

The Logic of Youth Development: Constructing a Logic Model of Youth Development through Sport

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: In recent years, considerable attention has been paid to the importance of programs in parks and recreation departments that promote positive youth development. These programs are designed not merely to decrease negative behaviors, but more importantly to assist youth in obtaining the competencies and assets that will help them develop into healthy adults in many different aspects of their lives. Youth sport is one area within parks and recreation services which has great potential for positive youth development. Although youth sport programs are not inherently good, they do have the potential to contribute to positive youth development. However, positive youth development is more likely to occur in youth sport programs if parks and recreation professionals use intentional programming when designing their programs. Intentional programming will help ensure that the experience these young athletes have in practices and games is positive rather than negative.

One promising method for intentionally programming youth sport leagues involves logic models. Logic models are an easy, clear, and understandable system for organizing information that enables key stakeholders to have a picture of how programs work. In other words, they provide a visual of how the intended program connects with the desired results. A variety of other fields currently use logic models, including education and extension services, but little information in parks, recreation, and tourism, has been published about them. Therefore, this article will explain how youth sport can be used to promote positive youth development using logic models. More specifically, it will review the literature on youth development and youth sport, describe the logic modeling process, and then provide a detailed example of how to construct a logic model for a program designed to use youth sport as a means of contributing to positive youth development. This will provide practitioners, administrators, and other parks and recreation professionals with a valuable tool to communicate their currently successful programs and validate the need for future ones.

Keywords: Positive youth development, logic models.

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The importance of positive youth development has received increased attention in recent years. Previously, the focus has been on a deficit approach, which labels youth as at-risk and addresses problem behaviors (Witt, 2002). More recently, however, research has promoted the idea that merely preventing problems does not entirely prepare youth for successful adult life (Damon, 2004; Park, 2004; Witt, 2002). Instead, youth programs should be developed that help youth acquire personal competencies that will assist them in preparing for a healthy future (Damon, 2004; Park, 2004; Witt, 2002).

One area with potential for positive youth development is youth sport. For years, people have continued to assert the notion that "sport builds character." While this may be true to some degree, the question remains about what type of character. Despite much press to the contrary, sport is not inherently good; it merely has the potential to build positive qualities (Fullinwider, 2006). It is the programming behind the sport that is necessary to ensure that individuals have positive rather than negative experiences (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005). This is especially important in youth sport where children are quickly absorbing lessons about character, both positive and negative. Previous research suggests that moral behavior and attitudes can increase in youth sport (Arthur-Banning, Paisley, & Wells, 2007; Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, & Shewchuk, 1986; Ellis, Henderson, Paisley, Silverberg, & Wells, 2004; Miller, Roberts, & Ommundsen, 2004; Wells, Ellis, Arthur-Banning, & Roark, 2006). Unfortunately, this is not consistently the case. Other research suggests that sport participation can have a negative impact on aggression and moral reasoning (Bredemeier, 1995; Bredemeier & Shields, 1987; Lemyre, Roberst, & Ommundsen, 2002). In order to ensure that the positive aspects of moral development are increased through sport, it is necessary to use intentional programming.

One technique that has significant potential for improving the intentional programming that should be employed for creating youth development opportunities out of youth sport programs involves using logic models. Logic models are a way of organizing the information parks and recreation professionals are already using to design programs in a way that is clearly understandable to key stakeholders. They provide a visual representation, or picture, of how programs work, connecting the intended program with the desired results (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004).

The clear nature of logic models is also useful when attempting to attain external funding. As internal funding opportunities for recreation programs continue to decrease, the need for external funding increases. Logic models allow individuals, such as potential or current funding agencies, to clearly see not only program components, but the reasoning behind a particular program based on the desired outcomes. Furthermore, logic models present information that simplifies the evaluation process, making it easier for already overworked administrators to collect valuable information about how their programs have succeeded or where they might need improvement (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004).

Logic models are currently being used in a variety of areas, such as education (Davis & Farbman, 2002), out-of-school programs (Zaff & Redd, 2001), parenting and family programs (Harrington, 2001; Redd, Matthews, & Hamilton, 2005), and extension services (Calvert, 2005; Kingsbury, 2002), but little information on logic models can be found in parks and recreation literature (Caldwell, Baldwin, Walls, & Smith, 2004). Using logic models in parks and recreation contexts, particularly in youth sport programs, could be valuable to parks and recreation professionals who are seeking to clearly communicate the successes of current programs or demonstrate the need for future ones. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to explain how youth sport can be used to promote positive youth development using the logic model process. An explanation of youth development and youth sport will be followed by a description of logic models and a detailed example of how this process can be applied in a youth sport program.

Youth Development

Working with youth and helping them to develop appropriately has long been a concern of many fields, including parks and recreation. In the past, many programs focused on serving “at-risk” youth. At-risk youth were defined as “a segment of the population that under current conditions has a low probability of growing into responsible adulthood” (Dryfoos, 1992, p. 128). Parks and recreation programs designed from this perspective were typically aimed at reducing specific problem behaviors, such as crime, sexual promiscuity, drug and alcohol use, school failure, or dropping out (Dryfoos, 1990).

In more recent years, the perspective has shifted from programs for at-risk youth to a more general focus on positive youth development. This was done to some extent because all youth could be considered at-risk for not developing in a healthy manner. More importantly, this shift in perspective has occurred based on the assumption that simply reducing negative behaviors does not ensure that youth will develop into responsible adults (Damon, 2004; Park, 2004; Witt, 2002). Programs and research have consequently become more focused on building individual strengths and competencies and in increasing specific behaviors related to healthy social, moral, emotional, physical, and cognitive development (Damon, 2004; Park, 2004; Witt, 2002). This perspective has helped researchers to more completely understand what attributes of life help youth become successful adults. While some work remains in this area to gain further knowledge, asset models have been created, including The Search Institute’s list of 40 internal and external assets for youth (Benson, 1997; Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998).

The Search Institute’s 40 developmental assets not only serve a protective role in terms of helping youth to avoid high-risk behaviors, but also serve an enhancing and resilient role as well. In other words, the more assets a young person possesses, the more likely he or she is to “thrive” in life, and he or she is also more likely to overcome challenging or difficult situations when they arise (Benson, 1997). The 40 assets can be divided into two categories (external and internal) along with eight sub-categories (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity). The list includes such assets as caring adult relationships outside the family,

safety, positive peer role models, creative activities, school engagement, integrity, interpersonal competence, and a positive view of the future. While no program is likely able to provide all 40 of these assets, parks and recreation professionals working with youth can use frameworks such as the 40 developmental assets to help focus their programs on providing positive youth development opportunities.

Youth Sport

Scholars have argued that programs in recreation in general and youth sport in particular can provide abundant opportunities for positive youth development (Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003; Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003; Shaw, Kleiber, & Caldwell, 1995). Advocates for enrolling youth into activities such as sport leagues suggest that recreation professionals should intentionally design their programs to promote personal development (Smith & Smoll, 1997). Programs designed to create intentional experiences do so with specific goals in mind (Rossman, 1998; 2003). These goals might include providing opportunities for enhancing self-concept and developing social skills, such as working with others; leadership; and interaction between peers (Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003; Klomsten, Skaalvik, & Espnes, 2004). In addition to social skills, youth sports can offer educational merit because they are capable of providing the moral, physical, mental, and cognitive development opportunities that can lead to a successful adulthood (Branta, Lerner, & Taylor, 1996; David, 1999; Hellison, 1995; Romance, Weiss, & Bockoven, 1986; Taylor, 1996).

Based solely on participation statistics, youth sport is one of the most important childhood activities (Brustad, 1993; Gould, 1987). Programs that promote physical activity, such as youth sport programs, can lead to many benefits, including reduced risks of childhood obesity and other related health problems (Hedstrom & Gould, 2004; Seefeldt & Ewing, 2000). This means that youth sport participation could be particularly important in an era in which childhood obesity is reaching epidemic proportions (World Health Organization, 2000).

Youth sport programs can also be used to foster positive youth development and build character (Coakley, 2004; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Seefeldt & Ewing, 2000), particularly through the use of the 40 developmental assets (Benson, 1997; Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998). In particular, several of these developmental assets can be attained through recreation programs, including positive adult relationships, safety, healthy adult role models, positive peer influences, and high expectations. Youth sport also has the potential to provide several of the internal assets, such as achievement, motivation, integrity, honesty, responsibility and restraint.

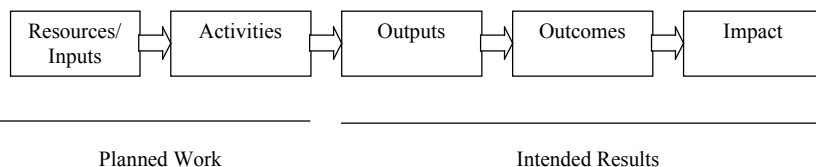
Another area of youth development, moral behavior, has perhaps, the most controversial relationship with youth sport participation. Some research has suggested that sport participation limits moral development (Eitzen, 2003), as a result of the mixed messages children often receive in the sport environment (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996). Although they may be told to engage in prosocial behaviors, children will more often follow the examples set for them. Coaches are particularly important in promoting prosocial behavior through both modeling and their influence in structuring the overall moral atmosphere of the environment (Duquin & Schroeder-Braun, 1996). Coaches who are perceived as exhibiting more moral behaviors are, therefore, more likely to have athletes who do so as well (Guivernau & Duda, 2002).

While youth sport has the potential to promote positive youth development by increasing both developmental assets and moral behavior, the reality is that sport does not inherently build character (Fullinwider, 2006; Hodge, 1989). In fact, many youth sport programs do not promote positive development at all (Hellison, 1995). Youth can have negative experiences as a result of teammates, parents, or coaches that lead them toward more damaging aspects of development. This might include exposure to harmful role models, poor conflict resolution among teammates, and demonstrating deceit, rather than integrity, in a game. Sport only provides a context in which individuals may potentially demonstrate positive development characteristics while having fun (Bigelow, Moroney, & Hall, 2001; Eitzen, 2003; Malina & Cumming, 2003). It is the responsibility of parks and recreation professionals to develop programs that take advantage of the opportunity youth sport provides to facilitate positive development. Youth sport can promote life-long physical activity, but only if programs are designed with this intent (Smith & Smoll, 1997; Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989). For example, recent research has demonstrated that intentionally designed youth sport programs can successfully increase sportsmanship through a variety of means, including prosocial behavior and goal orientation theory (Arthur-Banning, Paisley, & Wells, 2007; Ellis, Henderson, Paisley, Silverberg, & Wells, 2004; Wells, Ellis, Paisley, & Arthur-Banning, 2005; Wells, Ellis, Arthur-Banning, & Roark, 2006).

Using Logic Models

Using logic models in the programming process can help ensure that youth sport programs are intentionally designed for positive youth development. Logic models are a systematic and visual representation of the resources, activities, and proposed goals of a program. In other words, they describe the program's entire lifecycle (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Parks and recreation professionals typically possess most of this information; creating a logic model simply involves putting it in a visual format to more clearly express how their intended program will lead to the desired results. Several other fields use logic models extensively, including education (Davis & Farberman, 2002), out-of-school programs (Zaff & Redd, 2001), parenting and family programs (Harrington, 2001; Redd, Mathews, & Hamilton, 2005), and throughout extension services (Calvert, 2005; Kingsbury, 2002). Using logic models is not only common in other fields, but its usefulness for programmers and educators is demonstrated by the fact that some grants require that a logic model be completed prior to determining funding.

A logic model focuses on two specific areas with several components in each area (see Figure 1). The first area is Planned Work, which describes the intention of the program and the resources available. Components in Planned Work include resources/inputs and activities. Resources/inputs refer to what the program has available that will enable it to work. Human, financial, organizational, and community resources should all be included. For example, a program might list any employees who will be involved along with their training and expertise, funding already received, equipment and supplies, and board members or other community support. The second component in the Planned Work area, activities, indicates specific aspects of program implementation or what exactly the program is going to do. This may include things such as promotional materials, the curriculum being used, any services being provided such as training or counseling, along with the relationships involved that are designed for the intended result to occur (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Wholey & McLaughlin, 1998).

Figure 1. A Basic Logic Model (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004)

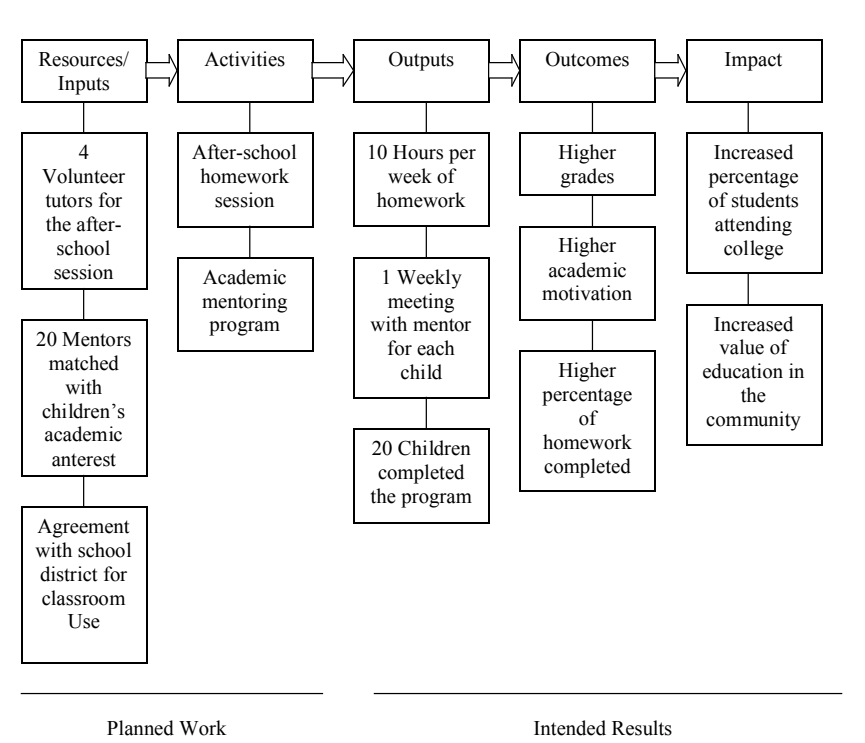
The second area of logic models is the Intended Results, which include everything the administrators or program designers hope will occur as a result of the program. Components that are a part of Intended Results include outputs, outcomes, and impacts (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Wholey & McLaughlin, 1998). Outputs are the specific byproducts of the activities delivered. This could include the hours of instruction, number of participants served, or the number of informational handouts delivered. Outcomes refer to any changes in attitudes or behavior within the participants and can be measured by both short-term and long-term changes. These changes (both short- and long-term) are frequently the more broad goals of youth development programs, such as increased self-efficacy or resilience, higher levels of academic motivation or engagement in school, or greater involvement in community service programs. Finally, Impacts are the long-term consequences (both intended and unintended) in the community that may result from the program. For example, if participants in a certain community achieve an outcome of higher academic motivation, in 7 to 10 years, that might result in a higher percentage of high school graduates attending college or a greater value of education throughout the community. A more detailed example of a logic model can be seen in Figure 2.

Benefits of Logic Models for Youth Development Programs

One benefit of employing logic models is that they consolidate the information parks and recreation professionals already have in order to provide stakeholders with a clear and visual map of the sequence of the program. In other words, it enables all stakeholders to have a mental picture of what is going to happen. Specific benefits can also occur in the following areas, all of which are important to youth development programs: program design and planning; program implementation; and program evaluation and reporting (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004).

First and foremost, using the logic model process in the program design and planning stage forces professionals to review previous and established programs, along with best practices and current literature, to determine the best strategies for achieving their goals. The rationale behind specific activities is apparent in a logic model, and therefore stakeholders, including participants, parents, board members, and potential funding agencies, can all see the reasons behind the program, and how it is designed to reach intended outcomes (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Furthermore, agencies who use logic models will find that once the information is collected to complete the model, it can be used in other ways as well. For example, gathering such information regarding resources/inputs will make it easier for administrators to utilize that information not only for additional programs, but also for other purposes. It could

Figure 2. Detailed Sample Logic Model



make them aware of facilities or equipment that may be needed or are in need of repair, additional staff that needs to be hired and trained, or additional partnerships that could be made with community organizations.

During program implementation, logic models will help administrators and managers to maintain their focus and energy. It is easy to get distracted by the day-to-day logistical requirements of running a program and to lose focus on the overall outcomes and impacts the program is designed to achieve. In addition, unanticipated decisions will frequently have to be made due to such problems as reduced funding or changes in staff. When this happens, logic models provide a structure to determine the most critical aspects of the program so that the right adjustments can be made with minimal negative effects on the desired outcomes and impacts (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004).

Finally, logic models can be of particular benefit when it comes to evaluating and reporting the results of a program. Most professionals recognize the importance of evaluating their programs. Obtaining accurate information can help communicate the need for their programs and demonstrate their success, which in the future can help to both maintain and gain funding. The reality is, however, that logistical and financial limitations often make it difficult to gather evaluative information. Logic models can simplify this process somewhat. Laying out the format of the program and stating the intended outputs, outcomes, and impacts will provide valuable information

on what data to collect (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). For example, it will be easier to collect information, such as numbers of participants served, hours involved in the program, and attitudinal and behavioral changes, if it is known in advance that this information is desired. Additionally, logic models also make reporting the results of an evaluation easier. Adding the information into the already constructed model will show board members, funding agencies, and other key stakeholders exactly what the intended goals of the program were and whether or not the program achieved these goals. Furthermore, the logic model will illustrate how these goals were accomplished and the reasoning behind the program itself. In other words, stakeholders will see the direct path taken that led to success.

Designing a Logic Model for Youth Sport

Using the logic model process, it is possible to create a youth sport program intended to increase positive youth development. The following logic model will provide an example of how the logic model process works, and will show how to maximize the benefits of youth sport programs through increasing aspects of positive youth development.

While reading a logic model, it makes the most sense to start with the resources and understand how each step leads to the next, all the way through to the ultimate impacts of the program. When developing or creating a logic model, however, the process works somewhat in reverse. The first step begins with the intended results, in which questions to answer involve what the program hopes to accomplish, including the impacts, outcomes, and outputs.

The impacts of the program are the intended and unintended long-term effects of the program on the larger community (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Wholey & McLaughlin, 1998). In the case of this sample youth sport program designed with the purposes of positive youth development, impacts might be drawn from the 40 developmental assets framework. Research suggests that youth high in developmental assets are less likely to engage in drug and alcohol use, are less likely to be depressed, are more likely to be successful in school, and demonstrate more resilience (Benson, 1997; Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998). Each of these could be considered a potential impact and can be measured objectively.

Outcomes are the short- and long-term changes in the attitudes and behaviors of participants (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Wholey & McLaughlin, 1998). This is the reason why the program is designed and implemented. This sample youth sport program is intended for positive youth development, and therefore, the majority of the desired outcomes will be related to previous research in this area. More specifically, the program will be designed to increase 4 of the 40 developmental assets for youth development including: positive adult relationships outside the family, youth programs, achievement motivation, and integrity (Benson, 1997; Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998). In conjunction with these assets, the programs will be designed to accomplish four outcomes. First, youth participants will increase the number of positive adult, non-family relationships they have. Second, youth participants will increase the number of hours they spend in quality youth programs. Third, young participants will increase their task orientation (a part of goal orientation theory that is related to achievement motivation; Duda, 1989; Duda & Nicholls, 1992; Nicholls,

1978; 1984). Finally, participants in the youth sport program will increase the number of positive sportsmanship behaviors exhibited during games (related to moral behavior and integrity; May, 2001; Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995).

Outputs refer to the specific byproducts that result from the program being delivered (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Wholey & McLaughlin, 1998). In the case of this example, several outputs are intended. As it is a youth sport program, it is expected that youth will participate in two weekly practices and one weekly game over a period of eight weeks. This means that one potential output is that youth will engage in approximately 24 hours of physical activity over the course of the season. Additional outputs could be a 100% of coaches passing a training program with instruction regarding task orientation, and how to positively influence youth; and 100% of referees passing a training program, including teaching the referees how to encourage more pro-social behaviors of parents, coaches, and players in the sporting environment.

Once the intended results have been determined, the next step is to plan how the program will accomplish them. It is necessary to know what resources you have available in order to determine what services the program will be able to provide. Resources that need to be considered include not only financial, but also human (such as staff and their experience); organizational (such as facilities, equipment, and insurance); and community (such as potential partnerships; W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Wholey & McLaughlin, 1998). Important resources for this example include gym space for practices as well as games, a minimum of two staff members to oversee the practices and games, two to three qualified coaches for each team, trained referees for games, and qualified personnel for training and orientation purposes.

In determining the activities in the logic model, it is important to not merely design a program that matches the resources, but to design one that matches the desired impacts, outcomes, and outputs with the resources that are available (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Wholey & McLaughlin, 1998). For example, if one of the desired outcomes of the program is to reduce aggressive behavior, it would be important to know that research suggests that perceptions of coaches' behaviors are related to player behaviors (Guivernau & Duda, 2002). Specific activities might, therefore, be targeted to reducing aggressive behaviors among coaches in order to accomplish the desired result.

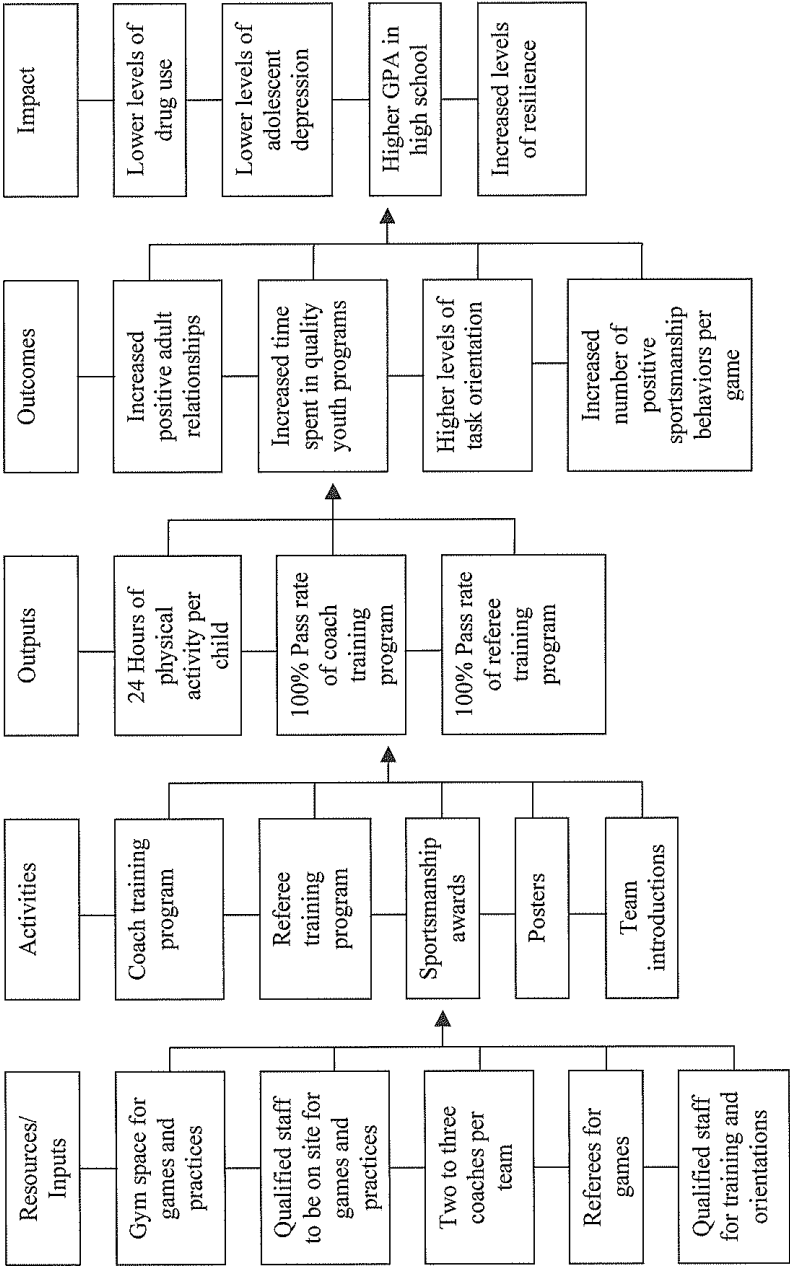
The activities in this example need to be designed with the previously stated outcomes in mind (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Wholey & McLaughlin, 1998). In order to accomplish these with the resources available, several specific steps will be taken. Two of these assets are easy to accomplish. Coaches for each team ensure that the participants will make connections with adults, and training programs can be introduced or modified to help create positive relationships between coaches and players (Smith & Smoll, 1997). Increasing time spent in quality youth programs is another outcome that is relatively simple to include in the program design and is somewhat self-explanatory, assuming that the program itself is of high quality. Addressing the final two intended outcomes (increasing task orientation and positive sportsmanship behaviors) may be a more complex process. However, current research demonstrates that these two outcomes can be achieved. Examples of how to do this include targeted coaches' training, referee training, and simple program adaptations based on goal orientation theory and prosocial behavior, such as sportsmanship awards, posters, and introductions before games to increase familiarity among players (Arthur-Banning, Paisley,

& Wells al., 2007; Ellis, Henderson, Paisley, Silverberg, & Wells, 2004; Wells, Ellis, Paisley, & Arthur-Banning, 2005; Wells, Ellis, Arthur-Banning, & Roark, 2006).

The model presented in Figure 3 represents the logic model of a youth sport program designed to improve positive youth development. While the description of the model has been brief, it does outline the process of employing logic models in the development of youth sport programs for the purposes of increasing positive youth development. As it is written, this model provides a clear and easily understandable picture of the program's resources, and how it will use these resources to reach the program goals of building positive adult relationships, taking part in quality youth programs, raising task orientation, and increasing positive sportsmanship behaviors. Based on this model, professionals would be able to maintain a better focus on program goals and have a strong foundation for evaluations. Professionals know that in order to determine success, they can see if they matched their intended outputs, as well as measure any changes in their desired outcomes. Finally, this picture will easily position these professionals to apply for external funding sources if the need arises. They will be easily able to explain to any potential funding agencies what they hope to accomplish, why that is important, along with a solid plan for how they will achieve it.

As parks and recreation professionals move toward a greater understanding of the impact they have on the social and moral development of youth, there has to be a process of developing programs with specific, targeted outcomes. Logic models can be used to organize and clearly identify the desired goals of a program, lay out the foundation for how the program can be run, and determine the resources available to bring it all together. While this may not be the only way of designing youth sport programs, it does provide administrators with one more tool to intentionally generate positive experiences for youth.

Figure 3. Youth Sport Logic Model Example



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