

Foster physical activity & sports among children

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Abstract

It is widely accepted that physical activity has numerous positive health outcomes including its influence on meeting healthy weight goals, when associated with low-energy intake through healthy eating habits. In children, physical activity is particularly important as it improves gross and fine motor skill development necessary for academic performance (e.g., writing), self-perceived competence (academic as well as athletic) as well as increasing socio-emotional adjustment and self-esteem. Physical activities in groups and games also have social benefits in that they offer children opportunities to learn new skills while developing friendships. Parents have a direct influence on their children's Physical Activity. Their support of Physical Activity, their own level of PA, and their enjoyment of PA predict the extent to which their young will engage in PA with sufficient intensity and duration.

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Introduction

"Sports do more than just contribute to a child's physical development."

Children in schools today are increasingly overburdened with academics. Most parents make all efforts to get them to excel at studies. However, going with the popular saying, '*all work and no play*' is not necessarily the best strategy to improve your child's performance at school.

For children to grow and develop into healthy individuals there needs to be a reasonable balance between work and play. But in this mechanized world we all forget our physical work out. Now-a-days children are sticking on tablets, laptops or television. In terms of sports and play they would like to play in big malls robotic games or mobiles games. Sports play an important part in the development of children.

Benefits of sports: Participation in sports helps children to:

- **Maintain good health:** Unlike academics, sport is both physical and cerebral. Involvement in sports helps children develop physically. Outdoor sports encourage them to be out in the open air. The discipline associated with sports teaches them healthy habits such as right eating and exercising.

- **Cultivate team spirit:** Most outdoor games involve teamwork. They teach children how to coordinate with peers to fulfill a common task or accomplish a common goal. This involves superior communication skills, the capacity to assess situations, and the ability to take immediate and critical decisions. Children will require these skills when they finish school and step out into the professional world.
- **Become confident:** Taking part in sports can boost children's morale. Children realize that being selected to represent their school in a tournament is an honour and a responsibility. Their ability to fulfill this responsibility installs confidence in them. Children who are into sports are known to display confidence in other areas of their life, such as academics, making friends, and relationships with adults.
- **Cope with failure:** Sports is as much about winning as about losing. It helps children not just to accept failures, but also to learn from them. Participation in sports teaches children to cultivate perseverance and single-mindedly pursue their goals.
- **Surpass limitations:** Sports is not just about beating an opponent; it is about surpassing individual capacities. Playing a competitive sport helps children to know their limitations and work towards overcoming them. It helps them to develop the spirit of continuous self-improvement.

Ways to encourage participation

In order to introduce children to sports, we first need to find out which sports would be appropriate for them. Most children usually have natural preferences. They may be drawn towards team sports such as

football or hockey, or prefer individual sports such as athletics, swimming, or cycling. Exposing them to different sports is a good way to determine their inclinations.

Age is also an important factor. Each age bracket would have its own preference of sporting activities.

- **Age two to four:** Children in this age group are still mastering complex movements such as running and jumping. Playing on swings, sliding boards and see-saws is ideal for them. They can also be allowed to play about in a shallow pool of water, though always under parental supervision. They may also learn to ride a tricycle or a bicycle with supporting wheels.
- **Age five to seven:** Children at this age are sure about their movements and are keen to explore the range of movements they can perform. Dancing, skipping, tossing, and catching a ball are typical activities they will enjoy at this age.
- **Age nine to twelve:** This is the right age for children to start playing games such as badminton, tennis, cricket, football, volleyball, etc.

These are some tips to help us to foster the sporting spirit in our child:

- While introducing our child to sports, it helps to start early. Watch the child as he develops, for clues on where his aptitude lies.
- It is important that our child enjoys the sport he plays. Forcing a child into sports may put him off the idea of playing completely.
- Look for a coach who can inculcate a passion for the sport in his students. Such a teacher is better than one who emphasizes winning at any cost.
- Take an active interest in our child's sporting achievements. Ask him questions, attend some practice sessions, and be there at tournaments to applaud his efforts.
- In case, our child prefers some other extra-curricular activity-such as art, music, or theatre-in preference to sports, accept his wish. The important thing is to understand that it is his involvement in these activities that helps him develop into a balanced individual.

Role of parents in child physical activity participation:

Parents occupy a privileged position in terms of influencing their children's physical activity. Research suggests that there is a link between parental Physical Activity, encouragement, involvement/interaction, support, and their children's PA. Moore et al. found that children between 4 and 7 years of age were 3.5 to almost 6 times more likely to be active when one or both parents were active than when both parents were inactive. Among the various components of parental influence, it appears that parental facilitation exerts the greatest independent influence on young children's PA. In addition, there is evidence that parental support of

child PA contributes to the maintenance of PA habits later in adolescence, at least in girls.

Conclusion

Children are not only responsible for the less participation in physical activity. Actually Parents are the focal point of this problem. Parents should have to understand the importance of physical activity and sports. They live with their child and know him better than other. Although it is not mean that parents don't know the value of physical activity and sports, just their little laziness and ignorance may spoil the future of their next generation. So, its time to be awake and takes a little steps out of your home. This will make their world happier and healthier.

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