

## Counseling Corner

### **Are Sports Too Important In Your Family's Life?**

from the American Counseling Association

Youth sports are an important part of today's lifestyle in this country. Soccer, baseball, lacrosse, swimming, basketball -- the list of sports for young people today is long and growing.

But while it's great that there are so many opportunities for kids to be active, there can be a point where it becomes too much of a good thing. That's especially true when it's mom or dad, or both, who is pushing their child to be a star athlete, or who is making sure their child is involved in multiple sports year-round.

Of course, many kids really enjoy their athletic endeavors, and there are those talented few who will go on to successful college and pro careers. But for the majority of children, sports should simply be a way to be physically active, to enjoy time with friends, and to have fun and enjoy some of the success that can come on the playing field.

How can you tell when sports have become too important? If you continually have to force your child to participate in practice sessions or go to games, it probably means he or she is burned out in regard to that sport, or it just isn't the right sport for him or her.

Other signs are when school grades are slipping, or when non-sport activities seem to hold no interest. Childhood shouldn't mean nothing but sports. Parents then simply have to set limits.

Sometimes it's the parents themselves who are too wrapped up in their child's sports. Does family life revolve around the child's sport activities? Do you find you have mood swings depending on whether your child's teams wins or loses? Do you lose your temper when there's a loss and verbally blame the coach, other players or even your own child for not winning?

When parents put too much emphasis on a child's athletic activities it directly affects how the child feels and reacts. He or she may become stressed and depressed, feeling that the parents' love and acceptance is being lost because he or she is not excelling athletically.

Take the time to examine if there's too big an emphasis on sports in your family. It doesn't mean giving it all up, but rather readjusting your perspective to put a healthy balance between sports, family life and your child's happiness. For help, try talking to your school counselor.

*"Counseling Corner" is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to [ACAcornet@counseling.org](mailto:ACAcornet@counseling.org) or visit the ACA website at [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)*

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