

Why Most Kids Quit Sports

by Carleton Kendrick Ed.M., LCSW

Twenty million kids register each year for youth hockey, football, baseball, soccer, and other competitive sports. The National Alliance for Sports reports that 70 percent of these kids quit playing these league sports by age 13 -- and never play them again.

According to Michael Pfahl, executive director of the National Youth Sports Coaches Association, "The number one reason (why they quit) is that it stopped being fun." With figures like these, it's time we rethink how we present youth sports to kids.

With that in mind, here are some key points to remember about your kids playing sports.

Preschool

Focus on the element of play in any sports activity you introduce to very young kids. Make it fun! Don't burden them or concern them with competition, keeping score, and rules. Get them running, kicking, throwing, catching ... and laughing. Use equipment that suits their bodies and coordination levels (toss a beanbag instead of a ball). Adapt games according to their abilities. Always offer encouraging words for all their efforts.

Elementary school

Sports psychology expert Rick Wolff, author of *Good Sports*, stresses that parents of kids ages 5-12 need not be concerned with their child's excellence at such refined sports skills as corner kicks and drag bunts. "Those are unimportant," Wolff advises. "The key here is having your child develop a sense of passion for the sport."

Parents and coaches need to be aware of what kids can accomplish at their differing developmental levels -- physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Don't make unrealistic expectations concerning your child's sports performance -- be it in the area of muscle coordination, dedication, or attention span. Many kids lose their passion for youth sports during these years because they feel they can't live up to their parents' and coaches' expectations.

Middle school

Kids start dropping out in big numbers at this stage. Playing sports loses its enjoyment for them and "fun" takes a back seat to winning. Pick-up games and just "playing for fun" should be encouraged. The key at this vulnerable stage is to keep them playing the sports they enjoy -- if not on school or youth teams, then informally with friends. Not being on a team does not mean they have failed as athletes. It just means that they have to find other pleasurable ways to continue enjoying their sports.

High school

Find Baby & Family Names

Slideshows

Printables

Activities Center

Quizzes

Pregnancy Day by Day

Videos

Blogs

Message Boards

Advice from Parents

Recalls

Mom's Coffee Break

Family Entertainment Center

Reading Readiness Screening Tool

Multiple Intelligences Screening Tool

Expert Advice

Free Newsletters

Family Fun & Entertainment

School Resources for Parents

Family Life

FREE NEWSLETTERS

Keep up-to-date!
Get parenting information sent straight to your inbox! [Sign up today!](#)

MOST POPULAR

- [St. Patrick's Day Crafts for Kids](#)
- [Top 12 Fundraising Ideas](#)
- [Cell Phones at School: Should They Be Allowed?](#)
- [View All](#)

STAY CONNECTED



FamilyEducation.com on Facebook



You like this. · Admin Page · Insights · Error



Follow us on [Pinterest](#)

Get on the Path to Parenting Success
Every journey starts with a few small steps, and parenting is no different. Get positive support, tips and tools for helping your kids reach for success! [Click here for more information from ParentFurther.](#)

Famous Women Word Search
March is Women's History Month. Celebrate by teaching your kids about female movers and shakers with this printable [Women's History word search](#).

NEW Top 10 Gifts for Moms Expecting Twins
Searching for the perfect [baby shower gift for twins](#)? Check out creative and practical ideas that will bring the multiples-mom-to-be double the joy.

St. Patrick's Day Crafts for Kids
Everyone is Irish on March 17! Create these [10 fun St. Patrick's Day crafts](#) with your little leprechauns.

Top 10 Potato Recipes for St. Paddy's Day
Aren't potatoes great? Check out [10 amazing potato recipes](#), whether you're throwing a St. Patrick's Day potluck or just looking for a new starchy side dish to try.

Need ideas for this weekend?
Visit our [weekend planner page](#), and get ideas for family activities, games, and recipes - everything you need for a weekend of family fun.

By this stage, it's usually the successful high-school athletes who play both school sports and outside competitive-league sports. There are just so many positions to be filled on competitive teams. But what about kids who still love to play sports but can't because of their demanding academic, social, and work lives? Parents need to remind these kids of the fun they had playing these games and help them to find time to play them with family members and friends. Helping your kids stay connected to the sports they love now can encourage them to remain physically active throughout their lives.

Read [Carleton Kendrick's bio](#).



 Facebook social plugin



RELATED

- [Realistic Goals and Fun Keep Kids in Sports](#)
- [Sports for Middle and High Schoolers](#)
- [Sports for Elementary-School Kids](#)

[About Family Education](#), part of Family Education Network | [Site Map](#) | [Press Releases](#) | [Help](#) | [Advertise](#)

 [RSS](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)

[Parenting Advice](#) | [Teacher Resources](#) | [Online Gradebook](#) | [Reference Site](#) | [Homework Help](#) | [K-8 Kids](#) | [Poptropica](#)

© 2000-2012 Pearson Education, Inc. All Rights Reserved.