

Benefits of School Sports

Joining an athletic team is a great way for student-athletes to build relationships with others and confidence in themselves. From football and basketball to volleyball and golf, there is a sport for every season depending on the size and location of your child's school.

Parents play a key role in encouraging their children to join an athletic team without being overly pushy. If your child shows an interest in a sport, there are various things you can do to make sure it is an enjoyable experience.

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Sports aren't solely about game day. There is extensive work required during practices and camps that may not be on your child's radar just yet. Before signing your child up to play a competitive sport in middle school or high school, be sure he or she understands the commitment that will go into being a member of the team.

Encourage your child to talk with the team's coach to get an idea of the amount of time associated with the schedule. Check this time requirement against other activities — both school and family-related — in which your child is currently involved. This kind of research can be a big help in making your decision as a family.



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POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Playing sports is not only fun but can have a big impact on your child's fitness levels. According to a report from the National Federation of State High School Associations, a

study found girls had a healthier weight and body mass when they were given more opportunities to participate in high school athletics.

Studies also suggest that stu-

dent-athletes are less likely to participate in risky behavior when they are part of an athletic team. The more a child is engaged in something productive that requires both mental

and physical commitment, the more likely they are to stick to healthy life decisions.

Other potential benefits, according to research by national organizations, include

higher grade point averages, better attendance, stronger social relationships and enhanced skills in leadership, time management, creativity and concentration.