

Joint Action Plan

**Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa and
Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children**

Improving participation in play, active recreation
and sport across the Oranga Tamariki system

2026–2028



Every child and young person deserves the opportunity to play, be active and participate in sport.

Play, active recreation and sport support physical, mental and social wellbeing. They help children and young people build confidence, develop positive relationships, strengthen resilience and experience a sense of belonging.

For tamariki and rangatahi involved with Oranga Tamariki, these opportunities can be especially important. However, barriers such as cost, transport and limited access to local opportunities can make participation difficult.

This Joint Action Plan sets out how Sport NZ and Oranga Tamariki will work together to reduce those barriers and improve participation in play, active recreation and sport for children and young people who need it most.

The Action Plan

The Plan provides a shared framework for action between Sport NZ and Oranga Tamariki. It builds on the agencies' longstanding partnership and existing work in communities to improve the conditions that enable participation.

The Action Plan is organised around four priority areas:

1

Strengthening collaboration across agencies and regions

2

Building workforce capability and shared practice

3

Identifying and addressing barriers to participation

4

Using sport and physical activity to support early intervention and positive pathways for young people

Through stronger collaboration, a more capable workforce, evidence-informed action and targeted initiatives, the Action Plan aims to make participation more accessible, consistent and sustainable for children and young people, regardless of their circumstances.

Action	What we'll work on together	Outcomes	Timeframe
1 Refresh Relationship Agreement	Update and agree a refreshed Relationship Agreement between Sport NZ and Oranga Tamariki that clarifies the purpose of the relationship, the ways of working between the organisations, and how progress against this joint Action Plan will be governed, monitored and managed.	• Clear shared purpose, roles and accountability between Sport NZ and Oranga Tamariki • Established governance, monitoring and managing arrangements for joint work • Improved alignment of national and regional priorities	November 2026
2 Embed youth voices in programming decisions	Establish mechanisms to enable care and youth justice-experienced tamariki and rangatahi to participate in work to understand and address barriers to participation in play, active recreation and sport.	• More responsive and relevant initiatives for care and youth justice-experienced children and young people • Increased trust and engagement	Ongoing through to June 2028
3 Enable connections between Sport NZ, Regional Sport Trusts (RSTs), and Oranga Tamariki	Establish regular national connections between Sport NZ and Oranga Tamariki (Tamariki & Whānau Services and Youth Justice) to strengthen relationships and ensure ongoing alignment. Support regional and local connections between RSTs, Oranga Tamariki Regional Commissioners, and Regional Youth Justice Managers to facilitate information sharing and coordinated local delivery. Consider funding a navigator/connector role to support access to appropriate physical activity opportunities. Roles are likely to be primarily targeted at reducing child and youth offending but are also likely to support access for other children and young people in the care and protection system.	• Stronger and sustained national, regional and local relationships • Improved coordination of locally led planning and delivery • Increased awareness and uptake of existing physical activity opportunities	Ongoing through to June 2028

Action	What we'll work on together	Outcomes	Timeframe
4 Map providers of shared interest	Complete a joint stocktake of current and potential providers using physical activity to improve outcomes for children and young people involved with the care and protection or youth justice systems. This stocktake will be shared between Oranga Tamariki, Sport NZ and RSTs.	• Clear understanding of available providers and gaps in provision • Improved visibility of opportunities for Oranga Tamariki staff and RSTs • Better targeting of investment and referrals	August 2026 (complete)
5 Review workforce quality and capability	Review workforce capability across the sport and recreation sector with a focus on trauma-informed, culturally responsive and inclusive practice. Raise awareness of the value of play, active recreation and sport across the care and youth justice workforce, and explore opportunities to increase access to participation.	• Improved understanding of workforce strengths and capability gaps • Clear priorities for workforce development	December 2026
6 Enable workforce connection, shared practice, and learning	Develop and consider initiatives to improve workforce awareness and capability based on identified needs (including training, guidance, and communities of practice). This will support shared understanding, aligned expectations, and consistent quality of delivery across sectors.	• Stronger cross-sector networks and communities of practice • Improved quality and consistency of delivery • Increased workforce confidence and capability	May 2027

Action	What we'll work on together	Outcomes	Timeframe
7 Build an evidence-based picture of need	Establish a shared, evidence-based understanding of the operational barriers and enablers affecting access and participation in play, active recreation and sport across the care spectrum, drawing on the following sources (at a minimum): • Unlocking Opportunities Report (2025) • Aroturuki Tamariki deep dive on access to sport and recreation for children in care (2026) • Joint Sport NZ-Oranga Tamariki/Ministry of Culture and Heritage workshops to build shared understanding of system factors influencing access to play, active recreation and sport • Input from iwi, care-experienced children and young people, caregivers and community providers Insights from this work will be shared to support future policy work led by Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage.	• Shared, evidence-based understanding of access issues across the system • Better-informed decision-making and programme design • Alignment across agencies on priority issues	December 2026
8 Develop targeted initiatives to reduce barriers and enhance enablers	Work collaboratively to develop initiatives that respond to evidence-based barriers and enablers identified in Action 7, to support children's and young people's consistent access to quality play, active recreation and sport across the Oranga Tamariki system. Actions will include a mix of short, medium and long-term initiatives for Ministerial consideration.	• Set of actions developed to address identified barriers and enablers • Mix of short, medium and long-term initiatives for ministerial consideration • Improved consistency of access to quality physical activity opportunities	May 2027

Using sport and physical activity to support prevention and positive pathways for young people in, or at risk of entering, the youth justice system

Action	What we'll work on together	Outcomes	Timeframe
9 Inform distribution of Sport NZ Community Impact Investment	Collaborate on assessing proposals seeking Community Impact Investment funding, including Oranga Tamariki providing feedback on organisations suitable for investment. Oranga Tamariki will also be invited to review proposals to use Community Impact Investment to support children and young people in Youth Justice Residences.	• Investments are better aligned to priority communities and needs • Increased reach and effectiveness of funded initiatives • Scaling successful programmes	Ongoing through to March 2027
10 Collaborate on potential systems investment opportunities	Work in partnership to design and deliver initiatives that demonstrate and promote the role of physical activity and sport in positive youth development and crime prevention, including pilot programmes, cross-sector events, and shared learning activities (e.g. Bluelight Youth Justice Conference 2027).	• Increased cross-sector understanding of physical activity as a prevention tool • Development of system-level initiatives supporting shared outcomes • Stronger collaboration across sport and recreation, care and youth justice sectors	Ongoing through to June 2028