



# UNDERSTANDING CHALLENGES OF IMMIGRANTS TO ENROLL THEIR CHILDREN IN RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Sports is universal language that has been practiced in every culture and tradition since ancient times. Immigrant children face psychological issues due to language, unfamiliar environment, new culture, and new people. In settlement process of immigrants in a host country, immigrant children and their transition are often overlooked. This research investigates role of recreational activities in Nepali immigrant children living in Guelph towards their inclusion and socialisation in the community.

## WHY RECREATION IS IMPORTANT FOR IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

- High social importance and aids in language practice, making friends, acquisition of social capital in culturally diverse environment.
- Induces inter-group relationship, place-based connection, and citizenship.
- Helps children adapt to stressful acculturation process and feel induced into new community.

Despite of parents' interest to see their children getting involved in recreational activities, Nepali immigrants in Guelph expressed difficulty to enroll their children in recreational activities. Nepali families noted challenges in accessing information about many recreational services and programs, affordability of recreational programs, and accessing recreational programs within the community.

## STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING IMMIGRATION CHILDREN ENGAGEMENT IN RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Promote subsidy and financial programs in multiple languages to ensure they reach newcomers.
- Distributing multi-lingual brochures to all school students to promote opportunities.
- Use multiple methods to determine eligibility for subsidy and financial programs. The Low Income Cut Offs (LICO) often means families who are outside LICO but still finds it hard to make ends meet are not eligible.
- Launch after school recreation programs. Schools have pre-existing space to support diverse types of recreational activities. Students from diverse communities socialize and make friends in after school recreation program.
- Ensure transportation options, such as public transit, are considered when scheduling the time and location of recreation activities.
- Provide inter-cultural training opportunities for recreational activity coaches to ensure a welcoming environment for children of immigrants.

The full research report can be found at [www.ruraldev.ca/recreationalactivities/](http://www.ruraldev.ca/recreationalactivities/). Niva Shrestha conducted this research as part of her Master of Science in Rural Planning and Development program at the University of Guelph. Niva can be reached at [nshresth@uoguelph.ca](mailto:nshresth@uoguelph.ca).

