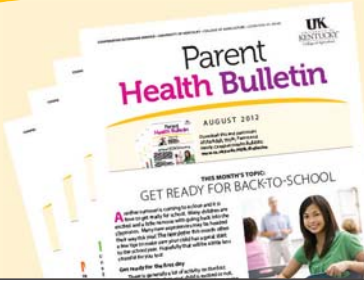


Parent Health Bulletin



AUGUST 2013

Download this and past issues
of the Adult, Youth, Parent and
Family Caregiver Health Bulletins:
www.ca.uky.edu/HEEL/Bulletins

Reprinted by:
K-State Research & Extension
Atchison County Office
405 Main/PO Box 109
Effingham, KS 66023
913-833-5450

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: COMPETITIVE SPORTS

With a new school year, your child may have shown interest in participating in a team sport. How do you know if your child is ready to play competitive sports? There are many factors to consider when deciding whether or not to let your child play. Age and skills are important, but so is the time commitment and the impact joining a sports team can have on the whole family. Here are a few things you should think about before enrolling your child in a competitive sport.

Age

Both child development specialists and youth sport experts agree: 8 is the earliest age that a child should join a competitive



Continued on the back →



Before the age of 8, a child may not understand fully the concepts of winning and losing.

Continued from page 1

team. Before the age of 8, a child may not understand fully the concepts of winning and losing. A child at this age may also be affected by the stress of being watched, measured and ranked on their ability to perform.

Even at the age of 8, not all children are ready for competitive sports. For some children, it may take up to two more years until they can understand competition. Children tend to have a harder time understanding that even when you try your best, sometimes you do not win.

Children also need to have the discipline to be able to listen to their coaches and follow the directions given. They should be able to pay attention throughout practice and be respectful of the coach. Even if your child watches a sport on TV and seems very interested in it, it does not always mean that he or she is ready to play the sport in a competitive way.

Skills

Competitive sports require certain skills. Just because your child likes to watch a certain sport on TV does not mean that he or she will have the skills needed to perform that sport at a competitive level. If your child enrolls and does not have the needed skills for that sport, he or she may end up sitting on the bench. That can be very discouraging for a child. It is often recommended that at the early stages of competitive sports a team coach should

There are many factors to consider when deciding whether or not to let your child play. Age and skills are important, but so is the time commitment and the impact joining a sports team can have on the whole family.



focus on teaching the skills needed to play the sport and that the team learns from mistakes. Coaching that encourages winning at all costs should be avoided.

Is your family ready?

Make sure you know all of the facts regarding the time and money commitment before signing your child up on a competitive sports team. Your family will need to make sure that your child can get to practices and games. You may also be needed for volunteer hours and/or fundraising. Knowing the impact that it will make on the family is an important part of being prepared for competitive sports.

Competitive sports can be a lot of fun for your child. However, before enrolling talk to your child and make sure he or she is ready to play.

SOURCES:

Holecko, Catherine. When should kids start competitive sports? (May 2011). <http://familyfitness.about.com/od/kidssports/f/When-Should-Kids-Start-Competitive-Sports.htm>

Parent
Health Bulletin

Written by: Nicole Peritore
Edited by: Connee Wheeler
Designed by: Rusty Manseau
Stock images: 123RF.com