

Raising Athletes For Life

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RAISING ATHLETES FOR LIFE

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RAISING ATHLETES FOR LIFE

**This will not be a Singular Event
It will be a Process and a Journey for each Family**

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AGE CHILDREN QUIT REGULARLY PLAYING A SPORT (AGES 3-18)

SPORT	AVG. AGE OF LAST REGULAR PARTICIPATION	AVG. LENGTH IN YEARS OF PARTICIPATION
Baseball	10.5	3.3
Basketball	11.2	3.2
Bicycling	9.5	2.5
Cross Country	12.7	1.7*
Field Hockey	11.4	5.1
Flag Football	10.4	4.1
Tackle Football	11.9	2.8
Golf	11.8	2.8
Gymnastics	8.7	3.0
Ice Hockey	10.9	3.1
Lacrosse	11.2	2.2
Martial Arts	9.2	2.6
Skateboarding	12.0	2.8
Skiing/Snowboarding	12.1	4.3
Soccer	9.1	3.0
Softball	10.4	2.8
Swimming	10.2	3.2
Tennis	10.9	1.9
Track and Field	13.0	2.0*
Volleyball	12.3	2.0*
Wrestling	9.8	1.6
All Sports	10.5	2.9

Meet our Panelist

Dave Inman - Former Professional Hockey Player - New York Rangers

Heather Knight Pech - Marathon Runner & Trainer

Kendall Patten - Cornell University Soccer Player

Andy Towers - Lacrosse Coach Former College & Professional Player.

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Culture Matters



The interactions kids have with teammates, coaches, officials, and parents shape how kids feel about themselves.

Selecting a Good Youth Sports Program



What kids Want From Playing Sports

- They want play to be fair.
- They want to be with friends.
- They want to have Fun.
- They want to be involved in the action.
They would rather play on a losing team than sit the bench on a winning team.
- They want the play be competitive.
They are not afraid to change the rules when it suits them.



What do Parents want for their Kids?

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Don't place success ahead of their health, safety, and happiness.

SPECIALIZATION AT A YOUNG AGE



[Play Video](#)

Panelists – Early Specialization

Heather Knight Pech - Marathon Runner & Trainer

Andy Towers - Lacrosse Coach , College and Professional Player.

Kendall Patten - Cornell University Soccer Player

Dave Inman - Former Professional Hockey Player - New York Rangers

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A family of four is playing soccer in a park during sunset. A woman in a blue shirt is running towards the left, a young girl in a pink shirt is in the center, and a young boy in a striped shirt is on the right. In the foreground, a person's legs and arms are visible, suggesting they are also playing. The background shows a grassy field and trees under a warm, golden sky.

**Whole family sports
should be about...**

Learning

Enjoyment



**A balance of family
and other activities**

Developing a Success Mindset for Sports and Family Life

Dr. Marianne Engle

- Clinical Psychologist
- Sports Psychologist
- Educator with inCourage

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Panelists – Family, The Other Side of Sports

Andy Towers - Lacrosse Coach , College and Professional Player.

Dave Inman - Former Professional Hockey Player - New York Rangers

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A Road Map For Sports Parents



Panelists - RAISING ATHLETES FOR LIFE

Q&A

Dave Inman – Former New York Ranger

Heather Knight Pech - Marathon Runner & Trainer

Kendall Patten - Cornell University Soccer Player

Andy Towers - Lacrosse Coach , College and Professional Player.

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RAISING ATHLETES FOR LIFE

It's Not a Singular Event
It's a Process and a Journey

Good Luck!

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Bonus Video

Encouraging Your Child to Play Sports

GETTING ACTIVE STEP 1: LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD

[Play Video](#)



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
PROJECT PLAY

PARENT CHECKLIST



Shaping a Positive Sports Experience for Your Child

1) Make sure they get rest. *It's important that young people get enough sleep. In a world where there is always another distraction, help your son/daughter unwind by promoting turning off cell phones by a certain time at night. Help them make good sleep into a habit.*

2) Mandate recovery. *If your child is injured or sick, make sure they're taken care of and given plenty of time to recuperate. They'll be much better off in the long run if they do so.*

3) Encourage them to play multiple sports. *There are numerous benefits to playing multiple sports instead of focusing on just one. The Michigan State Institute for the Study of Youth Sports gives this example: "Another reason we want children to sample a variety of sports is the fact that to pursue a sport further takes considerable internal or intrinsic motivation, so they must find the sport that is right for them."*

4) Help them prioritize. *Make sure they remember that their sport is not as crucial as trying to make good grades in school or spending time with family. Most importantly, they have to prioritize themselves so that they get what they need (proper rest, nutrition, etc.)*

5) Make sure their sport does not feel like a job. *Have open and honest conversations with your son/daughter about whether or not they truly enjoy what they're doing.*

Allow their time at home to be time "away" from the sport, both mentally and physically. While they may be playing their sport year-round, make sure there are plenty of breaks for vacations, time away from the sport, and time to explore other interests and hobbies. Don't force them into an "athletic" box.

6) Value your child for who they are, not what they do. *Never be upset or disappointed with your son/daughter in their athletic endeavors. Have conversations with them if you feel they're not putting forth their best effort on the court.*

Let them know you love them and are proud of them, no matter what their final stat line looked like. Show your interest in their academic life, social life, and other hobbies they have just as you show interest in their athletic life.

7) Value their effort as much as their performance."

WHAT TO AIM FOR IN YOUTH PROGRAMS

FOR KIDS (AGES 6-12) WHO PLAY SPORTS

If you're a parent or caregiver, your favorite athlete is probably the one you're raising. Ten questions to ask of yourself, your child and local programs to make sports a great experience:

- 1. HAVE I ASKED MY CHILD *WHY* THEY WANT TO PLAY SPORTS?**

Is it to have fun with classmates? Be tested at the highest level competitively? What do they want to get from the activity? Finding the right program starts with understanding a child's social-emotional needs.
- 2. HAVE I ASKED MY CHILD WHICH SPORTS INTEREST THEM?**

Most kids get funneled into the same small handful of sports. But there are 120 of them offered across the U.S., with programs that might just be a few miles away. There's a sport for every kid. Explore the options with them.
- 3. DO I ENCOURAGE UNSTRUCTURED AND LOOSELY STRUCTURED PLAY?**

Michael Jordan had a "love of the game" clause in his NBA contract that allowed him to play pickup hoops. Build the same ethos into your kid's experience so it's not all organized competition. Give kids equipment, and get out of the way.
- 4. DOES MY CHILD'S PROGRAM PROMOTE MULTI-SPORT PARTICIPATION?**

As early as grade school, your child may get pressure to focus on playing one sport year-round. Research on child and athletic development rejects this approach. Ask program leaders how they'll make room for playing other sports.
- 5. ARE THE COACHES TRAINED IN KEY COMPETENCIES TO WORK WITH KIDS?**

The best programs mandate training in coaching philosophy/methods, sport skills & tactics, and safety protections including First Aid and CPR (and, in collision sports like football and hockey, concussion management).
- 6. DOES THE PROGRAM EMBRACE SMALL-SIDED, AGE-APPROPRIATE PLAY?**

Kids are not miniature adults. Six isn't even 16. Children learn better and have more fun when play spaces, equipment and the number of participants on the field/court/ice are modified to their level. Small rosters help, too.

7. DOES THE PROGRAM OFFER AN APPROPRIATE PRACTICE-TO-GAME RATIO?

Kids want access to the action. You want them to be physically active, while also minimizing the costs and time allocated to away-game transportation. The best programs understand that development mostly occurs in training. At least two practices for every game is best.

8. DOES THE PROGRAM ENCOURAGE EQUAL PLAYING TIME?

There's a time for programs to sort the weak from the strong in sports. It's not before kids grow into their bodies, minds, and interests. Through age 12, at least, programs should invest in every kid equally. That includes playing time.

9. DOES THE PROGRAM SYSTEMATICALLY SEEK FEEDBACK FROM KIDS AND PARENTS?

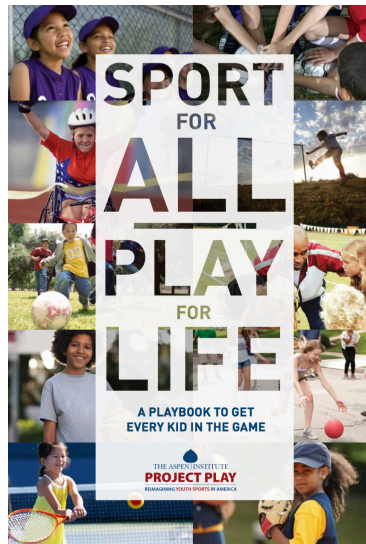
A simple online survey is easy enough to create and send at the end of the season, collecting insights that can be shared with program leadership to improve quality and foster retention. Honor the programs that honor input.

10. DOES THE PROGRAM MAKE EFFORTS TO FOSTER PHYSICAL LITERACY?

Physical Literacy is the ability, confidence and desire to be active for life, with an emphasis on fundamental movement skills – not just sport-specific skills. Learning to move well can open access to dozens of sports.

SCORE/BOXES CHECKED:

- 9-10 = Ideal scenario for kids
- 6-8 = Solid foundation
- 3-5 = Much more can be done
- 1-2 = Much more should be done



Questions distilled from *Sport for All, Play for Life: A Playbook to Get Every Kid in the Game*, by the Aspen Institute's Project Play, which developed its framework with input from 300+ thought leaders.

Additional experts and resources were consulted in the development of the checklists. Background on and resources supporting the checklists are at: www.projectplay.us

GETTING KIDS OFF THE COUCH & INTO THE GAME

FOR KIDS (AGES 6-12) NOT PLAYING SPORTS

It can be hard, knowing how to introduce your child to sport and physical activities that meet their unique needs. Ten questions to ask of yourself, your kid, and local programs in finding a good fit:

1. IS MY CHILD GETTING AN HOUR OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DAILY?

If the answer is no, they are not getting CDC's recommended amount for youth. That means moderate-to-vigorous activity, with at least three of those days also involving exercise that strengthens muscles and bones.

2. DO I REGULARLY ENGAGE IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OR SPORTS MYSELF?

Research shows that parents who are physically active are more likely to have physically active children. Be a role model, while also encouraging fun activities that you can enjoy together – from bike riding to a backyard catch.

3. HAVE I POPULATED OUR HOME WITH BALLS AND OTHER SPORTS EQUIPMENT?

Provide a child with the tools to play, on their own terms (not those of adults), and often they will. Unstructured play builds physical literacy and love of game, with intrinsic rewards that encourage further engagement.

4. DO I LIMIT SCREEN TIME AT HOME AND REQUIRE MY CHILD TO GO OUTSIDE?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends parents place consistent limits on time spent with media. Start by removing TVs from bedrooms. Research shows more than 1.5 hours of daily TV is a risk factor for obesity.

5. HAVE I ASKED MY CHILD WHICH SPORTS THEY MIGHT LIKE TO LEARN?

Most kids get funneled into the same, small handful of team sports. But there are 120 sports offered across the U.S., and some providers and sites might just be a few miles away. There's a sport for every kid. Internet tools can help you explore

6. HAVE I CONSIDERED ACTIVITIES THAT LIMIT PEER COMPARISON?

Rock-climbing. Skiing. Snowshoeing. Martial arts. Archery. Individual sports can feel safe, especially for kids with special needs. Then there are more recreational team games, like Ultimate Frisbee.

7. IS THE PROGRAM I'M CONSIDERING FOCUSED ON SELF-IMPROVEMENT?

Kids lacking physical confidence especially benefit from programs that foster a “mastery climate” in which development, not outcomes, is the goal. Ask programs for their mission statement — and how they define success.

8. HAVE I THOUGHT ABOUT VOLUNTEERING FOR A RECREATION BOARD?

Want more inclusive, development-focused policies in youth sports that make room for kids like yours? Do something about it and run for a town recreation board or youth sport program board. Get in there and change things.

9. HAVE I ADVOCATED FOR QUALITY PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECESS?

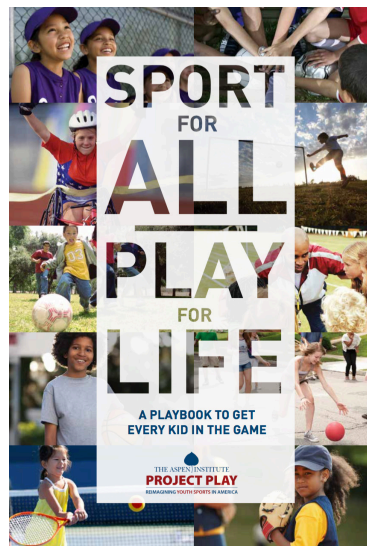
These settings can engage all kids. But they're under-resourced. The median P.E. budget for schools is \$764 per year. Encourage your school board to make P.E. and recess available on a daily basis, led by trained instructors.

10. HAVE I LOOKED FOR LOW-COST, “LEARN TO PLAY” OPPORTUNITIES?

Organized leagues today can be costly, and a full-season commitment can cause a kid who doesn't like the sport to turn off to sports in general. Find programs and camps that offer sport sampling, ideally at low or no cost.

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