



NCCOR Member Call

July 22, 2026 | 2:00 p.m. ET



Building Evidence and Advancing Practice for Healthy Children, Families, and Communities

Agenda

- Steering Committee updates
- Spotlight: NCCOR Youth Sports Workshop Recap
 - *Dan Hatfield, NCCOR Coordinating Center*
- Workgroup and communication updates
- Emerging opportunities for NCCOR
- Calendar reminders

Steering Committee Updates

- September Member Meeting
 - **Wednesday, September 16** | In-person and hybrid
 - Theme: Exploring the evidence to action pipeline with CORD 3.0
 - Featuring:
 - Research Panel: CORD researchers will discuss intervention development, trial outcomes, and key lessons learned.
 - Lauren Fiechtner, MD, *Massachusetts General Hospital*
 - Denise Wilfley, PhD, *Washington University in St. Louis*
 - Kate Heelan, PhD, *University of Nebraska Kearney*
 - CDC Grantee Panel: DNPAO grantees will share experiences implementing CORD interventions, including barriers, facilitators, and ongoing technical assistance needs.
 - Barbara Mintz, MS, RD & Kerri Likakis, MS, RD, *RWJ Barnabas Health*
 - Twarnisha Stokes, *Prince George's County Health Department*
 - Anne Lee, MEd, RD, CDCES, *Touro University California*

Spotlight: NCCOR Youth Sports Workshop Recap

Dan Hatfield, PhD

NCCOR Coordinating Center

Workshop Overview

- Workshop goals: (1) Introduce the draft framework for quality youth sports, (2) Describe youth sports organizations that represent different dimensions of the framework, (3) Discuss whether and how the framework can be revised to better capture quality youth sports, (4) Identify potential next steps for the framework, tailored to researchers and practitioners.
- Prior to the workshop, draft quality framework was developed by workgroup members and feedback was integrated from six expert interviews.
- Programs invited to present were identified through a literature review, lists of recognized high-quality programs, and expert interviews.
- June 9th pre-workshop webinar previewed the framework and plan for the workshop (18 non-federal attendees).
- June 15th/16th virtual workshop included four panel presentations / discussions and four breakouts.
 - 34 invited non-federal attendees included researchers and representatives from local and national youth sports programs.

Youth Sports Quality Framework

NCCOR Youth Sports Quality Framework



Component 1

Foundational Conditions

The structural and contextual conditions that make quality sport possible

Dimension	Organization-Level	Facility-Level	Coach-Athlete-Level	Youth-Level Outcomes
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Structural Quality Organizational systems and resources	- Organization mission, goals, and structure that align with elements of this framework - Strategic planning that advances concepts in this framework - Resource and performance management to support organizational-level aspects of concepts in this framework - Onboarding policies that include education around concepts in this framework - Data collection and evaluation around indicators represented in this framework	- Equipment quality - Facility standards (including accessibility for people with disabilities)	- Clear coach qualification standards - Continuing education for coaches - Coaching performance standards and evaluation - Alignment with physical activity standards - Staff-to-participant ratios	Captured through downstream developmental and experiential outcomes
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Access Inclusion and opportunity for all youth	- Affordability - Multi-sport exposure opportunities as an organizational priority - Accessible transportation options - Cultural responsiveness - Tailoring sport preferences to local context	- Adaptive programming that meets the needs of all participants - Proximity to where children live and play - Scheduling considerations (accounting for how groups access facilities at different days and times)	- Culturally responsive coaching practices - Instructional approaches that address the needs of all children	Representation across demographic groups in the sports activity
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Transparency & Engagement Open communication and shared decision-making	- Youth governance opportunities - Financial transparency - Parent, community, and youth feedback mechanisms - Open organizational communication - Formal mechanisms for complaint resolution	Observation access for parents and community members	- Parent education on coaching techniques, practices, and youth development opportunities - Open communication between coaches, athletes, and families	Athlete voice in organizational decisions
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Component 2

Program Environment

How the sport experience is delivered once youth are there

Psychological Environment Climate that fosters safety, belonging, and well-being	- Organizational climate policies (e.g., parent and spectator conduct policies, youth mental health and well-being policies) - Employee retention and satisfaction assessment for continuity in quality staffing at all organizational levels	Physical environment that promotes belonging and psychological safety (e.g., visual display of athlete rights, mental health awareness materials, designated safe spaces, noise management to lessen stress)	- Coach conduct policies - Open-concept coaching spaces - Motivational climate - Autonomy support - Promotion of enjoyment/fun - Athlete-centered communication style	- Sense of belonging - Perceived psychological safety - Enjoyment
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Health & Safety Physical health and protection from harm	- Safety protocols (including transportation) - Screening and background check protocols - Incident reporting mechanisms - Abuse and bullying prevention policies (e.g., child abuse prevention certification requirements) - Parent education about injury and abuse policies	- Safe physical environment (e.g., line of sight to adult-youth and peer interactions) - Access to trainers/health care professionals in case of injury or harm	- Training load management - Mental health support - Education around physiology and benefits of exercise, abuse prevention, and injury response - Boundary maintenance	- Time in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) - Mental health indicators - No exposure to violence/abuse from peers or adults
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Component 3

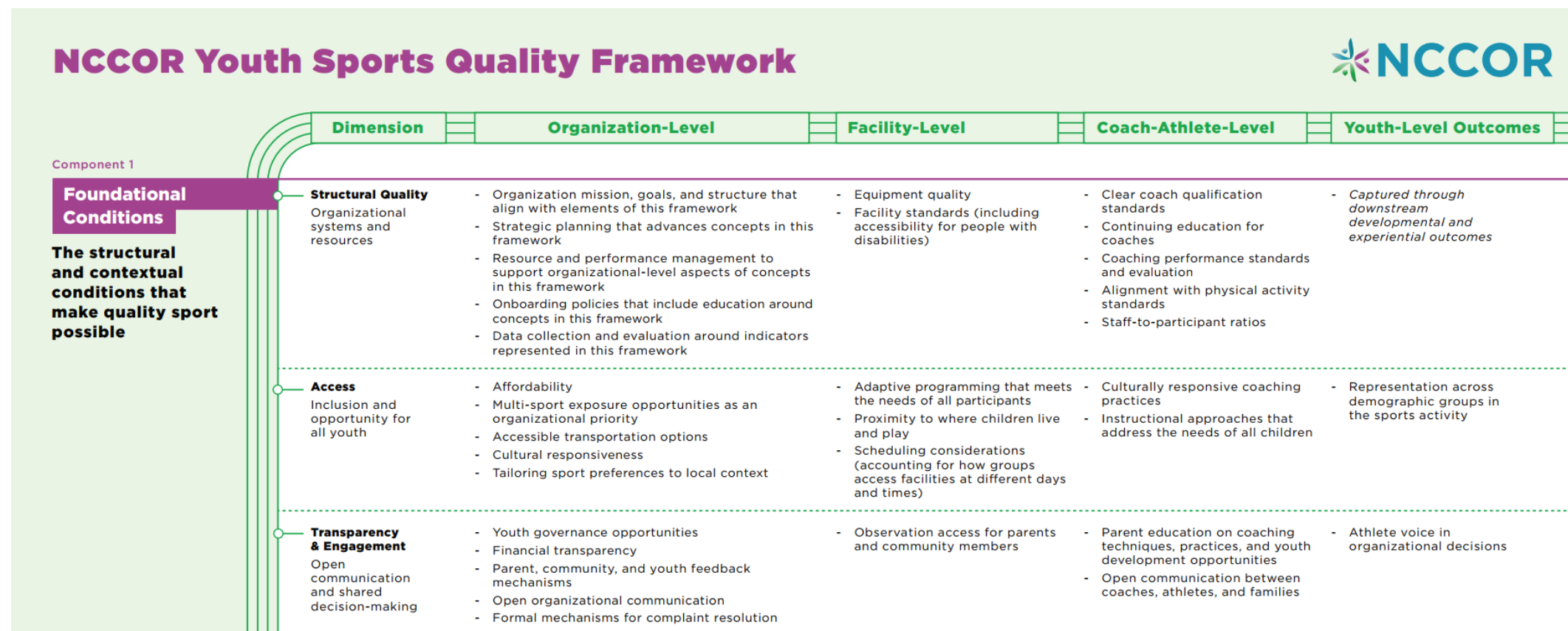
Developmental Experience

Factors that ensure youth sports environments are developmentally supportive

Appropriateness for developmental stage Appropriate experiences that support whole-child development	- Developmentally appropriate participation models/policies - Modified, developmentally appropriate competition format policies - Appropriate specialization timing policies	Spaces that support play-based learning and skill progression	- Skill mastery progression - Multi-sport participation encouragement - Intrinsic motivation emphasis (over external rewards)	- Leadership opportunities (e.g., pathways to coaching) - Physical literacy - Cognitive growth - Sport sampling rates
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Positive Youth Development (PYD) Life skills and character building through sport	- PYD-aligned organizational structures (e.g., mission, values, hiring) - Tracking of youth personal-social development outcomes	- Environments that support connection and character development (e.g., spaces that support relationship building and competence, spaces for reflection) - Community-facing design to promote community connection	- Intentional life skills teaching - Character-building through coaching/sport - Reinforcing the 5 C's (Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Caring)	- Transferable life skills - Personal-social development outcomes
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Foundational Conditions



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- Athlete-centered communication style

- Sense of belonging
- Perceived psychological safety
- Enjoyment

Health & Safety

Physical health and protection from harm

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- Skill mastery progression
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- Leadership opportunities (e.g., pathways to coaching)
- Physical literacy
- Cognitive growth
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Positive Youth Development (PYD)

Life skills and character building through sport

- PYD-aligned organizational structures (e.g., mission, values, hiring)
- Tracking of youth personal-social development outcomes

- Environments that support connection and character development (e.g., spaces that support relationship building and competence, spaces for reflection)
- Community-facing design to promote community connection

- Intentional life skills teaching
- Character-building through coaching/sport
- Reinforcing the 5 C's (Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Caring)

- Transferrable life skills
- Personal-social development outcomes

Structural Quality, Access, Transparency, and Engagement in Youth Sport Programs



Fa'amalo "Malo" Lutu
*Imperial Beach Parks, Recreation,
and Community Services*



Stephanie McKeon
Special Olympics North America



Allie Riley, PhD, MSW
Girls On the Run



Moderator
Hui-Ju "Zoe" Young, PhD, CMA
*National Center on Health,
Physical Activity and Disability
(NCHPAD),
University of Alabama at
Birmingham*

Sample Presentation & Breakout Themes

- There is often overlap or synergy across different sections of the framework, particularly in terms of foundational conditions; it may be worthwhile to signal that interconnectedness more explicitly.
- Ensuring access demands attention to a wide range of factors beyond just making programs available—e.g., addressing affordability, proximity, cultural responsiveness, adaptation for youth with disabilities and other needs, and more.
- Youth voice should be systematically included in shaping programs (e.g., via athlete councils or other ongoing mechanisms) to ensure programs deliver what youth themselves want to see—including fun!
- Effective coaching is core to the youth experience, making quality coach onboarding, training, and continuous support essential.
- Parents play a particularly central role in youth sports access and experience, and engaging them may require a multi-pronged strategy given that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach that works for all parents.

Psychological Environment, Health, and Safety in Youth Sport Programs



Jackie Kippen
YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit



Jaci McCormack
Rise Above



Tierra Stewart
DC Scores



Moderator
Lynette Craft, PhD
*American Orthopaedic Society
for Sports Medicine*

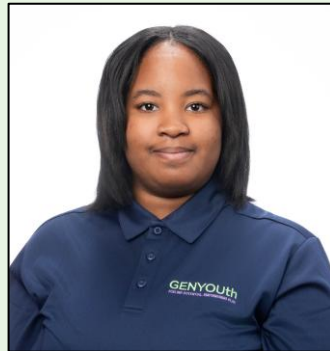
Sample Presentation & Breakout Themes

- Quality is created through organizational systems—not just individual coaches—with consistent training, procedures, and supports shaping the youth experience.
 - *But* also important to be flexible to meet local needs (“stubborn on vision, flexible on details”).
- Fun, belonging, and positive team culture are central to high-quality youth sport experiences—and fun depends on wide-ranging factors (e.g., not just the activities themselves, but also things like balanced teams, injury avoidance, appropriate breaks, etc.).
- Coaches should be developed as leaders in whole-child development, responsible for fostering confidence, connection, well-being, and growth, not just sport skills.
- A strength of the framework is its inclusion of both physical and psychological well-being: health and safety extend beyond injury prevention to include psychological safety, mental health support, trusted relationships, and supportive environments.
- Access to resources to support safety can be a challenge in many communities; developing partnerships can be critical to foster safe environments.

Youth Voice and Autonomy in Youth Sports



Ellise
11th Grade, Idaho
GENYOUth Youth Council



Raquel
11th Grade, Texas
GENYOUth Youth Council



Rohit
12th Grade, New Jersey
GENYOUth Youth Council



Moderator
Jayne Greenberg, MS, EdD,
*International Sport and Culture
Association*

Youth Panel Themes

- Having mechanisms for hearing from youth and incorporating their feedback is key!
- Potential for youth sports to teach a huge range of transferrable life skills—value of hard work and discipline, teamwork, personal improvement, and more.
 - Those lessons have spillover effects in all aspects of life!
- Coaches are a lynchpin for cultivation of growth and development.
- As athletes get older, there may be a shift toward focus on competition and less on other skills, and the most talented athletes may get the most attention.
- Parent communication may represent a missed opportunity in some cases.

Appropriateness for Developmental Stage and Positive Youth Development in Youth Sport Programs



Dawn Anderson-Butcher,
PhD, LISW-S, CMPC
*Ohio State University
LiFEsports*



Stephanie Herrick, MS
*Rising New York Road
Runners*



Moderator
Daycia McClam
Positive Coaching Alliance

Sample Presentation & Breakout Themes

- With intentional focus, sport programs can achieve a huge range of positive youth development goals—e.g., building fundamental movement skills and life skills such as self-control, teamwork, responsibility, leadership, and more.
- Enjoyment is central to sustained participation and may be strengthened by focusing on individual mastery over competition.
- Developmentally appropriate experiences should reflect differences not just in age but also in youth readiness, skill levels, and competitive needs.
- Quality implementation matters—factors like belonging, relationships, and reflection/debriefing can be important mechanisms that drive program effects.
- Strong research can be integrated with practice and generate win-win opportunities!

Cross-Cutting Themes

Youth Centricity

Framework as
a System

Quality Happens
Before First
Practice

Consistency and
Flexibility

People at
Multiple Levels

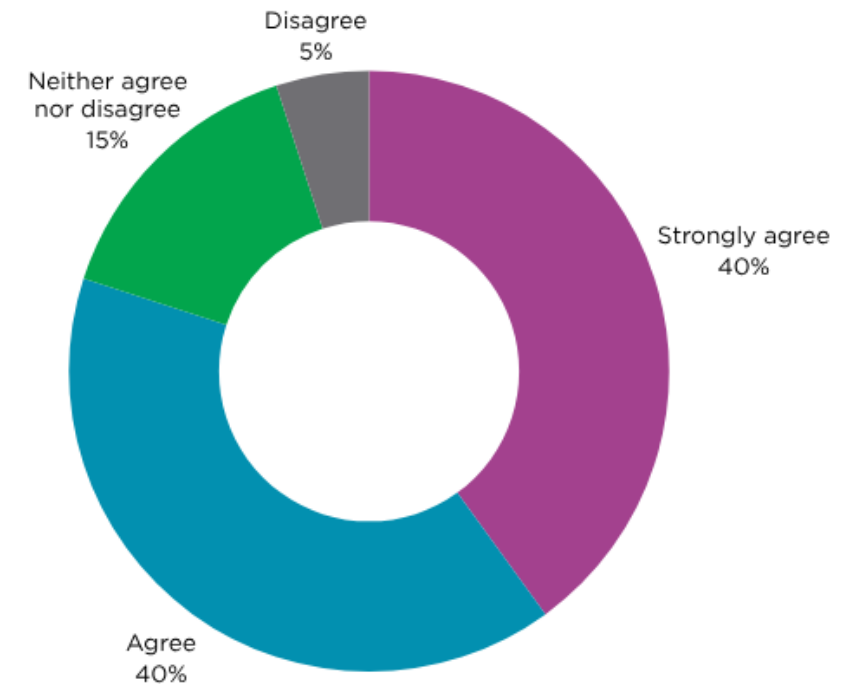
Continuous
Evaluation

Need for
Knowledge-
Sharing

Participant Feedback

- The workshop successfully reached a new audience—60% of respondents reported they were not at all familiar with NCCOR before the workshop
- Workshop was well received, with 80% of survey respondents saying the workshop was a good use of their time.
- 85% of respondents said they were moderately or very likely to use the Framework in the future.

This webinar was a good use of my time



Participant Feedback

- The Steering Committee and workgroup members have also received positive anecdotal feedback from meeting participants

“NCCOR Team,

Thank you so much for including me in the Defining Quality Youth Sports Environments workshops the past two days. I loved every second of it, and I also felt very welcomed and included and that my own experience was valued alongside the amazing attendees and presenters and NCCOR staff.

I welcome any additional collaboration or opportunities to support the work you are doing in this area. I am both a researcher and a practitioner striving to do exactly what the framework is intended to do. Very excited about your work.”

Next Steps

- Panel recordings
- Meeting summary
- Refined framework + supporting resources / dissemination

Workgroup and Communication Updates

Meher Din

NCCOR Coordinating Center

Workgroup Updates

- **Obesity-Related Policy Research in the U.S. (OPUS) Learning Network:** The next meeting of the OPUS Learning Network will be on Thursday, August 27 where grantees will discuss how to create meaningful outputs. The group is preparing for its retreat in September.
- **Research Gaps in Treatment of Pediatric Obesity with Obesity Medications:** The workshop attendees have completed their review of all workshop output documents. The workgroup is processing the feedback and finalizing materials for inclusion in the white paper.

Workgroup Updates

- **Sport and Youth Well-Being:** This workgroup successfully hosted the July workshop. They are working to finalize the workshop summary and incorporate participant feedback into the youth sports quality framework.
- **Rapid Infant Growth:** This workgroup has confirmed all speakers for the September workshop and has invited 50 participants. They are continuing to develop key questions to address through the breakout discussions.

Communications Updates

- We're seeing a great response to our LinkedIn articles. Our recent articles generated high audience interest, generating a combined 750 impressions and a 7% average engagement rate, exceeding industry benchmarks.

**Q&A with
Dr. Allison Wu:**
Food is Medicine for
Improving Maternal
and Infant Health
Outcomes



**Federal Funding
Opportunities Roundup:**
Advancing Nutrition,
Obesity, and Food as
Medicine Research





Emerging Opportunities for NCCOR

Calendar Reminders (FY 26)

Member Calls

- August 19

Member Meetings

- September 16

Do you want to present your work to NCCOR members? Let us know at rgrimsland@fhi360.org!



Questions?