



## **Choosing a Sports Camp for My Child**

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The number of athletic camps and clinics for kids, adolescents and adults is simply overwhelming. Which are the best ones? Which camp is best for my child? What about age and skill level? What about cost? Because of these many questions, it is important to consider the following points as a way to help make decisions in this complex process.

### **Ask**

One of the first things to do is ask your kids (if they have not already told you) what camps they might be interested in – baseball, hockey, soccer, gymnastics, etc.. They may already know the camp they want to attend because their friends are planning on going or have attended in the past.

### **Skill Level**

There are not only a multitude of camps, but numerous skill levels involved in these camps. Some are more competitive and geared to higher skill levels while others have an equal or greater emphasis on fun and social development. Now all camps should be fun and social, but consider the competitiveness of the camp and its fit for your son or daughter.

### **Expose Them to Different Sports**

If they have not had much exposure to a variety of sports, it might be worth suggesting that they try a different sport. This different sport camp or clinic will expose them to new coaches, kids, and physical skill sets. If they have already developed a desire for just one sport and are a bit older (12 or above), then it may be best to have them pursue the camp for which they have the most interest and motivation.

### **Go with Them For the First Day**

If this is the first time they have ever been to a camp, it may be overwhelming. If so, go with them to the first meeting. Even though they may enjoy the sport, you do not want them to have a negative experience in adjusting to a camp situation. They will be meeting many new people, including coaches, administrators and obviously kids their own age and sometimes it can be overwhelming (on the other hand, some of your kids may not want you near the camp because of wanting to be with their peers - do not take this personally!)

### **Consider Expense and Time Away**

Consider the amount of money involved. There are camps that can cost several hundreds of dollars and you will have to decide if your child's commitment level warrants a top dollar camp. It may be better, especially if it is a new sport or your child's first camp to start slow and attend a local camp to make certain he or she enjoys it. Consider time away from home as well. There are more and more overnight camps and ones in different states. Again, consider all of the family ramifications and its feasibility as well as your child's readiness.

Play Hard, Play Smart and Play Well!