7 Are Sports Bad for Kids?

Pre-Reading

Think about the following questions.

1. Who is a famous sports star in your country?
2. Why is he or she a star?
3. Is this person a good example for young people? Why or why not?

Vocabulary Preview

Write the letter of the word or phrase with the same meaning as the underlined word.

a. make stronger	d. beliefs a person follows in life
b. OK	e. bold and active; ready to fight or attack
c. let; permit	f. bad

1. ___ She is a very <u>aggressive</u> player. She always tries hard to win.
2. ___ After a lesson, you should practice to <u>reinforce</u> what you have learned.
3. ___ It is never <u>acceptable</u> to hit another player.
4. ___ If you think <u>negative</u> thoughts before the game, you will lose.
5. ___ Honesty and hard work are <u>values</u> everybody respects.
6. ___ His parents did not <u>allow</u> him to join the school's soccer team.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Are Sports Bad for Kids?

Track 13

People think children should play sports. Sports are fun, and children stay healthy while playing with others. However, playing sports can have negative effects on children. It may produce feelings of poor **self-esteem** or aggressive behavior in some children. According to research on kids and sports, 40 million kids play sports in the US. Of these, 18 million say they have been **yelled at** or called names while playing sports. This leaves many children with a bad **impression** of sports. They think sports are just too aggressive.

Many researchers believe adults, especially parents and **coaches**, are the main cause of too much aggression in children's sports. They believe children copy aggressive adult behavior. This behavior is then further reinforced through both **positive** and negative **feedback**. Parents and coaches are powerful teachers because children usually look up to them. Often these adults behave aggressively themselves, sending children the message that winning is everything. At children's sporting events, parents may yell insults at other players or **cheer** when their child behaves aggressively. As well, children may be taught that hurting other players is acceptable, or they may be pushed to continue playing even when they are injured. In addition, the **media** makes **violence** seem exciting. Children watch adult sports games and see violent behavior replayed over and over on television.

As a society, we really need to face up to this problem and do something about it. Parents and coaches should act as better examples for children. They also need to teach children better values. They should teach children to enjoy themselves whether they win or not. It is not necessary to knock yourself out to enjoy sports. Winning is not everything. In addition, children should not be allowed to continue to play when they are injured. Sending a child with an injury into a game gives the child the message that health is not as important as winning. If we make some basic changes, children might learn to enjoy sports again.

Reading Time _____ minutes _____ seconds 332 words

3 *self-esteem*: an opinion about oneself
5 *yell at*: to speak to loudly and in anger
6 *impression*: the idea about someone or something
8 *coach*: a person teaching or leading athletes
10 *positive*: good
11 *feedback*: the response to someone's work
14 *cheer*: to shout with excitement or praise
16 *media*: television, newspapers, magazines, etc.
16 *violence*: an action that hurts others

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Reading Comprehension

Choose the best answer.

1. What is the main idea of the reading?

a. Children often become like their parents.
b. Children need to play sports in school.
c. Playing sports may have negative results.
d. Some sports can cause health problems.

2. How many children said they had some negative experience when playing sports?

a. All of the children
b. More than half of the children
c. Less than half of the children
d. About ten percent of the children

3. Which is described as the main cause of more aggressive playing?

a. Adults
b. Children with low grades in school
c. New rules in sports
d. Other players

4. What does the writer suggest?

a. Aggressive sports should not be shown on television.
b. Children should not play sports until high school.
c. Coaches should be required to study child psychology.
d. Parents should teach children to play sports for fun and exercise.

5. What would probably NOT be done when "facing up to a problem"?

a. Ignoring the problem
b. Finding the reason
c. Admitting there is a problem
d. Looking for a solution

Idiomatic Expressions

Find these idioms in the reading.

- **call (someone) names** [to insult or abuse someone with words]
  It is not nice to call people names.
- **over and over** [again and again; many times]
  She told him over and over not to do that.
- **knock yourself out** [to try so hard you become exhausted]
  Don't knock yourself out! This is a football match, not a war!

Fill in the blank with one of the above idioms. Change its form if necessary.

1. Even if I _____ myself _____, I'll never get an "A" in math.

2. In school, children used to _____ her _____ like "Mop Top" or "Poodle Head" because of her curly hair.

3. This is her favorite book. She likes to read it _____.

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Summary

Fill in the blanks with the correct words or phrases.

acceptable	**aggressive**	**called names**
effects	**healthy**	**main**

Sports can be 1 _____ for children, but sometimes there are also negative 2 _____ from sports. For example, children who don't play well may be 3 _____ or yelled at. Sometimes, parents and coaches also teach children that 4_____ play is OK in sports. Because of this, children may think it is 5 _____ to hurt others in sports and in life as long as they win. Parents need to teach children that the 6 _____ thing is to have fun rather than focus just on winning.

Listening

Kids and Sports

Track 14

Listen to the dialog and choose the best answer.

1. Who are the speakers?

a. Two children playing sports
b. Two coaches
c. Two doctors
d. Two parents

2. What is the woman's opinion?

a. Children should not play soccer.
b. Her son is too young for soccer.
c. Coaches need more training.
d. The school's team is very good.

3. What will the man probably do?

a. Allow his son to play soccer
b. Take his son off the team
c. Play soccer in the winter
d. See a doctor about the problem

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Discussion

Discuss the following questions.

1. How old were you when you first played a competitive sport?
2. Have you ever been hurt playing a sport? How old were you at the time, and what happened?
3. What sport, if any, did you play in high school?

Grammar

Gerund as Subject

A gerund can be used as the subject of a sentence.

(Play / Playing) sports can have negative effects on children.

(Send / Sending) a child with an injury into a game gives the child the message that health is not as important as winning.

Writing

Write your own short paragraph by answering the questions below.

Playing Sports

(1) Which sports are popular in high school in your country? **(2)** What was your high school team's name? **(3)** Was your school's team very good? **(4)** Did you know anyone on the team? **(5)** Did you play on the team?

Example

Football and basketball are popular sports in high school in the US. My school's team was the Panthers. Our football team was very good, but our basketball team wasn't. I didn't have any friends on either of these teams. I didn't play sports in high school.

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Vocabulary and Idiom Review

A. Choose the best word or phrase to fill in the blank.

1. He _____ working all night to finish the project.
   a. called him names b. figured him out c. got rid of him d. knocked himself out

2. The _____ thing to remember is to remain calm during a fire.
   a. acceptable b. main c. negative d. powerful

3. Her parents tried to teach her good _____.
   a. effects b. problems c. values d. problems

4. The animal will not attack you. It is not _____.
   a. aggressive b. healthy c. negative d. positive

5. Many doctors _____ swimming an excellent way to exercise.
   a. allow b. cheer c. consider d. decide

6. The exercises reuse words again and again. This _____ learning new words.
   a. behaves b. exchanges c. produces d. reinforces

7. We stayed up until _____ talking on the phone.
   a. in the name of b. over and over c. sooner or later d. the wee hours

B. Choose the correct form of the word to fill in the blank.

8. I don't think this medicine is _____. I still have a headache.
   a. effect b. effective c. effectively

9. The coach will _____ the award for the winning team.
   a. acceptance b. accept c. acceptable

10. Try to exercise more often. It's good for your _____.
    a. health b. heal c. healthy

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