

# DAUGHTERS & DADS

Active & Empowered

The Daughters and Dads Active and Empowered programme (DADs) is an 11-week programme helping primary school-aged daughters and their dads (or father-figures) get active together.

Each 90-minute session aims to increase physical activity levels, Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) and social-emotional wellbeing of girls by improving the girls' physical confidence and competence, challenging stereotypes about playing sport and physical activity and increase fathers' confidence and ability to act as role models in relation to their daughter's participation.

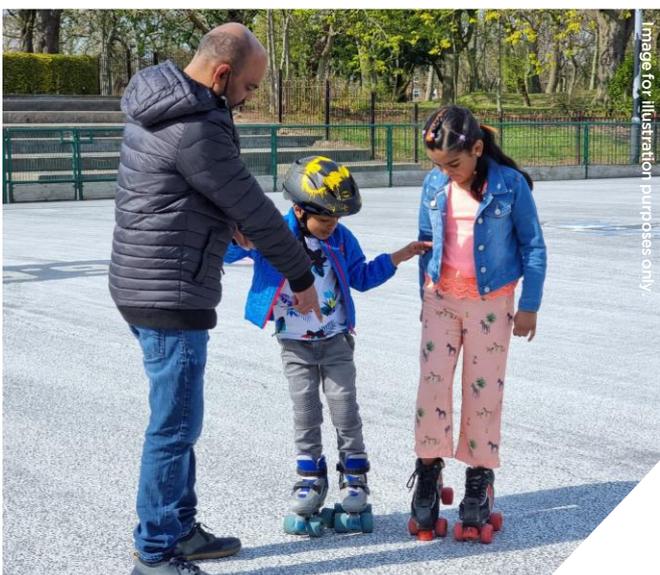


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## MEET THE SUBRAMANIVAMS

Dad, Roshan, and his wife are Sri Lankan and having moved to London to do their degrees are now raising their family in England. Amaya, who is 8 years old, and her younger brother are currently residing in the North East of England. Roshan is working hard to build a new business owning a grocery store and this means long hours away from the family.



**DAD TENDS TO SPEND TIME WITH THE CHILDREN ON THE WEEKEND, DUE TO HIS WORK COMMITMENTS, WHILST MUM HAS TIME WITH THEM ON WEEKDAYS.**

Amaya is a bubbly eight-year-old girl who loves going on bike rides with her younger brother. Her dad runs behind them whilst they cycle round the park, and they race each other. From a really young age Amaya has enjoyed trying different sports from gymnastics to swimming and her dad was determined that she would have the opportunities to do them despite his educational upbringing.

**ROSHAN GREW UP IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE GIRLS WERE NOT ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORT.**



Both parents encourage their children to take part in lots of different sports, so they grow up fit and healthy and **“it sticks in their minds that sport is good for them.”**

The Subramanivams attended a virtual Daughters and Dads Active and Empowered programme, as lockdown put a halt to their in person attendance.

## CONSCIOUS GENDER DECISIONS

Roshan was already consciously choosing to do things differently from his parents generation - he knew that he wanted his children to enjoy and learn sports like swimming which he wasn't allowed to do. **"In Sri Lanka, when I was playing sports, mostly the girls needed to study. We boys got to choose."**

Yet it wasn't until they joined the Daughters and Dad's Active programme being run by Women in Sport and Middlesbrough FC Foundation that dad realised some engrained gender stereotypes in his mind were still having an impact on decisions he was making for his daughter.

Roshan recalled how his initial idea was to let Amaya try what she wanted in sport and empower her to make her own choices based on what she likes.

**"WE ALWAYS LET HER DO SPORTS BUT SOME OF THEM WE FELT LIKE THEY ARE ONLY FOR THE BOYS."**

Sports like cricket, a game he loved from his own childhood, had felt was more suitable for his son rather than Amaya. The education element of the programme, however, taught them about the conscious choices they make and empowered them to think differently about gendered impact.

Amaya is now keen to try cricket as well as basketball and rather than buying his son an inflatable boxing bag, dad has now got them both one.

**AMAYA EXPLAINED THAT BOYS AND GIRLS CAN DO ANYTHING. GIRLS CAN DO WHAT BOYS DO AND BOYS CAN DO WHAT GIRLS DO."**



## FAMILY TIME AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The programme has also had a positive impact on the amount of time that Roshan finds to encourage and be active with his daughter. His new business means long hours away from the family, however, he chose to change his shift patterns so that he could join Amaya, so that they could do the activities together. He says he grew to understand through the education sessions just how important finding that time to spend with his daughter is.

**AMAYA RECALLS HOW FUN IT WAS TO HAVE DAD PARTICIPATING WITH HER AND WHEN THE FAMILY COMES TOGETHER**



After the programme finished, Roshan has kept these changes in place so he can spend time with his children as he wants his family to spend time together.

Both parents want their children to be healthy and happy, and understand the importance it has on their own health and wellbeing. Roshan explains **"when they are enjoying something and it makes them healthy at the same time it makes me proud and happy as well."**

Roshan says that the programme has had many positive effects on Amaya and the family as a whole. The exercise helped his daughter regain fitness and lose weight after the restrictions of the lockdowns, he has seen her grow in confidence for example in how she handles and throws balls and she is keen to try activities that she previously might not have thought were available to her as a girl like cricket and basketball.

## DEVELOPING ATTITUDES, SKILLS AND POSITIVE HABITS

The physical activity elements of DADs has helped the Roshan learn new ways they can sustain their activity together as a family as well as give Amaya confidence to try new sports skills. It offered them both the opportunity to understand the technical aspects of throwing a ball and kicking a ball.

Amaya agreed, and her new confidence and competence in her sports skills have empowered her to try new sports. She says **"I think I have got better at throwing balls so that the other person can catch it. I want to try some basketball now, cricket and some tennis."**

**"I JUST LIKE EVEN WHEN SHE WENT FOR A FOOTBALL GIRLS ONLY HOLIDAY SESSION LAST THURSDAY (SCHOOL HALF TERM) – WHEN I PICKED HER UP SHE SAID SHE PLAYED BETTER THAN EVER."**

Roshan has also learnt more about how he can support his daughter, and son, in their development. He and his wife bring different qualities to their parenting he says and his dad instinct to allow Amaya to make mistakes and take some risks so she can learn from them are important. Amaya loved doing the rough and tumble games with her dad – from trying to stand up whilst tied together to removing each others socks and Roshan knows that being there for her now and in the future is essential.



**WHEN I AM PLAYING WITH MY KIDS NOW THEY DON'T BOTHER ABOUT DOING THINGS WRONG OR MAKING MISTAKES BECAUSE THEY KNOW WE WON'T THINK ANYTHING ABOUT THAT. I HAVE LEARNT FROM THE COURSE - YOU FIND OUT THE MISTAKE FOR YOURSELF AND THEN IT HELPS TO CORRECT THE MISTAKES."**

Amaya described the moment she was practicing one of the rough and tumble activities with dad saying "it made me laugh and daddy was funny. Every time I won – I like to win if I can". When they practiced at home, they would also include Amaya's brother in the activities

Roshan feels proud watching his daughter embrace different sports and understands how he needs to help his daughter, introducing the community to her and being involved in lots of activities. Amaya says she is happiest when she is outside playing with her dad and spending time together as a family.

To read more case studies or find out more about Daughters and Dads Active and Empowered, [click here](#).

## SUMMARY OF IMPACT:

- Dad has developed a **greater understanding of how unconscious stereotypes in sport** can hold his daughter back.
- Dad has begun to **prioritise time** with his daughter to ensure they spend quality time together.
- Marked improvements in daughters sports skills – **understanding of technical aspects** of the skill was key in **developing confidence and competence**.
- Daughter has **transferred her learnings** into seeking new sports activities and opportunities.
- The learnings have been **cascaded across the whole family** and actively engage in activity together.



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\*All names have been changed for identity purposes