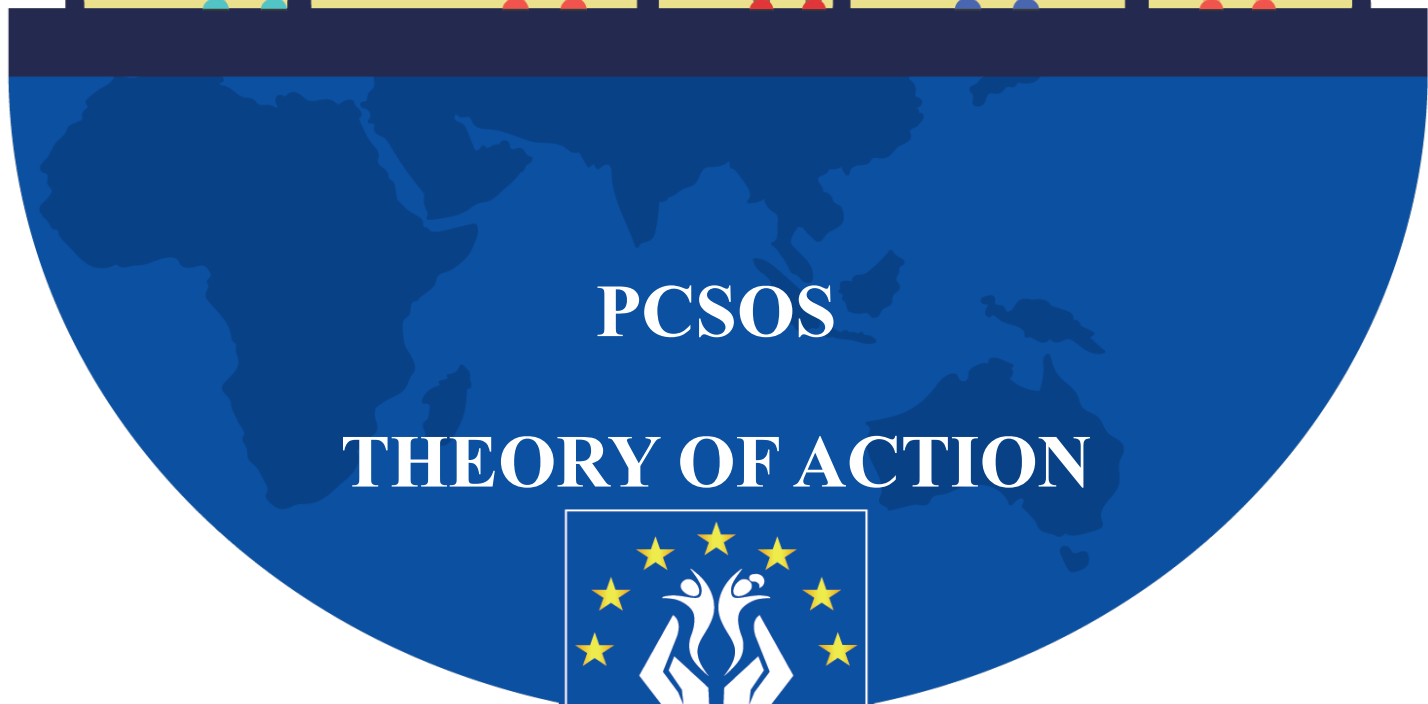




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# PCSOS THEORY OF ACTION



PROTECTING CHILDREN IN SPORT: DEVELOPING SAFE AND  
INCLUSIVE SPORT ORGANIZATIONS



**CBI** CONFEDERAZIONE  
BOCCISTICA  
INTERNAZIONALE  
PUNTO - RAFFA - VOLO



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## 1. Background

Participation of children in sports activities is a common view that is accepted by everyone that it contributes to their physical, social and cognitive development, and there is a lot of scientific evidence. However, sports environments have some risks and can expose children to some physical and psychological risks. In order to minimize the risks, one of the biggest duties of sports organizations is to systematically protect children against all kinds of violence and abuse. The existing literature, the results of projects supported by reputable organizations such as the European Union and the IOC, and the policy recommendations published in this context underline this necessity and emphasize the importance of sports organizations establishing effective child protection programs.

As a matter of fact, research conducted by Brackenridge (2001) and Fasting, Brackenridge and Sundgot-Borgen (2003) reported the presence of sexual, physical and emotional abuse in sports settings and emphasized the need to increase the awareness of sports managers on this issue and to take action. These studies and similar studies are a solid source of reference for the development and implementation of child protection strategies. Similarly, David P. (2005) stated in his research that despite the many proven positive aspects of children's sports participation, it is critical for sports organizations to take protective measures against these risks by defining in detail the potential risks that come with it. This shows the need for a comprehensive and effective approach to ensure the safety of children.

Lang and Hartill (2015) focused on the challenges faced by sports organizations in developing and implementing child protection policies and argued that a multidisciplinary approach should be taken in this process. These results highlight the importance of sports organizations providing training and support in the development and implementation of child protection programs. Another important research conducted by Cense and Brackenridge (2001) states that an effective child protection program should include important elements such as education, awareness activities, monitoring and risk management strategies to ensure safe sports environments.





This underscores the importance of sports organizations taking a proactive stance on the protection of children and taking comprehensive measures to mitigate possible risks.

The study by Rhind, Kay and Hills (2015) focused on the obstacles faced by sports organizations in the implementation of child protection policies and the steps to be taken to overcome these obstacles. The study states that sports organizations should have the necessary resources and support systems in place to effectively implement child protection programs.

Alexander, Stafford and Lewis (2011) examined how the implementation of child protection strategies in sports settings can affect children's sports experiences, showing that child protection practices can positively affect children's participation in sports activities, thereby increasing their well-being and ensuring sustainable sports participation.

Finally, the study by Mountjoy et al. (2016) provided a global perspective on child protection practices in sports organizations and discussed the common challenges faced by sports organizations in various countries in child protection and ways to overcome these challenges. Emphasizing that cultural differences can play an important role in the implementation of child protection strategies, the researchers stated that sports organizations should develop policies that take into account local contexts. This expresses a comprehensive approach towards local practices from a global perspective and demonstrates the importance of sports organisations leveraging international best practices to effectively implement child protection programmes.

The available literature provides valuable information on how sports organizations should approach child protection programmes. He emphasizes that various measures should be taken to ensure the safe participation of children in sports activities, from education and awareness-raising programs to policy development, from risk management strategies to the adoption of multidisciplinary approaches. It also reveals that child protection programmes have the potential to positively impact children's sports experiences and that it is possible to improve their well-being in this way.





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In this way, it is emphasized that the sustainable participation of children in sports activities will be increased.

Research also includes some suggestions for the challenges that sports organizations face in fulfilling their responsibility to protect children and the strategies needed to overcome these challenges. In this context, sports organizations should shape their local practices accordingly by making use of international best practices to ensure the safety of children. Effective implementation of child protection programs not only ensures the safety of children, but also ensures that they make the most of the positive aspects of their participation in sports activities. This contributes to the healthy growth of children, both physically and psychologically.

All of these studies jointly highlight the need for sports organizations to develop comprehensive and multifaceted strategies to ensure the safety of children in sports environments. The success of child protection programmes depends not only on the existence of policies, but also on the viability of these policies, cooperation between sports organisations and interested parties, and continuous improvement efforts. In this context, the aim of the developed PCSOS action theory is to provide a perspective and practical suggestions on how the capacity building framework of sports organizations should take action among sports organizations, taking advantage of the existing knowledge.

## 2. Introduction to Action Theory

Action theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals or organizations should act to achieve specific goals. At its core, action theory is a theoretical approach that examines how individuals or groups can act strategically and purposefully in complex social systems, especially in processes of human behavior and social change (Lewin, 1946). Within this framework, actions and strategies are planned and implemented to achieve the set goals.



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## 2.1. Foundations and Functions of Action Theory

Action theory has been used in a variety of disciplines, especially in fields such as sociology, psychology, educational sciences, and management sciences. Thinkers such as Max Weber and Talcott Parsons laid the foundations of action theory and explored how individual actions can be related to social structures and processes (Weiss, 2011).

Action theory is used to understand the processes of strategic planning and taking action to enable organizations to achieve specific goals, especially in matters of organizational change and development. This helps organizations assess their current situation, identify their future goals, and plan the steps needed to achieve those goals (Argyris & Schön, 1978).

## 2.2. Application of Action Theory in Sports Organizations

By using action theory, sports organizations can achieve strategic development and improvement goals in specific areas, such as child protection programs. The application of action theory allows sports organizations to analyze their own internal dynamics and external environment, identify risks and develop effective solution strategies.

An action theory that sports organizations can use when creating their child protection programs provides a framework for effective planning, implementation and continuous improvement of the program. This approach involves setting concrete goals, defining and implementing the steps necessary to achieve those goals, and evaluating the results. The application of action theory can help sports organizations successfully design and implement child protection programs. The implementation of the PCSOS theory of action can be successfully completed with the following 7 steps.



## 3. PCSOS Theory of Action in 7 Steps

### 3.1. Goal Setting and Prioritization

**Step 1:** Setting Specific Goals Sports organizations should clarify the main purpose of their child protection programs. This can range from protecting the physical and psychological well-being of children, to creating a safe space in a sports environment, to preventing child abuse. For example, a football academy might set a specific goal, such as "Ensure that all child players are protected from psychological abuse."

**Case Study:** Sports Academy Example: A football academy can set a goal of "increasing psychological support services for child players by 100% by the end of 2024". This may include the constant presence of a psychologist within the academy and regular psychological counseling of players.

**Step 2:** Setting Priorities The organization should set priorities across goals, keeping in mind limited resources. Situations that require immediate intervention and areas with the greatest impact potential can be prioritized. For example, if the sports organization is specifically a boarding academy, "Ensuring the safety of boarding students at night" may be a priority goal.

**Case Study:** The academy can conduct a survey to get the opinions of coaches, athletes and parents. According to the survey results, the areas where there is the most urgent need (for example, security at night) are prioritized.

**Step 3:** Defining Goals According to SMART Criteria It is important that the goals set are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Limited (SMART). For example, "Complete child protection training for all coaches and managers by the end of 2024" is a SMART goal because it is clear, measurable, achievable, relevant to the organization's mission, and has a specific time frame.



**Case Study:** The organization can run a workshop to create SMART goals. In this workshop, representatives from each department discuss the goals set and shape them according to the SMART criteria.

### 3.2. Situation Analysis

**Step 4:** Review of Current Policies and Practices The organization should review existing child protection policies, procedures, and practices. This can be done using surveys, interviews, and observation methods. Identifying existing weaknesses and shortcomings helps identify areas for improvement.

**Case Study:** The organization establishes a committee to review existing child protection policies. This committee evaluates policies against national laws and sports best practices.

**Step 5:** Risk Assessment Sports organizations should conduct a comprehensive risk assessment to identify potential risks to children. This can include areas such as security of facilities, coach-child interactions, and travel events.

**Case Study:** The organization organizes a workshop to identify potential risks to children. The workshop covers topics such as the safety of facilities, travel arrangements, and coach-child interactions

### 3.3. Strategy and Action Plan Development

**Step 6:** Preparation of the Action Plan Necessary strategies and actions should be developed to achieve the prioritized objectives. This should include concrete steps to be taken, the people responsible, and timelines. For example, an action plan item could be "Organize mandatory child protection training for all coaches in the first quarter of 2023."

**Case Study:** The organization organizes a seminar to prepare the action plan. In the seminar, the necessary steps, responsible persons and timelines are determined to achieve the prioritized goals.







**Step 7: Stakeholder Engagement** The success of the action plan depends on the involvement and support of all relevant stakeholders (coaches, athletes, parents, management). In the process of developing and implementing the plan, it is important to get their opinions and suggestions.

**Case Study:** The organization holds regular meetings to engage stakeholders necessary for the success of the action plan. In these meetings, information is given and feedback is received on the implementation and progress of the plan.

### 3.4. Identification and Distribution of Resources

**Step 8: Identification of Required Resources** Human resources, financial resources and other materials required to implement the action plan should be determined in detail. For example, the trainers, materials, and venues required for training programs should be considered, as well as the budget required for the implementation of the program.

**Case Study:** The finance department holds a session to plan the necessary budget for training programs and other action plan items.

**Step 9: Effective Distribution of Resources** Identified resources need to be distributed effectively and efficiently to support planned actions. Prioritization of the budget, proper allocation of human resources, and timely supply of necessary materials are important elements of this step.

**Case Study:** The organization develops a strategy for the effective deployment of resources. This strategy involves distributing resources according to prioritized goals.

### 3.5. Education and Awareness Raising

**Step 10: Development and Implementation of Training Programs** Regular training and awareness programs on child protection should be developed and implemented for sports administrators, coaches, athletes and other interested parties.



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These trainings should cover topics such as child protection policies, risks to children, and procedures for responding to abuse cases.

**Case Study:** The organization develops a training program on child protection policies and procedures. The program is organized for coaches, athletes and parents.

**Step 11:** Awareness Campaigns Sports organizations can organize awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of child protection measures and increase public awareness on this issue. Social media, brochures, and events can be part of these campaigns.

**Case Study:** The organization launches an awareness campaign on social media and local media to highlight the importance of child protection measures.

### 3.6. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

**Step 12:** Implementation of the Action Plan It is important to systematically implement the planned strategies and actions. This process should be carried out by adhering to the established timeline and plan.

**Case Study:** The organization creates a detailed timeline for the implementation of each action item. This calendar clearly specifies when each step will be performed and by whom.

**Step 13:** Continuous Monitoring and Reporting The implementation of the action plan should be continuously monitored and progress reports should be prepared regularly. This is critical to assessing whether the program is meeting its goals.

**Case Study:** The organization establishes a system to continuously monitor the implementation of the action plan. This system involves regular recording and reporting of progress. Progress reports are reviewed regularly at board meetings.

**Step 14:** Evaluation and Improvement The results of the action plan need to be evaluated regularly and, if necessary, the plan needs to be improved. This process is important to increase the effectiveness of the program and ensure continuous improvement.



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**Case Study:** The results of the action plan are evaluated at specified times. The organization holds feedback sessions with all interested parties to discuss the evaluation results and update the plan as needed.

### 3.7. Policy Recommendations and Collaboration with Stakeholders

**Step 15:** Policy Development Sports organizations should collaborate with policymakers at local and national levels to develop effective policies on child protection. This can contribute to raising child protection standards across the industry.

**Case Study:** The organization organizes a workshop with policy makers at local and national level to develop effective policies on child protection. This workshop provides recommendations for raising child protection standards across the sector.

**Step 16:** Collaboration with Stakeholders Sports organizations should collaborate with relevant stakeholders, such as other organizations, non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions, to succeed in their child protection efforts. This cooperation ensures that resources and knowledge are shared and that common goals are acted upon.

**Case Study:** The organization establishes collaborative networks with other sports organizations, non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions to succeed in child protection efforts. These networks enable the sharing of resources and knowledge through regular meetings and collaborative projects.



## 4. RESULT

The preparation and implementation of the action plan is vital for sports organizations to effectively manage their child protection programmes. These plans help organizations achieve key goals such as protecting children's physical and psychological well-being, creating a safe sports environment, and preventing child abuse. Steps such as goal setting and prioritization, situation analysis, strategy and action plan development, identification and distribution of resources, training and awareness raising, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, policy recommendations and cooperation with stakeholders are the basic components of this process.

The implementation of action plans enables sports organizations to objectively assess their current situation, identify risks and take effective measures against these risks. When the planning process is carried out with the participation of all interested parties, it increases the commitment of stakeholders to the objectives of the program and maximizes the success of the implementation. Education and awareness programs play a critical role in preventing cases of abuse by raising awareness of coaches, athletes, parents and administrators about child protection.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation determine the effectiveness of action plans and whether the program achieves the objectives, as well as providing the necessary information for continuous improvement. This process ensures that sports organisations keep their child protection practices up-to-date and comply with best practices. In addition, policy recommendations and collaboration with stakeholders strengthen child protection efforts across the sector, contributing to making sport a safer and more supportive environment for children.

As a result, careful preparation and implementation of action plans are the basis of sports organizations' child protection efforts. This process allows organizations to meet their responsibilities, develop effective strategies for child protection and ensure that sport is a positive experience for all participants. Action plans help sports organisations demonstrate leadership on child protection and raise overall awareness of children's safety and well-being in the community. This is an investment that benefits not only the children, but also the sport itself.



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