

Hesse

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### Can Participating In Sports Help or Hurt A Child?

Statistics show that 36,000,000 kids play organized sports each year. Are you or one of your family members a part of that 36,000,000? Often times parents think having their children participate in sports is just helpful for physical endurance. But according to Marilyn Price-Mitchell, Ph.d, sports help children develop teamwork skills, self-confidence, resiliency, moral character, and other personal strengths. Young people who play sports might also argue that sports provide the important skills needed for their future careers, or anything they plans to do later in life.

Sports help athletes develop good communication and other leadership skills, according to Theresa Maddox. Sports will also give children an opportunity to surround themselves with cooperative people and mentors. As children grow up around people who support them, they get older, and support the people they care about. Leadership skills are important because they tie into professional skills. They build self-management skills, communication skills, and also increase responsibility. A person might practice leadership skills while playing an organized sport if his or her coach makes him or her the game captain. Game captains have the responsibility of “picking up” the team when they’re down, and getting the medicine kit. The

coach trusts the captain with handling the team and the medicine kit. Each individual has a role. Just like when playing a sport. You play the position you're most accustomed to.

Sports also create and build relationships. When playing sports, you create new relationships with your peers and coaches. According to high school and college writers, Marlana Jean Shile and Katie Howard, the bond that players form with their coach is very important to whether the team succeeds or not. This shows that the coach has a very big impact on the players, just like the players have a very big impact on the team. The coach provides encouragement and wisdom for the players. The players go to the coach when something isn't clear. If a player and the coach don't agree on something, the entire team suffers. Conflicts between coaches and players don't always end well. But along the way, athletes are learning problem-solving and communication skills. Shile and Howard also think that "Playing sports enables you to create friendships you otherwise might not have formed." This demonstrates how people form special bonds with people they might've not started a friendship with before playing a sport. Sports bring people together from different schools, communities, and backgrounds.

Sports also decrease suicidal thoughts that occur amongst teens. Sports can provide comfort for teens. A person might have a lot going on at home, and to escape all the issues, they might resort to sports. When playing a sport, all you're thinking about is that sport. Usually, nothing else occupies your mind. Donna L. Merkel states that, "A reduction in suicidal thoughts and tendencies has been demonstrated for both boys and girls who engage in sport." This shows that when depressed teenagers participate in sports, they have psychological benefits.

Some people may argue that education is more important than sports. That may be true in some circumstances. But does education provide physical activity, communication and

leadership skills for children? Without sports, a child couldn't develop the communication and leadership skills obtained from sports.

Hopefully now, you know that sports aren't just for physically active kids, but also for developing lifelong skills. Sports connect to suicidal teens on a different level, have the potential to create new friendships, develop professional skills, and provide psychological benefits.

Education can't develop all of these skills on the same level, and it can't reduce a teen's suicidal thoughts or depression. Shouldn't we value sports just as much as we value education?

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