

CYS Health & Wellness

What if My Child Doesn't Want to Play Sports?

Team and individual sports can help boost a child's self esteem, overall fitness, fine and gross motor development, and help them to socially interact with adults and other children. When the ability to perform athletic activities doesn't come naturally for a child they may tell a parent directly or indirectly that they do not want to play sports. Then what?

There are children who may not want to join a team or play an individual sport. When this happens, parents should talk to their child and address the child's concerns as there may be underlying issues. Parents may consider working on alternative solutions to help children remain active with non-team or non-competitive physical activities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends children age 3 to 5 be active throughout their day and children ages 6 to 17 get 60 or more minutes a day of moderate to vigorous activity a day. For more information visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pdfs/FrameworkGraphicV9.pdf>.

Reasons Children Don't Participate

Children mature at different rates and may feel uncomfortable competing with children that may be taller or faster. They can develop a sense of inability to perform at the level of the other participants. Children who are still developing skills may not want to participate in team or group activities until they are comfortable being able to compete with their peers. Some children are shy in social settings and may cause them to not want to participate in certain activities. A child may be afraid of getting injured or find the activity too difficult. A competitive league may be intimidating to young children. Being understanding and supportive is essential when talking to your child about being active.



3 Reasons Children Might Be Reluctant

1. Stage Fright: Some young children are 'slow to warm' and may need additional reassurance and support from parents, coaches, and teammates.
2. Competitiveness: Most young children want to have fun while playing sports and may shy away when they feel too much pressure to perform is placed on them.
3. Wrong Sport: In general children tend to thrive in areas they are most comfortable. Find a sport that your child is interested in and talk to them about participating even if it isn't a traditional sport. The key is an active lifestyle.

What Can Parents Do

A supportive parent is the best advocate for a young athlete. Introduce your child to traditional and non traditional sports as interests vary in young children. Participating with your child is the best way to introduce them to a sport prior to enrolling them in a league. Finally, be patient as your child make steps towards an active lifestyle that could last a lifetime.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP), Dr. Mary L. Gavin Kidshealth.org,



UNITED STATES ARMY INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND

ArmyMWR.com/CYS

