#) to learn more about our 8 Principles for Success and for information and resources to help you reframe sport for teenage girls.