



Resources

ASPEN INSTITUTE REPORTS

KIDS SPORTS FACTS

PARENT CHECKLIST

Project Play Parent Checklists

TEN QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

We all want sports to be a great experience for kids. If you're a parent or caregiver, you want it that much more. Because once you have a child, your favorite athlete is no longer someone you watch on TV — it's the budding athlete down the hall, the one you're raising.

These Parent Checklists are for you. They distill the ideas embodied in the Aspen Institute's seminal report, Sport for All, Play for Life: A Playbook to Get Every Kid in the Game, into simple 10-point checklists that can be read at a glance. They include questions you can ask your child, yourself, and local programs when considering how to build an athlete for life.

YOU HAVE THREE CHOICES, TAILORED TO THE AGE AND ACTIVITY LEVEL OF YOUR CHILD:

CHILDREN AGES 0-5

[• VIEW CHECKLIST](#)

CHILDREN AGES 6-12 AND NOT PLAYING SPORTS

[• VIEW CHECKLIST](#)

CHILDREN AGES 6-12 AND PLAYING SPORTS

[• VIEW CHECKLIST](#)

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CHILDREN AGES 0-5



CHILDREN AGES 6-12 AND NOT PLAYING SPORTS



CHILDREN AGES 6-12 AND PLAYING SPORTS



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PARENT CHECKLIST

Project Play Parent Checklist FIRST STEPS IN BUILDING AN ATHLETE FOR LIFE
FOR KIDS (AGES 0-5) NOT YET INVOLVED IN SPORT PROGRAMS

Parents and caregivers today are bombarded with conflicting messages about when and how to introduce children to sport activity.

TEN QUESTIONS TO ASK OF YOURSELF AND LOCAL PROGRAMS:
[\(Download Spanish Version\)](#)

1. HAVE I TALKED WITH MY CHILD'S PEDIATRICIAN ABOUT SPORTS?
The American Academy of Pediatrics offers evidence-based guidance on a range of topics related to sports safety and physical activity for children. Ask what type of activities are advisable to introduce at each stage of development.

2. WITH INFANTS, AM I ENCOURAGING SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN MOVEMENT?
Humans are wired to move. Reaching and grasping, pulling and pushing, moving the head, torso and limbs – all of it helps develop the relationship between the brain and body. Interact with your child and offer effusive praise.

3. WITH TODDLERS, AM I PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATE MIX OF PLAY ENVIRONMENTS?

The guidelines for this age group are at least 30 minutes of structured physical activity each day, plus anywhere from 60 minutes to several hours of unstructured play. Toddlers should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time, except when sleeping.

4. HAVE I ENROLLED MY CHILD IN A LEARN-TO-SWIM CLASS?

Kids love to get wet. And for a child who is proficient in the water, a world of lifetime sport options open up: snorkeling, rowing, kayaking, surfing, standup paddleboard, water skiing, sailing, triathlon, swim team, among others.

5. HAVE I IDENTIFIED SAFE PLACES TO PLAY IN MY COMMUNITY?

People living within a mile of a park are four times more likely to use it than others. When choosing a home, take an inventory of nearby assets that promote active play: sidewalks, bike paths, playgrounds, and school facilities.

6. IS MY PRESCHOOLER IN PROGRAMS THAT PRIORITIZE PHYSICAL LITERACY?

Physical literacy is the ability, confidence and desire to be active for life. One key is the development of fundamental movement skills – agility, balance, coordination. Certainly before age 5, it's not about teaching sport-specific skills.

7. DOES MY CHILD'S PRESCHOOL ENCOURAGE LEARNING THROUGH PLAY?

Through kindergarten in Finland, teachers hold off on academic drilling and mostly ask kids to play in settings where they can solve problems. Finland's students end up with some of the highest math scores in the world.

8. HAVE I POPULATED OUR HOME WITH TOYS THAT ENCOURAGE MOVEMENT?

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

9. DO I UNDERSTAND AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL PRINCIPLES?

ADM is a framework designed by the US Olympic Committee that describes the five stages for proper athletic development. From ages 0 to 12, it's "Discover, Learn & Play." ADM debunks myths. From the start, get smart.

10. HAVE I IDENTIFIED WHAT BENEFITS I HOPE MY CHILD DERIVES FROM SPORTS?

Start with the end in mind, then design backwards. If it's a sports experience that develops social-emotional skills and healthy habits for life, resist the manic chase for the athletic scholarship and pro salaries. Elite performance cannot be manufactured.

7

YOUR SCORE

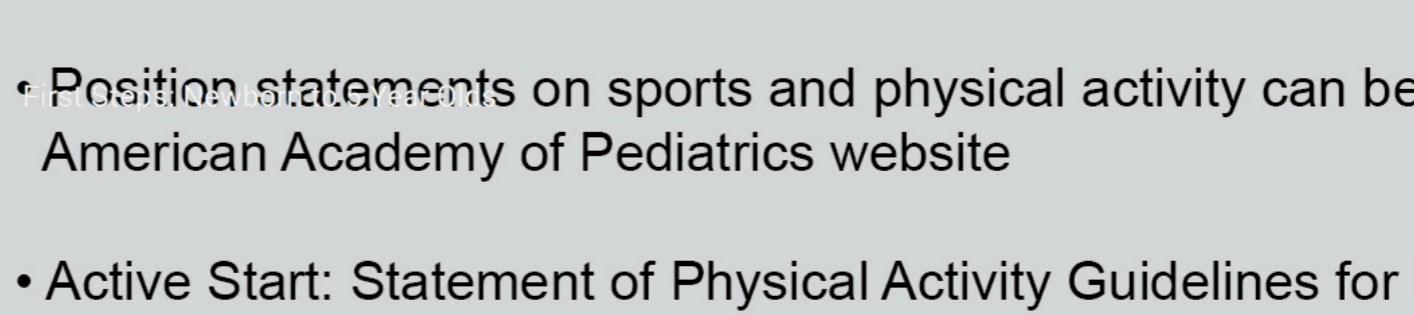
9-10 = Ideal scenario for kids

6-8 = Solid foundation

3-5 = Much more can be done

1-2 = Much more should be done

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FIRST STEPS CHECKLIST FOR BABIES

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE PROJECT PLAY

PARENT CHECKLIST 

HELPFUL LINKS

- Position statements on sports and physical activity can be found at the American Academy of Pediatrics website
- Active Start: Statement of Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Birth to Five Years, 2nd Edition, SHAPE America.
- A free, community-generated guide to parks and playgrounds, created by Kaboom! and searchable by zip code can be found here
- The Joyful, Illiterate Kindergarteners of Finland, by Timothy Walker, The Atlantic, Oct. 1, 2015