

Children in Sports

Being on a youth sports team is pretty much a must-do nowadays, at least for children between the ages of 7 to 18. Kids on a sport team derive many benefits, including:

- learning to commit to team
- learning to win as a team
- learning to loose as a team
- making good friends on the team
- becoming more physically fit
- doing better in school while they're on the team
- learning to multi-task
- increased confidence and poise
- are more likely to be involved in their community when they grow up

Kids should be on at least one sports team per year, not all year around or all four seasons, but at least one sport each year. There are many sports leagues to choose from, be they at school, the neighborhood or city, the CYO, YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, JCC, etc. And it doesn't have to be a traditional sport like baseball or soccer....any team sport will do, such as swim teams or golf teams. Soccer leagues and basketball leagues can be quite inexpensive. On the other hand, hockey can be very costly. Be aware that sign-ups for many sports teams begin several months before the season begins. Ask other parents and look for these notices in the local newspaper, or more often, in the bottom of your child's backpack under the month-old peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Be imaginative to get your child off the couch and onto a team!

Guidelines for Parents with Children in Sports

1. Make sure your children know that-win or lose-you love them and are not disappointed with their performance.
2. Be realistic about your child's physical ability.
3. Help your child set realistic goals, but enforce the commitment to the team for the season of play.
4. Emphasize improved performance, not winning. Positively reinforce improved skills.
5. Don't relive your own athletic past through your child.
6. Provide a safe environment for training and competition. This includes proper training methods and use of equipment.
7. Control your emotions at games and events. Don't yell at other players, coaches, or officials.
8. Be a cheerleader for your child and the other children on the team.
9. Respect your child's coaches. Communicate openly with them. If you disagree with their approach, discuss it will them.
10. Be a positive role model. Enjoy sports yourself. Set your own goals. Live a healthy lifestyle.

GOOD LUCK!