

# Are There Disadvantages to Children Playing Sports?

LS [livestrong.com/article/93150-disadvantages-children-sports/](https://www.livestrong.com/article/93150-disadvantages-children-sports/). January 29, 2017.

## Overview

For many kids, playing a sport can be a positive experience. They're active, social and learning lessons about cooperation, sportsmanship, goal-setting and competition. But like any activity, youth sports have disadvantages, and they are all too often driven by adults who, unintentionally, can turn something that's fun into something that can seem like a chore, or worse, something potentially dangerous.

## Burnout

Burnout is a very real risk for a child in any sport, and it's even more likely the sport becomes more of a chore than a game. And when a sport stops being fun for a kid, there's little chance of reigniting the fire that got him interested in the first place. Parents and coaches who obsess about an activity when the young athlete clearly doesn't share that level of interest are simply building up resentment in a child. In an article in Faith and Fitness magazine, Dr. Ron Eaker, clinical adviser to the American Running and Fitness Association, says the clear message from parents about sports should be "when it stops being fun, we'll move on to something else."

## Injury Risk

Far too often kids put too much strain on growing muscles and bones without parents stepping in to help the young athletes stay safe, cautions Mark Hyman in his book, "Until It Hurts: America's Obsession with Youth Sports and How It Harms Our Kids." He reports that in 2003, more than 3.5 million athletes younger than 15 in the U.S. had sports-related injuries that required medical attention. Certainly kids can get hurt in their first day of sports participation, but cautious parents and coaches should be aware of the risks and make sure kids have the right equipment and activity schedule to boost their chances of remaining injury-free.

## Time Commitment

Young people who are fairly well-organized and can balance the demands of school, family, friends and other activities can usually slot sports into their lives without much trouble. But as youth sports have become more sophisticated, such as year-round training programs for high school students and Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) leagues that keep kids playing sports, such as baseball, soccer and volleyball for months on end, the ability to juggle all those demands becomes increasingly difficult.