



# Importance of a Child's Participation in Sport & Recreation



Sport is one of the few activities where children have the potential to experience positive physical, mental, emotional and social development all in the same environment. Sport has a powerful influence over children, acting as a prevention tool for many societal problems.

## The Benefits of Sport & Recreation

**Physical Benefits:** *Physical activity on a regular basis can increase a person's life expectancy.*

- Sport promotes healthy active living, instilling positive eating habits, regular exercise routines and positive lifestyle choices that remain with children forever.
- Sport increases a child's physical fitness, strength, endurance, flexibility and aerobic capacity.
- Regular physical activity strengthens the heart and lungs, increases energy levels, helps children maintain a healthy body weight and increases subjective well-being.



**Psychological Benefits:** *Exercise effects structural and chemical changes within the central nervous system, regular exercise is associated with:*

- Faster information processing, problem-solving skills and execution of cognitive tasks.
- Advanced motor skills, creativity and self-expression contributing to a child's intellectual capacity.
- Prevention of various mental health disorders by improving a child's self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety as physical activity provides a stress release and has a positive affect on mood.



**Social/Developmental Benefits:** *Sport & recreation teaches children essential lifelong social and developmental skills.*

- Sport promotes: hard work, dedication, teamwork, self-discipline, positive thinking, self-confidence, leadership skills and respect for authority.
- Sport reduces feelings of isolation, loneliness and alienation, providing a constructive pass time where children can feel a part of a team.
- Children who are highly physically active achieve greater social success, greater leadership, peer acceptance and higher social competence.



**Family & Community Benefits:** *Children are socialized both in the family and the community. For optimal growth and development children require a strong sense of community and social unity..*

- Sport can be used as a unifying force to bring families and community members closer together.
- Sport provides role models for the pursuit of personal excellence, building the value of teamwork and community pride.
- In virtually all sports, once the game begins, social distinctions disappear and the game is centred on fun.
- Families that are active together tend to be more cohesive throughout life.
- Physically active people are more likely to volunteer within the community.
- If one parent is active with a child, that child is 40% more likely to be active, this percentage doubles if both parents are physically active.



**Prevention:** *Sport & recreation reduces self-destructive behaviour and negative social activity in youth.*

- Sport reduces both the incidence and severity of illness and disability.
- Physical activity is essential for preventing child obesity, sport regulates obesity since it increases energy expenditure, suppresses appetite, increases metabolic rate and increases lean body mass.
- Sport teaches children to control aggressive responses, hardships and pain in times of defeat.



**KidSport™ Timmins focuses on sport so that all children have the opportunity to benefit from the endless advantages sport offers through a child's developmental process.**

For more information, please visit [www.kidsport.on.ca/timmins/](http://www.kidsport.on.ca/timmins/)  
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