

The Play to Lead Toolkit



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Amid our 50th anniversary celebrations, the Women's Sports Foundation (WSF®) released a breakthrough study titled, "[Play to Lead: The Generational Impact of Sport on Women's Leadership](#)," that takes a new look at the profound cross-generational impact youth sports have had on women's leadership.

We at WSF truly believe that *Play to Lead* is more than a research report, **it is a call to action** for everyone to prioritize youth sports participation because it proves that **when girls play, they lead, and we all win**. As part of our effort to amplify this *first-of-its-kind* study and its vital findings, we encourage you to support the promotion of it through your networks, helping to spread awareness and inspire change by motivating everyone throughout society to invest in girls' youth sports programs.

This toolkit provides a comprehensive guide on how to promote the report. Below you will find additional instructions on how to participate in WSF's **#PlayToLead** social media campaign, including guided videos on how to plug your own photos into our graphic templates so you can share your own **#PlayToLead** stories. You will also find key messaging and data points from the report to easily uplift in your posts, as well as an email template to share with your networks and additional resources to browse through.

Thank you for your support and if you have any questions, please reach out to:

- Kandice Miller - Associate Director, Communications:
KMiller@WomensSportsFoundation.org
- Maegan Olmstead - Senior Manager, Digital Content:
MOlmstead@WomensSportsFoundation.org

Toolkit Sections

- Overview + Key Messages + Report Highlights
- How to Support the Report
- Social Media Guidelines
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Overview

- “Play to Lead: The Generational Impact of Sport on Women’s Leadership” provides a new look at the profound cross-generational impact youth sport participation has had on women’s leadership development.
- The report is the *first-of-its-kind* to survey seven generations of women in their 20s, 30s, and up to 80s, exploring the effects of policy-driven changes, most notably the passage of Title IX in 1972, and dives into the barriers that have impeded full and sustained sport participation across the decades.
- **These findings are the latest proof point** that the skills, traits and experiences girls learn through the transformative power of sport have the ability to build a vibrant leadership pipeline that both benefits society and bolsters the economy.

Key Messages

- *Play to Lead* proves what the Women’s Sports Foundation has known for 50 years and counting: **when girls play, they lead, and we all win.**
- It is more than just a research report, it is a **call to action** on the vital role sport plays in fostering a vibrant leadership pipeline.
- The findings illuminate why sports are not a nice-to-have but a **must-have** for all girls, showcasing what can be achieved when they truly have equitable access and opportunity to play at the youth level.

Report Highlights

Youth Sports Fuel Women’s Leadership

- **67%** of women believe they have carried the skills and lessons from sports into adulthood
- **Half of women (49%)** credit the skills acquired through sports for their leadership development

Sports Prepare Women to Lead, With the Top Skills Learned Being

- Teamwork (**73%**)
- Learning from mistakes (**53%**)
- Handling pressure (**51%**)
- Pushing physical boundaries (**46%**)

Leadership Roles and Sports

- **69%** of women who played sports held at least one formal leadership role outside of the family
- **71%** of women who had a formal leadership role held titles like Manager, Director, President, or C-suite Executive
- The longer girls play sports, the more likely they are to hold formal leadership roles

Barriers to Participation Persist

- **Seven out of 10 women** reported various barriers to full access - meaning they would have liked to play longer, more competitively or additional sports. The most reported barriers include:
 - Family finances (**27%**)
 - Low parental engagement (**20%**)
 - Limited opportunities to participate (**20%**)
 - Injury/health concerns (**17%**)
- Girls of color, LGBTQ+ youth, and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face even greater barriers to sports participation.

Access to Sport Promotes Equity for All

- Leadership outcomes from sports participation are consistent across all racial and ethnic groups.

How to Support the Report

- **Promote on Social Media:** Share key findings (listed above) and/or [the report's infographic](#) across your personal or organizational social media channels.
- **Engage With Our Posts:** Like, comment, and share posts from the Women's Sports Foundation's official channels to increase visibility, like this one on [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#).
- **Use Our Pre-designed Content Templates:** Create consistent, visually appealing posts across your channels. These templates allow you to highlight key findings from the report (listed above), while plugging in customized images that speak to your **#PlayToLead** story.
- **Send an Email:** Use the email template provided to reach out to your networks, encouraging them to explore and share the report.
- **Host a Conversation:** Organize a virtual or in-person discussion within your organization or community group to highlight the findings and discuss the role of sports in leadership development.

Social Media Guidelines

- **Platform:** Choose the platform(s) where you have the most influence – Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Twitter, Threads and Facebook.
- **Tone:** Keep the tone professional and inspiring, highlighting both how sport has helped you lead and key findings from the report.
- **Hashtags:** Our main hashtag is **#PlayToLead**, other relevant hashtags include **#SportsLeadership**, **#FollowTheLeader**, **#TitleIX**, and **#WomenInSports** to expand your reach.
- **Tag Us:** Mention or tag the Women's Sports Foundation's social media accounts so we can amplify your posts.
 - Instagram: [@WomensSportsFoundation](#)

- TikTok: [@Womenssportsfoundation](#)
- LinkedIn: [@Women Sports Foundation](#)
- Twitter: [@WomenSportsFdn](#)
- Threads: [@Womessportsfoundation](#)
- Facebook: [@Women's Sports Foundation](#)

Sample Social Media Captions

Twitter/Threads Post:

The @WomensSportsFdn's latest report #PlayToLead proves that girls who play sports become women who lead! I'm grateful to have played [youth sports/through high school/through college] and now am [a proud leader in education/medicine/a CEO/etc]. Share how you #PlayToLead at www.WomensSportsFoundation.org/PlaytoLead

Instagram/Facebook/LinkedIn Post:

I'm proud to be part of the @WomensSportsFoundation's #PlayToLead movement! 🏆 Growing up, playing [insert sport] taught me valuable lessons that shaped my leadership skills today. 🙌 Whether it was learning [insert your skills learned like teamwork, learning from mistakes, handling pressure, etc], the impact of sports on my life is undeniable. From my early days in sports to now, I've seen how participation builds strong leadership. ✨ Visit www.WomensSportsFoundation.org/PlaytoLead and share your #PlayToLead story and together let's inspire the next generation of girls and women to #KeepPlaying.

Now & Then Social Template Instruction Video

Post Type: Single Post

Template/Editable Link: [Now & Then Graphic](#)

Link to 'How-To' Video: [Now & Then Social Template Instruction Video](#)

Important Timecodes:

- [00:00](#) - Start of Video
- [00:20](#) - Duplicating the master template
- [00:40](#) - Uploading Photos into Canva
- [00:46](#) - Replacing photos in the template
- [01:48](#) - Referencing the example post
- [02:00](#) - Replacing text in the template
- [02:18](#) - Exporting the image from Canva

Follow The Leader Social Template Instruction Video

Post Type: Carousel

Template/Editable Link: [Follow The Leader Graphic](#)

Link to 'How-To' Video: [Follow The Leader Social Template Instruction Video](#)

Image Splitter Website for Computer: [Image Splitter](#)

Image Splitter App for mobile phones: Android Devices - [SCRL app for android](#); Apple Devices - [SCRL app for apple](#)

Important Timecodes:

- [00:00](#) - Start of Video
- [00:21](#) - Duplicating the master template
- [00:40](#) - Replacing photos in the template
- [01:02](#) - Exporting the image from Canva
- [01:38](#) - Splitting the Image (for mobile phones, refer to the SCRL video link below)

Video: [How to use SCRL app to split images](#)

Social Template Instruction Video for Mobile Phones

Link to Video: [Social Template Instruction Video for Mobile Phones](#)

Important Timecodes:

- [00:00](#) - Start of Video
- [00:52](#) - Replacing text in the template
- [01:00](#) - Viewing other versions
- [01:05](#) - Referencing the example post
- [01:16](#) - Exporting the image from Canva

Email Template

Hello [Name],

I am excited to share the Women's Sports Foundation's (WSF) breakthrough study revealing the profound, cross-generational impact youth sport participation has had on women's leadership development.

Titled "[Play to Lead: The Generational Impact of Sport on Women's Leadership](#)," the report is the *first-of-its-kind* to survey seven generations of women in their 20s, 30s, and up to 80s, exploring the effects of policy-driven changes, most notably the passage of Title IX in 1972 and dives into the barriers that have impeded full and sustained sport participation across the decades.

Play to Lead is the latest proof point – and a **call to action** for all to prioritize youth sport participation – that the skills, traits and experiences girls learn through the transformative power of sport, have the ability to build a vibrant leadership pipeline that benefits society and bolsters the economy.

I encourage you to read the [full report](#) and join me in spreading the word about its findings. Whether it's through social media, email, or conversations, you can make a difference by helping uplift a powerful message: **when girls play, they lead, and we all win!**

Thank you for your support in amplifying *Play to Lead's* findings!

- Instagram: [@WomensSportsFoundation](#)
- TikTok: [@Womenssportsfoundation](#)
- LinkedIn: [@Women Sports Foundation](#)
- Twitter: [@WomenSportsFdn](#)
- Threads: [@Womessportsfoundation](#)
- Facebook: [@Women's Sports Foundation](#)

Additional Resources

- **Full Report/Infographic:** Access the full Play to Lead report and infographic [here](#).
- **Media Kit:** Find additional media resources, including the report's press release, media articles and social templates/tutorials.
 - [PR Newswire](#)
 - [Forbes Article](#)
 - [Fast Company Article](#)
 - [Now & Then Graphic - Editable Link](#)
 - [Follow The Leader Graphic - Editable Link](#)
 - [Social Template Tutorials](#)

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