

Five Benefits of Enrolling Your Child in an Organized Sport

-James D. Guilford

Televisions, computers, and video games have made kids more inactive than ever. Because a world of entertainment lay at a child's fingertips, parents are finding it difficult to motivate children to get on their feet.

Enrolling children in an organized sport such as gymnastics, basketball, or swimming, is a great way to encourage physical activity. But there are other less obvious advantages to these activities. Below are five benefits your child will gain from participating in a sport.

1. **PERSEVERANCE.** In sports, especially those that require repetition in order to gain a skill, a child will fail many times before she succeeds. In this way, children who participate in sports learn to continue to try even in the face of difficulty.
2. **CONFIDENCE.** Over time, young athletes experience tangible and measurable payoffs for their efforts, such as mastering new skills in gymnastics or improving sprint times in track. These gains increase confidence and reinforce the benefits of hard work.
3. **INTELLIGENCE.** A recent study by the California Department of Education shows that when a substantial amount of a child's time is dedicated to physical activity, their academic performance meets and may even exceed that of children who are not as active.
4. **ORGANIZATION.** Students who engage in sports learn to keep track of schedules, which include class times, homework deadlines, family commitments, as well as practices and competitions. Moreover, by finishing assignments, carrying uniforms, and completing chores these young athletes also learn to pay attention to details.
5. **HEALTH AND LONGEVITY.** According to a study by the Surgeon General and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, participating in physical activity such as gymnastics, football, or another organized sports, reduces the risk of coronary heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, diabetes, and premature death in general.

The excitement of wearing a uniform, using special equipment, and hearing the cheer of the crowd can be a great motivator for young athletes. Moreover, it is a well-documented fact that participation in sports improves physical and mental health. Help your child adopt a healthy lifestyle by enrolling them in an organized sport.