



## Should My Child Play Sports Year Round?

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It is much more common today for youth to be playing sports year round as well as to specialize and play just one sport during this year. How does playing sports year round affect today's young student-athletes? It truly depends on the individual student-athlete and the numerous circumstances involved, but here are some tips to consider when addressing this issue.

### Assess Motivation

One of the first issues to address is whether your children want to play sports year round. They may want to take a break between seasons and they should not be punished for this decision. It is also important to remember that when young student-athletes play *different* sports throughout the year, their motivation to play year-round may be higher because of the variety. If young athletes are competing in only *one* sport year round, however, they may need a break for a period of a couple of weeks to a couple of months in order to physically and mentally refresh themselves. Simply ask your children what they might want to do at the end of each season or periodically throughout the year.

### Take a Look at Your Schedule and Money

As a parent, consider your own time and money. If you are like most parents, you probably have multiple children involved in sports or extracurricular activities, work full-time, and have to chauffeur them around everywhere. If this is the case, it may not be feasible for your children to play sports year round. It does not do young student-athletes any good when their parents are angry and frustrated all of the time because of the craziness of their own schedules. Be honest and realistic with yourself – if it is not possible for *all* of your children to play sports year round, simply negotiate on how everyone's needs can best be met.

### Play Different Sports

Playing a variety of sports can help young student-athletes from becoming burned out. They can also learn a great deal from these other sports and these changes can boost their motivation because of being around different sports, coaches and teammates. Even if your child may be especially talented in one sport, playing different sports can help them both physically and mentally in that one particular sport.

Remember, sports are meant to be fun and exciting. This does not mean it will always be fun, but it should be that way most of the time. And even if your child may have

special talent, taking a break from sport will *not* result in everyone else surpassing them in ability and skill. It is better for them to take the break, become mentally rested and refreshed, and then get back at it. If their heart is not in it, they will not give 100% effort, and as a result, pick up negative training and practice habits. So, take a break if need be - life is too short to be burned out, for you and your child.

Play Hard, Play Smart and Play Well!