

How do Youth Sports Help Kids in Academics?

“Sports participation is a critical catalyst for educational success”

They Have to Earn the Privilege

Students are often required to maintain a specific average by their teachers and parents in order to be eligible to play. If students want to get on the field, the court or the ice, they have to earn that privilege by performing well in the classroom. Playing sports serves as motivation for doing well in the classroom.

They Have Higher Self-Esteem

Playing sports often boosts a youngster's sense of self-worth because they are surrounded by teammates who may become friends. The increased social status often results in an improved attitude that often translates into the child becoming more enthusiastic toward a variety of activities — including academic pursuits. According to researchers at Michigan State University's Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, young people who play sports perform better in school than those who don't.

Sports participation positively impacts brain function and critical learning.

Participation is correlated with the improvement of mental processes that lead to academic achievement such as concentration, memory, and goal-directed behavior. In fact, a recent study suggests that the cognitive skills gained through sports may actually effect information processing in everyday life. Physically strenuous activity synthesizes the neural benefits of both exercises and play by simultaneously providing physical, social, and intellectual stimulation.

Athletes have higher levels of academic achievement than non-athletes.

Sports participation has been shown to improve grades, educational aspirations, and educational achievement beyond high school. Athletes are absent from school half as often as non-athletes. They also have fewer discipline referrals, an affirmation that they are making the best of the time they spend in school. Results from studies in both Minnesota and North Carolina demonstrate that student- athletes achieved higher GPAs on average than non-athletes.

Student athletes are more likely to attend and graduate from college than their non-athlete peers.

Student-athletes matriculate into college at a higher rate than non-athletes. Improved rates of college enrollment, retention, and graduation are all linked to sports participation. Former student-athletes are also more likely to have graduated from college and have a job with a future by age 24.

Adapted from articles at:

www.UP2US.org and www.livestrong.com