

# **Building the Value of Sports** *Sporting* **kid**®

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## Parent power

Whether calling plays on the sideline or cheering from the stands, parents play important roles in their children's sports experiences.

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# Transferring athletic skills from the playing field to life

Going over these skills with your child can lead to improved confidence and higher self-esteem

**EVERY YEAR THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN END THEIR SPORTS** careers. Sadly, the vast majority of these kids – whether they've grown tired of the sport and call it quits on their own, are forced away from the playing field due to injuries, or leave for any number of other reasons – tend to compartmentalize their athletic experience. Oftentimes, all the invaluable skills they learned are either taken for granted, forgotten, or never even realized and appreciated to begin with.

As adults, we know that many terrific things are learned by playing sports – what are known as Athletic Transferable Skills (ATS) – and it's important that kids know about these, too.

Regardless of the age of your child, the specific sports he or she plays or the level of competition, it is inevitable that your child will grow physically, cognitively and emotionally through playing sports. In fact, many people would argue that some of their greatest life lessons have come through the goals they set and achieved in sports.

Unfortunately, in far too many cases, kids today are not taught and reminded of the value of skills learned by playing sports – the very same skills that can later become invaluable across settings, including school, interpersonal relationships, and even their future careers.

One reason why children do not always recognize the value of their ATS is that these skills are so often used that they become taken for granted. The child who regularly participates in sports sometimes does not think about the importance of being a team player, exercising self-discipline and playing with integrity. Furthermore, many children believe these skills are the same skills all children are learning, whether or not they play sports.

Below is a brief rundown of some of the more common ATS:

- **SETTING AND ACHIEVING GOALS.** Young athletes regularly set individual and team goals, as well as develop ways to monitor their success. Goal setting is positively correlated to increased performance – both in sports and other non-athletic endeavors.
- **OVERCOMING ADVERSITY.** Anyone who has ever competed knows that losing goes hand in hand with competing, and that the only way you ever succeed is to learn how to cope with failure. Athletic competition provides a great learning environment to develop skills to deal with frustration and losing.
- **SELF-DISCIPLINE AND MOTIVATION.** Being an athlete requires diet and exercise routines, demanding practices and making choices that non-athletes do not usually experience.

- **TIME MANAGEMENT.** Young athletes learn very early on in sports that practices, training and competition can be very demanding. Keeping a tight schedule and taking advantage of down time is quite common for many athletes.

- **RELAXING UNDER PRESSURE/STAYING COMPOSED.** Athletes deal with nerves quite regularly, and oftentimes they develop specific skills to help them overcome their anxiety. Learning how to relax under pressure is an invaluable skill in the classroom, too, especially when taking a test or giving a speech.


- **DECISION MAKING.** Whether it's making a quick, spontaneous decision during a game, weighing options about what sport to play, or choosing an exercise routine to follow, athletes usually get quite a bit of practice when it comes to making decisions.

- **TEAMWORK.** Working with a team is a skill that your child will use long after his or her playing days are over. Being a part of the team experience can let them see what it means to work for team success rather than just individual success. Teamwork will impact future work and home life.

- **LEADERSHIP.** In team environments some players learn to lead by example, while others learn that they impact their teammates with a positive attitude. Both leading and following are valuable and show how one can contribute to individual and team success.

- **LOYALTY.** To support and believe in a coach or a teammate is a great skill and is something an employer would strive for in a future employee. To know that others have confidence in you and believe in the work you are doing can be the difference between success and failure.

- **DEPENDABILITY.** Reliability of practicing and playing hard in games is the same quality employers look for in employees when they assess various work projects and tasks that need to be completed.

Obviously, these are just some of the ATS that you can discuss with your child. Make sure to take time out of your schedule to sit down with your son or daughter and brainstorm about all the skills he or she is learning through their sports participation, then show him or her how those skills can be used across various settings. By taking time to identify these skills, your child will increase his or her self-confidence and likely improve his or her performance, too. 

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