



# PARENT RESOURCE GUIDE

YOUTH & HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL









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# OUR COMMITMENT



### **OUR COMMITMENT: TO SUPPORT YOUTH & HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL NATIONWIDE.**

USA Football, the National Football League, the league's 32 Clubs and other leaders across our sport are committed to inform and support the moms and dads who comprise America's youth and high school football family. This commitment stems from the joy, friendships and fitness that our children gain by playing football.

This Parent Resource Guide outlines our approach to serve and celebrate football across youth and high school levels. This guide was created for parents of athletes who capture the lasting inspiration fostered through flag and tackle football.

Being a parent is one of the most challenging and rewarding opportunities in life. The pride that comes with watching our children succeed sits on a delicate balance across from our empathy when seeing them encounter challenges. Parents are coaches, nurses, psychologists, equipment managers, chauffeurs, chefs, and so much more.

Please consider this resource as you continue your journey as a football parent. If you are not a football parent and are considering the sport for your child, this guide offers best practices to help you and your young player discover the best experience possible through a modern game with timeless values.

Thank you.

**Scott Hallenbeck**

*CEO, USA Football*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott Hallenbeck". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Roman Oben**

*Vice President, Youth Football  
National Football League*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roman Oben". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.







# HEALTH & WELLNESS

# CREATING NEW SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

## A BETTER WAY TO PLAY FOOTBALL IN AN EFFORT TO MAKE THE GAME SAFER

USA Football's Heads Up Football program is a comprehensive approach to teaching youth organizations and high schools a better and safer way to play football.

The program focuses on:

- 1 EQUIPMENT FITTING
- 2 HEALTH AND SAFETY
- 3 SHOULDER TACKLING AND BLOCKING FUNDAMENTALS

Learn more about USA Football's Heads Up Football program at [www.usafootball.com/headsup](http://www.usafootball.com/headsup).

## WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

**FUNDAMENTALS.** Focuses on age-appropriate methods of learning and teaches techniques to fit a player's progression in skills and development.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY.** Protects your child on and off the field through a comprehensive health and safety curriculum covering: concussion and recognition response, heat preparedness, hydration, sudden cardiac arrest

**EQUIPMENT THAT FITS.** Covers the proper way to size and fit helmets and shoulder pads to decrease risk of injury on the field.

**COACHING CERTIFICATION.** Coaches are able to get certified with the help of USA Football and the nation's leading football and medical experts who have created content for USA Football's coaching certifications.



# FUEL UP FOR GAME DAY

Eating and drinking right are just as important as improving skills and practicing plays to be successful on the field.

Get your child ready for game day with some simple nutrition tips:

## STEP 1 - CARB UP

Have your children eat a bigger meal two to four hours before they take the field. Incorporate protein and antioxidants if possible, with carbohydrates.

## STEP 2 - SNACK ATTACK

Have a small snack or sports drink ready for your child 30 to 60 minutes before kickoff. The key is not to fill your child's stomach, but to satisfy it.

### PRO TIP:

Try a pasta dish with some lean ground turkey meat sauce, or a chicken stir-fry with lots of rice and veggies.

## 3 KINDS OF FOOD TO AVOID

**FATTY AND FRIED FOODS.** Greasy foods such as hamburgers and french fries are hard to digest and just sit in your child's stomach.

**PROTEIN SHAKES AND BARS.** Protein plays an important role in your child's overall diet, but they should not consume a large quantity right before a game.

**ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS.** These will stress your child's digestion, and the last thing anyone wants before a big game is an upset stomach.

## QUICK TIPS

**Never skip.** We are all rushed on game day, but having your child grab a yogurt, banana, or bowl of cereal before they leave will kick off the day right.

**Colorful plates.** A meal that's well-stocked with fruits and vegetables will provide a variety of nutrients, which will help performance and recovery.

# SNACKS ON THE SIDELINES

**Halftime for coaches means a chance to reinforce what the team is doing and help your young athlete get better. For players, those few minutes also mean snacks.**

Halftime is a crucial point in the game to refill children's glycogen – a muscle fuel source – and keep them energized for the second half.



For more snack ideas and recipes, visit [www.usafootball.com/parent](http://www.usafootball.com/parent).

## PRO TIP:

Ease digestion.

Go for a high glycemic carbohydrate that absorbs quickly with minimal fiber.

**TRY THESE EASY  
OPTIONS WHEN  
ORANGE SLICES JUST  
AREN'T CUTTING IT:**

FIG BARS

FRUIT ROPE

BANANAS

GRANOLA BARS

DRIED FRUIT

RICE KRISPIES TREATS®

# HOW TO STAY **HYDRATED**

Children have a harder time cooling down during activity than adults, and the chances of them becoming dehydrated is a real problem—especially when fluids leave the body faster than they can be replaced. But what goes out must come back in. Hydrating before a game or practice is just as important as during it.

## LEARN IT

### Dehydration Symptoms

- Feeling faint
- Headache
- Fever
- Intense thirst
- Not urinating for many hours
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Breathing faster or deeper than normal
- Skin numbness or tingling
- Muscle spasms
- Extreme tiredness

### PRO TIP:

If your child's urine is a dark yellow color, resembling apple juice, it is time to rehydrate.

## TEACH IT

### Make hydration a habit

One of the best ways to keep your child hydrated is to get them in the habit of drinking fluids every 20 minutes during the course of activity and after it ends.

## DO IT

### When and how to hydrate

**BEFORE ACTIVITY:** Drink 16-24 fluid ounces of water 10-15 minutes before activity.

**DURING ACTIVITY:** Hydrate with an electrolyte-packed sports drink or water every 15-20 minutes throughout play.

**AFTER ACTIVITY:** Have your child drink chocolate milk as a post-workout snack to replenish nutrients lost during exercise.

### PRO TIP:

Pair a favorite sports drink with a healthy snack, and on busy days, plan ahead for additional hydration opportunities the night before an activity or with breakfast.



# BEAT THE HEAT

**Kids take longer to cool down than adults during strenuous activity, so dehydration can be a real danger.**

Dehydration symptoms include feeling faint, headache, fever, intense thirst, not urinating for many hours, nausea, vomiting, breathing faster and deeper than normal, skin numbness or tingling, muscle spasms and extreme tiredness.

To properly hydrate, have your child drink 16-24 ounces of water before activity, then have them consume an electrolyte-packed sports drink or water every 15-20 minutes throughout play. Finally, have them drink chocolate milk as a post-activity snack to replenish lost nutrients.

In addition to hydration, to keep kids safer when temperatures rise, schedule outdoor activities in the morning, before the sun reaches its peak. If that isn't possible, plan plenty of breaks as needed.

As an extra preventative measure, on both sunny and cloudy days, apply sunscreen with SPF 15 or greater that protects against UVA and UVB rays, 15-30 minutes before exposure. Repeat every two hours if necessary.

Sources: University of Connecticut,  
Heads Up Football Heat and Hydration Guidelines

## PRO TIP:

On hot days wear less  
equipment and light  
weight clothing.

**Here are the three primary heat problems to look out for:**

## HEAT SYNCOPE

**Symptoms:** Becoming lightheaded or fainting during exercise

**Treatment:** Find a shaded area, lay your child on the ground and raise their legs. This helps blood get back to the heart

## HEAT EXHAUSTION

**Symptoms:** May feel hot, tired, weak or dizzy while sweating profusely

**Treatment:** Remove your child from activity and put them in a shaded, cool area. Lay them on the ground and raise their legs about 12 inches. Replenish lost fluids and use ice-wrapped towels to help them cool down

## HEAT CRAMPS

**Symptoms:** Painful and localized cramps, usually visible and make muscles feel hard

**Treatment:** Rehydrate with water and sports drinks. Use light stretching and ice massages on the cramped muscle to relieve cramping

**REMEMBER:** Always call 911 in case of an emergency.



SEATING

SEASIDE

SECTION GATE

ROW 24  
SECTION

300 LEVEL  
100 LEVEL

# INCREASE CONCUSSION AWARENESS

**Along with heat-related precautions, it's imperative to know proper concussion protocol.**

Signs of a concussion include being dazed, stunned or confused about an assignment or their position; forgetting plays; being unsure of the game, score or opponent; losing consciousness; showing behavior or personality changes; and forgetting events prior to or after an impact or fall.

Symptoms include headache or head pressure; nausea or vomiting; balance problems or dizziness; double or blurry vision; sensitivity to light or noise; concentration or memory problems; and feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy.

This is provided from USA Football's concussion guidelines.

## HERE'S WHAT COACHES SHOULD DO IF A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED:

- Remove the athlete from play and do not let them return
- Ensure athlete is evaluated by a physician with proper expertise
- Inform athlete's parents or guardians
- Only allow the athlete to return after they're cleared by a medical professional





# YOUTH FOOTBALL

# YOUTH FOOTBALL:

The focus of youth football for parents should be to make sure your kids have the best overall experience, win or lose. At this stage, the emphasis should be on fun, safety, and introducing the great game of football to new players and their parents. Parent education is the foundation for a child's success on the field.





**For a youth football player or parent, the first few years of participation are filled with a spectrum of emotions.** From registration to obtaining equipment to training camp, nutrition and volunteering, to practice and games, there is a lot to digest. It's important to know what to expect, how to prepare your child for what lies ahead, and how to tackle the many opportunities and challenges that can arise.

Many kids have already been exposed to the great game of football before they step foot onto a field in an organized program. Whether it's having attended a game in person or watching one on television, or just throwing a ball around in the backyard, kids can fall in love with football in a number of different ways.

For those children who have not had much exposure to the game, there is still an excitement around getting started because it means learning about the sport, being active with friends, making new friends and having fun. There is something special about that maiden voyage – whether it's flag, tackle, or any modified football, the journey starts with the collective decision for a child to play youth football.

Regardless of who initiates the decision to get involved in youth football, parents and players have to determine together which path makes the most sense for the player. For some kids, it will be flag, others will choose tackle first, and some might choose both.

Whichever route you choose, the decision to participate in youth football can be the beginning of a wonderful experience for both the player and the parents, so here are some things to understand, look for, and experience in those first years of your child's participation.



Play **ON OUR**  
Team



## JOIN THE OFFICIAL YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL PROGRAM OF THE NFL.

**NFL FLAG is the only flag league that allows your child to play for the NFL.**

NFL FLAG is powered by USA Football, the sport's national governing body. NFL FLAG is a fun and exciting sport played year round by boys and girls ages 5-17. Players enjoy the fast paced nature of football in a non-contact environment, while coaches and league organizers are held to the highest standards for coaching credibility and safety through the USA Football certification program.

**Find a league in your area and learn more about NFL FLAG by visiting [www.nflflag.com](http://www.nflflag.com).**

### WHAT YOUR PLAYER RECEIVES:

- NFL FLAG reversible team jersey
- Official NFL FLAG football belt and flags
- Opportunity to compete at Regional Tournaments
- Opportunity to compete at the NFL FLAG Championships

# DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Parents should do their homework on the teams and programs in your area. Whether its flag or tackle, there are always options and the decision on what team or program to join isn't always easy. Some things to consider when making a decision include whether or not the program is affiliated with USA Football, whether or not the coaches are USA Football certified, the proximity to your home, and what league they are in. It's also always a good idea to ask other parents who have their kids playing youth football about a particular program or team.

As with other sports, make sure you understand all risks associated with playing football.

# EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

The start of football season is an exciting time as millions of young athletes and their parents prepare to take the field decked out in the best equipment available for purchase.

**Before dropping hundreds of dollars on the latest gear, be aware of what equipment you should buy.**

## MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD IS PREPARED FOR PRACTICE WITH THE FOLLOWING CHECKLIST:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7-piece pad set   | <input type="checkbox"/> Padded girdle, Padded performance shirt, Practice jersey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic bag, Belt, Chin strap, Cleats (typically plastic), Eye black | <input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder pads  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football, Gloves, Helmet, Clear helmet visor (if desired)             | <input type="checkbox"/> Socks  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated football pants, Mouth guard                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrist coach for plays (if required)                      |



# QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD'S COACH

**Your role as a parent is to support, encourage, volunteer, and guide them through the ups and downs of every season.**

While it's the coach's job to instruct, you must become comfortable with the process and be aware of what your child is doing.

**WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON PLAYING TIME?** Know upfront whether your coach's main focus is winning or development. At the younger levels, the final score should not matter. As athletes advance, a coach's job might be tied to the team's performance.

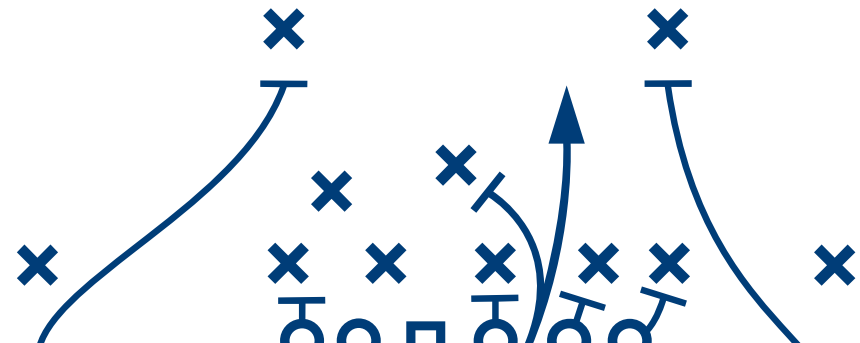
**DO YOU HAVE FIRST-AID TRAINING?** Don't assume that coaches can do anything more than apply a BAND-AID Brand Adhesive Bandage. Insist that someone on staff is present at all games and practices, knows CPR and can identify heat illness, concussions, and sudden cardiac arrest.

**WHAT IS YOUR EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN?** If an emergency does occur, are you prepared to react? Is there proper cellphone coverage at all practice and game sites? Are there automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) and cooling tubs available nearby?

**HOW CAN I HELP?** This answer might surprise you. While every league and school welcomes volunteers to do the work behind the scenes, the coach's No. 1 request might be "Please get your child to practice and games on time."

**DO YOU HAVE A CHILD ON THE TEAM?** Don't jump to conclusions. If the coach says, "yes," seek assurances that favoritism will not be an ongoing problem throughout the season.

Original content provided by: Janis Meredith, Author, Sports Parenting Survival Guide





# MIDDLE SCHOOL FOOTBALL



# HOW TO PREPARE YOUR ATHLETE FOR TACKLE FOOTBALL

If it's your first season of tackle football as a parent, here are a few things to remember:

- Your child may want to play for a variety of reasons, but all who play sports want to have fun. There'll be good and bad days, but a well-coached team with supportive parents makes for an enjoyable season for all.
- You'll likely have a greater time commitment compared to other sports, as most tackle football teams practice on multiple nights. Coaches utilize this time to improve skills, technique and conditioning.
- Tackle football costs more than flag football primarily because a football helmet is involved. You won't purchase a more important piece of equipment during your years in sports than the helmet.
- You can expect your child to come home with some bumps and bruises. Learn to recognize the difference between soreness from early-season practices and a real injury. If you aren't sure, treat it as an injury until a professional tells you otherwise.
- Perhaps more than any other sport, tackle football requires the ability to learn plays and understand strategy. Be prepared to help your child grasp these concepts before the first game. If you treat it like homework and set aside time to do it each night, it'll happen more naturally.
- If your child has suffered a head injury, make sure they don't return to play until they are cleared by a medical professional with head injury expertise.



## SO, WHAT TRAITS SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN A HEAD COACH?:

**FUN AND PERSONABLE:** Fun starts with the coach. That doesn't mean every minute has to be all fun and games, but it does mean kids should want to go to practice and games because they're fun. The coach can make or break a child's love for the game.

**GOOD COMMUNICATOR:** Sometimes communication is simple: "This is how you grip a football." Other times it requires a little more skill and tact: "Let me explain to you why your child won't be starting today." A good coach gets the message across in both cases.

**KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE GAME:** A good coach knows the ins and outs of the game. They not only know how to teach and correct individual skills, but also how to teach players to effectively implement them into team strategy.

**KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT KIDS:** The top coaches are the ones who can manage children. If there are 10 kids on a team, there'll be 10 different personalities and 10 ways those kids learn best. A good coach realizes their favorite way to coach isn't the only way.



**HEADS UP  
FOOTBALL**

## PEYTON MANNING

NFL QB, 2-time Super Bowl Champion  
5-time League MVP  
All American at University of Tennessee

“ These [football] environments teach young men about taking coaching, overcoming adversity, and communicating with teammates. There is a unique bond that I have with my high school teammates... It's a bond that never goes away.”

## CHAD E. WALKER

Whitney Young HS Linebacker, Class of 1991;  
Vice President, General Counsel, Morton Salt, Inc

“ I wouldn't be the person I am today but for the game of football. It taught me the importance of leadership, teamwork, discipline, determination, and perseverance that has benefitted me professionally as well as personally.”

## TONY DUNGY

Hall of Fame Football Coach, TV Analyst

“ The secret to success is good leadership, and good leadership is all about making the lives of your team members or workers better.”

## RANDY ALLEN

2017 Don Shula NFL High School Coach of the Year

“ I believe football teaches the values of teamwork, resiliency, hard work, commitment and integrity in a way that leaves a lasting impression on the young men who play the game that lasts a lifetime.”

# FOOTBALL

# VALUES

# COMMITMENT, INTEGRITY, COURAGE

## JEFF IMMELT

Former CEO of General Electric;  
Offensive Tackle for Dartmouth College in mid 1970s

“What I learned from football enters my life every day... So when you ask what a CEO does: drives performance, knows how to develop other people, and know how to set standards. All three of those things I think in some way come back to what I learned when I was playing football.”

## GENERAL ODIERNO

Willowridge High School Defensive Back, Class of 1992;  
Senior Vice President, Miami Dolphins

“Simply put, the character development and life lessons I learned through football informed every facet of my life in a positive way. The game taught me the successful qualities of teamwork, physical and mental toughness, resilience and competitiveness.”

## JASON JENKINS

Willowridge High School Defensive Back, Class of 1992;  
Senior Vice President, Miami Dolphins

“Simply put, the character development and life lessons I learned through football informed every facet of my life in a positive way. The game taught me the successful qualities of teamwork, physical and mental toughness, resilience and competitiveness.”

## SAM PALMISANO

Former CEO & Chairman of IBM

“Especially in football, you learn competitiveness. You also realize that you must work together in so many way—takes a selfless attitude to succeed. Playing lineman for a football team is, quite literally, a selfless position.”

# UES

# COURAGE, RESPECT, EXCELLENCE

# WAYS TO MENTALLY PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR THE GAME

**Athletes can practice and prepare to get their bodies in the best shape for a game, but getting prepared mentally is a different thing. Fear of failure is real and affects how athletes perform, regardless of their age.**

**LOOK TO THE FUTURE.** Everyone loses once in a while, but that doesn't make it easy. Help your child put that last play behind them and focus on the next opportunity.

**FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE.** Even after near-perfect performances, it's natural for players to dwell on one or two failures. Help your child focus on successes and how to learn from failures in order to overcome them.

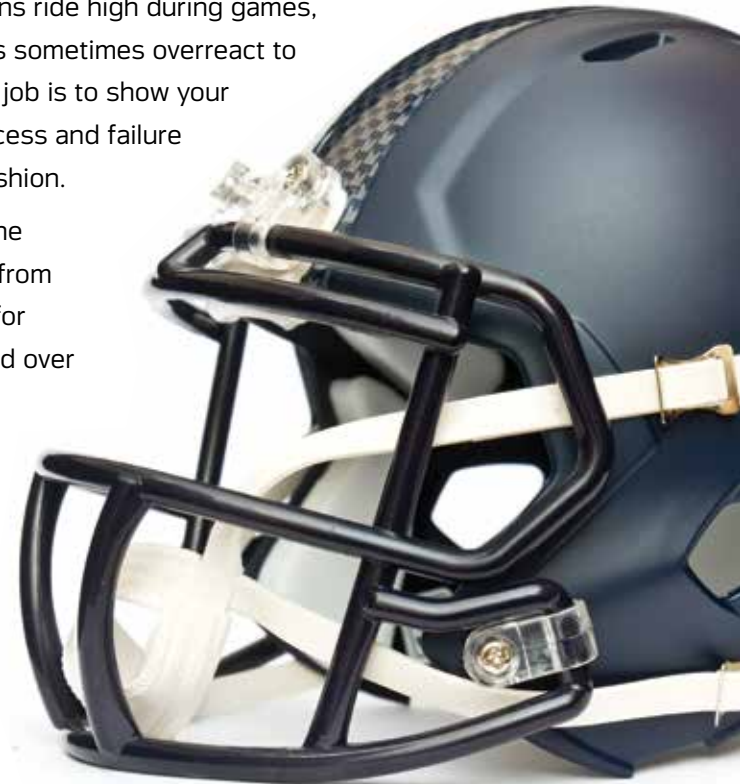
**DON'T PUNISH EVERY MISTAKE.** Not every misstep needs to be addressed. Don't step in until mistakes become a habit that needs to be corrected.

**DON'T SHOW DISAPPOINTMENT.** Your job as a parent is to help your child build confidence, so encourage, support, and just be there.

**LET THEM OWN IT.** Progression starts when young athletes can accept that they make mistakes.

**BE THEIR ROCK.** Emotions ride high during games, and coaches and players sometimes overreact to what is happening. Your job is to show your child how to handle success and failure in an age appropriate fashion.

**REPEAT AFTER ME.** In the end, belief has to come from within. Create a mantra for your child to say over and over when times get tough. "Let's do it," "I believe," and "I got this" are all powerful starting points.





# PHRASES YOUR CHILD SHOULD HEAR OFTEN

**Words have the power to encourage and motivate just as easily as they can hurt and discourage.**

Your child will remember general tones, approaches, and phrases heard most often. Avoid the negative and foster healthy self-esteem, strength, and confidence in your child by picking the right words.

**“I LOVE YOU.”** You may think it is going in one ear and out the other, but trust that this phrase will stay with your child.

**“I AM PROUD OF YOU.”** Look into your child’s eyes and say it every day and before and after every game, win or lose.

**“I BELIEVE IN YOU.”** Self-confidence can be a struggle for some children. Having your children know you believe them no matter what happens is a great foundation.

**“HOW WAS YOUR DAY?”** Let your child know that you care about things other than sports.

Original content provided by: Michelle Hill, Author, [winningproof.com](http://winningproof.com)

**“YOU CAN DO THIS.”** Encourage your child to never quit, to keep pursuing dreams, and to overcome challenges when things get tough.

**“I FORGIVE YOU.”** Your child may say the wrong things during emotional times, like right after a loss. Put moments like that in the past and learn to forgive.

**“YOU’VE GOT TO FORGIVE YOURSELF.”** Any frustrations your children shows are nothing compared to what is going on inside their heads.

**“I AM LISTENING.”** Put down your phone, iPad, or TV remote and look your child in the eyes.

**“WHAT DO YOU THINK?”** Start a conversation with your child, even if you may not agree with what is going on.

**“LET’S TALK.”** Don’t give up on your child, even when it seems like you are being shut out. Let your child know you are always there.



# EXPRESSIONS TO AVOID SAYING ONCE YOU LEAVE THE FIELD

**The car ride home after a game or practice can be a magnet for emotionally charged comments that could later lead to regret.**

After a disappointing loss or performance, silence is a valid option if you aren't sure what your child wants to hear.

**Here are four things you should avoid with your child after a hard loss:**

**“IF ONLY YOU HADN'T...”** Remember to give kids some credit. They know their performance wasn't great and probably feel bad about it. Reliving it could just make things worse.

**“WE WORKED ON THIS.”** Let the coaches coach, and instead focus on giving your children the support they need instead of discussing missed opportunities on the field.

**“WHY DIDN'T THE COACH PUT YOU IN?”** Avoid asking why your child's playing time dwindled or why they lost a starting spot. It will only demoralize and discourage – and maybe even plant ideas that weren't there to begin with.

**“I'VE SEEN YOU PLAY HARDER THAN THAT.”** Effort and performance are unrelated, especially at younger levels. Avoid making kids feel like they have to please you while they're out on the field. Athletes who aren't trying their best already know.

Visit [www.usafootball.com/parent](http://www.usafootball.com/parent) for more tips on communicating with your player.

Original content provided by: Janis Meredith, Author, Sports Parenting Survival Guide



# 5 COMMON MYTHS

## ABOUT ATHLETES WHO FOCUS ON A SINGLE SPORT:

**MYTH:** Most college athletes specialize in one sport as a child.

**FACT:** Eighty-eight percent of college athletes played more than one sport in high school.

**MYTH:** The only way to build the skills necessary to play at the college level is to focus on one sport.

**FACT:** Children who play multiple sports tend to be more physically developed than those who limit themselves to one sport.

**MYTH:** Young athletes need to play year-round to stay in shape and avoid injury.

**FACT:** Athletes who play just one sport are 70-93 percent more likely to get hurt.

**MYTH:** Kids who spend their time in one sport are more likely to stay active throughout their lives.

**FACT:** Children who specialize in a single sport early in life are more likely to burn out and stop participating altogether.

**MYTH:** The only way to truly love a sport is to start early and stick with it.

**FACT:** Playing multiple sports statistically produces longer playing careers, better confidence, improved athletic development, and less chance of burnout.

Source: American Medical Society for Sports Medicine



# REASONS WHY YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO PLAY **MORE** **THAN ONE SPORT**

- Participation numbers are dropping for many youth sports because children are focusing on a single sport at earlier ages.
- Driven by year-round travel clubs and the availability of indoor practice facilities, parents are spending more money and time to specialize early.
- Encourage children to play a variety of sports while they have the chance.
- According to medical experts, taking part in a variety of activities leads to greater skill and muscle development.





# BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH OPPORTUNITY

Confidence and opportunity are two of the most important things that you and youth football coaches can give players. For some, things come easy, and their personalities exude confidence. Others struggle to believe in themselves enough to give their best effort. Confidence is something you can instill and improve by exhibiting great energy, providing positive feedback, and showing your child you know how hard they are working.

## 5 PHRASES THAT INSTILL CONFIDENCE

**As your child leaves and prepares to join their teammates, choose your words wisely as they will carry those words with them onto the field.**

### SHOULD SAY...

- "You can do it."
- "We're rooting for you."
- "You are awesome."
- "You've done it before. You can do it again."
- "I'm so proud of how far along you've developed"

### DON'T SAY...

- "Woah, those guys look big."
- "Don't screw up."
- "It can't be as bad as last time."
- "Make me proud."
- "I had it way worse than you when I was your age"



# COACHING EDUCATION

**Many youth sports coaches are volunteers and only five to ten percent of these coaches will receive relevant training related to the sport they are coaching. The value of coaching education goes way beyond the wins and losses.**

## LONGER ENGAGEMENT IN SPORTS


Sports can play a positive role in your child's life and playing for a trained coach lessens the chance of dropout. Athletes who play for untrained coaches drop out at a rate of 26% compared to those who play for a trained coach.

## CHANCE OF A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

As a parent, a fun experience should be the number one goal for your child. Ultimately it is your child's coach who can make or break your desire to keep playing. Studies show that coaches who have received proper coaching education are better at establishing a fun-filled and stress-free environment that keeps children engaged.

## REDUCE INJURIES ON THE FIELD

Coaches with proper coaching education and development teach age-appropriate fundamentals, techniques, and drills properly, in order to reduce the risk of injury.

A photograph of a male coach wearing a dark blue polo shirt, a dark blue baseball cap, and glasses. He has his arms crossed and is looking off to the side. Behind him is a football team in white jerseys with yellow and black accents, and black helmets. The scene is outdoors at night, with stadium lights visible in the background.

We wouldn't send our children to schools with teachers who haven't received proper training, and the same should go for coaches.

# HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

# HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

**Welcome to high school football.** At this level, many of the challenges players experienced in their younger years have gone, as your high school football player is bigger, stronger, faster, and has better motor skills than in middle and elementary school. It's always important to understand that a high school coach has multiple responsibilities, including those of administrators, unlike volunteer youth coaches. Off the field, the job of a high school football coach is to be a mentor for his kids – a meaningful role in any young person's life that can provide additional support beyond his or her family. Furthermore, in almost all cases, head high school football coaches are leaders in their community. Being a part of a high school football team is an amazing experience, but there are important adjustments for your child to make more than during any step of the journey to this point.

Kids may have to adjust to a different position that they may not have played in youth football. Depending on the size of the high school program and a player's skill level, many 9th and 10th graders will play on the freshman or JV squad, but some will play varsity right away. There are some schools that have a legacy of winning, including city and county championships, and that constantly pursue the ultimate

goal of state championships. In other cases there are schools that struggle to win games but maintain a deep pride among the students and the community.

Not every kid that plays youth or tackle football is going to play in middle school. Not every player in middle school is going to continue playing in high school, and not every high school player is going to have the opportunity to play in college, for those who want to continue. Regardless of the path an athlete ultimately chooses, the character and discipline they learn through football will help lead to success in any endeavor.



# ARE YOU READY TO PLAY FOOTBALL?

If you want to play sports at an NCAA school, start by registering at [eligibilitycenter.org](https://eligibilitycenter.org).

## FRESHMAN YEAR PLAN

- Start planning now! Take the right courses and earn the best grades you can.
- Ask your counselor for a list of your high school's NCAA core courses to make sure you take the right classes.

## SOPHOMORE YEAR REGISTER

- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at [eligibilitycenter.org](https://eligibilitycenter.org)
- If you fall behind on courses, don't take shortcuts to catch up. Ask your counselor for help with finding approved programs with courses you can take.

## JUNIOR YEAR STUDY

- Check with your counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate on time.
- Take the ACT or SAT and make sure we get your scores by using code 9999.
- At the end of the year, ask your counselor to upload your official transcript to the NCAA Eligibility Center.

## SENIOR YEAR GRADUATE

- Take the ACT or SAT again, if needed, and make sure we get your scores by using code 9999.
- Request your final amateurism certification after April 1.
- After you graduate, ask your counselor to upload your final official transcript with proof of graduation to the NCAA Eligibility Center.

## COMPETE TO COMPETE IN DIVISION I, YOU MUST:

- Complete 16 core courses in the appropriate areas.
- Complete at least 10 of those 16 core courses before the start of your seventh semester. Seven of the 10 core courses must be in English, math or science.
- Earn at least a 2.3 GPA in the core courses, with a corresponding SAT or ACT on the Division I sliding scale.

The SAT has changed its scoring system. For more information, visit [NCAA.org/playcollegesports](https://NCAA.org/playcollegesports) and select the Test Scores link at the bottom of the page.

# HELPFUL HINTS

- Visit [ncaa.org/playcollegesports](https://ncaa.org/playcollegesports) to learn more about opportunities available at NCAA schools.
- Know the academic standards for Division I and Division II.
- Complete NCAA-approved courses throughout high school.
- Your high school counselor can help you find and select courses.
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at [eligibilitycenter.org](https://eligibilitycenter.org) during your sophomore year if you are interested in playing college sports.
- After six semesters, ask your high school counselor to send official transcripts from all high schools you have attended to the NCAA Eligibility Center.
- After you graduate, ask your counselor to upload your final official transcript with proof of graduation to the NCAA Eligibility Center.

Information provided by NCAA





# THINKING OF GOING PRO?

**There are more than 480,000 NCAA student-athletes, and fewer than 2 percent will go pro in their sport.**

For the rest, the experiences of college athletics and the life lessons they learn along the way will help them as they pursue careers in business, education, athletics administration, communications, law, medicine and many more fields. Education is a vital part of the college athletics experience, and student-athletes treat it that way.

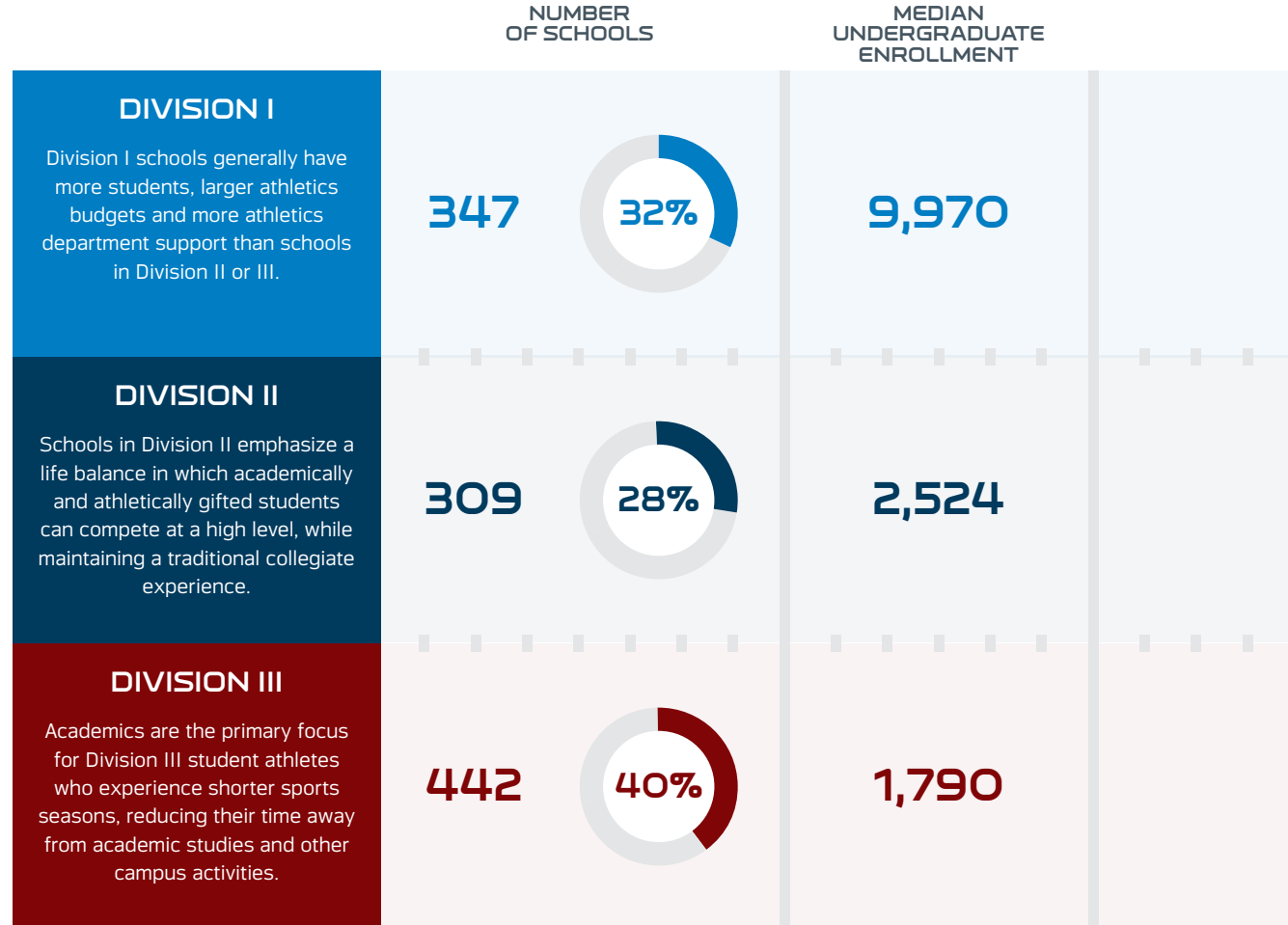
Overall, student-athletes graduate at higher rates than their peers in the student body, and those rates rise each year.

Information provided by NCAA.

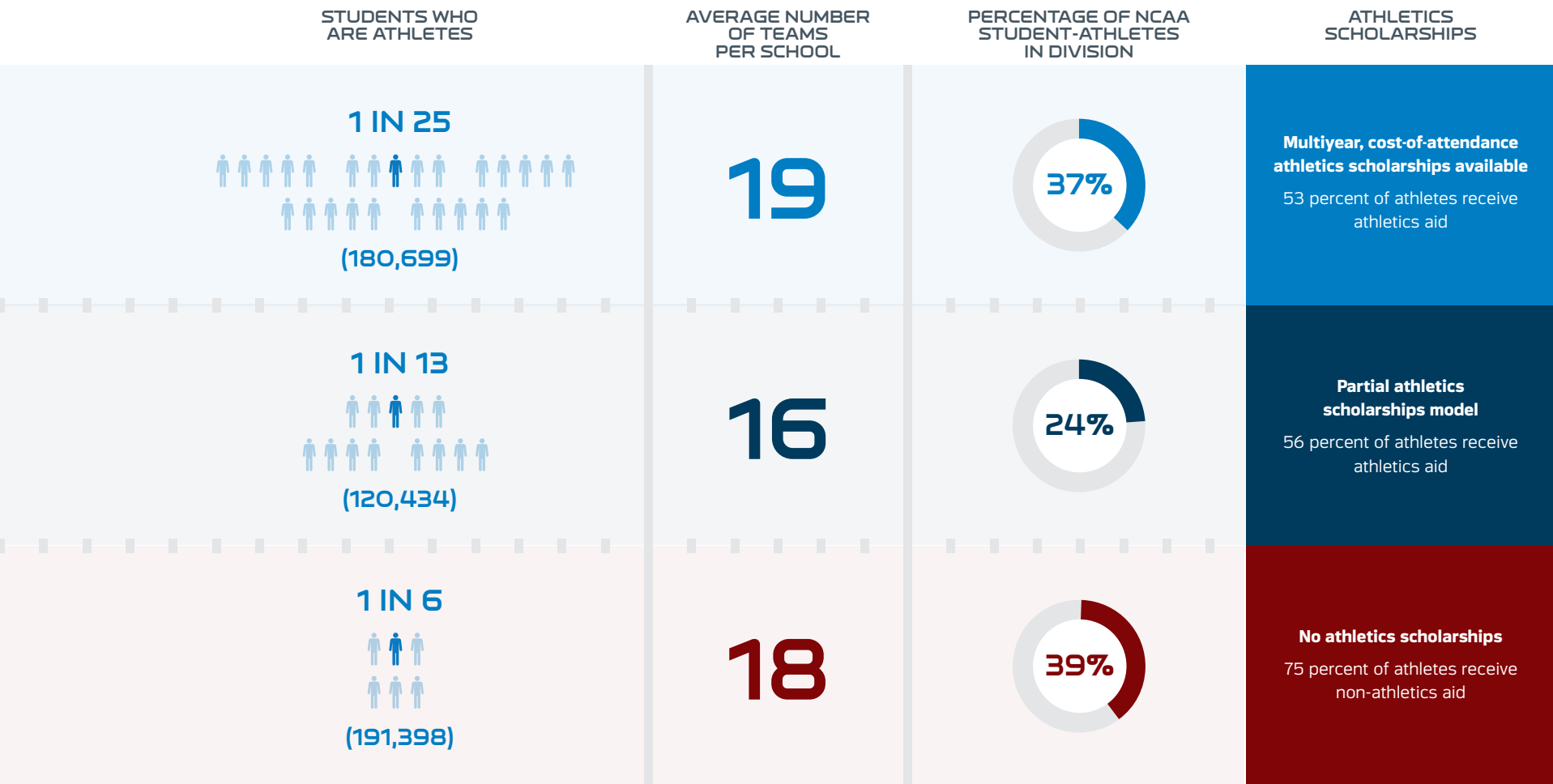
\*Percentages based on estimated data.

	MEN'S BASKETBALL	WOMEN'S BASKETBALL	FOOTBALL	BASEBALL	MEN'S ICE HOCKEY	MEN'S SOCCER
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETES	546,428	429,380	1,083,308	488,815	35,155	440,322
HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR STUDENT-ATHLETES	156,122	122,680	309,517	139,661	10,044	125,806
NCAA STUDENT-ATHLETES	18,684	16,593	73,660	34,554	4,102	24,903
NCAA FRESHMAN ROSTER POSITIONS	5,338	4,741	21,046	9,873	1,172	7,087
NCAA SENIOR STUDENT-ATHLETES	4,152	3,687	16,369	7,679	912	5,512
NCAA STUDENT-ATHLETES DRAFTED	44	35	251	695	51	75
PERCENT HIGH SCHOOL TO NCAA	3.4%	3.9%	6.8%	7.1%	11.7%	5.6%
PERCENT NCAA TO PROFESSIONAL	1.1%	0.9%	1.5%	9.1%	5.6%	1.4%
PERCENT HIGH SCHOOL TO PROFESSIONAL	0.03%	0.03%	0.08%	0.50%	0.51%	0.06%

# OUR THREE DIVISIONS



Information provided by NCAA.





We believe that playing football instills values, teaches skills and builds character. We are dedicated to developing kids into football players, for life. We are coaches, mothers, fathers, teachers and mentors. **And together, we are a TEAM.**





