

# Youth Sports

Family Living – Louise Kuo Habakus  
Pathways #45, page 64



Parents see these things all over the place. But it's different when kids are doing it, not just of the field. The great old-fashioned sports experience is... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to...

**Parenting Mische**  
Habitual is a trap. When you're doing something, average... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to...

**Check The Boxes In Baseball**  
The Little League game is a... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to...

**It's Not Always About You**  
Parents are often the... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to... parents, look on, sure, but kids, sure with, playing to...

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## Talking Points

- ❖ Most Americans love sports. Kids love sports. Did you know famous sports athletes are among the most admired people in their lives? (Second to their parents – way to go guys!)
- ❖ Author Louise Kuo Habakus’ sons play baseball. They love to play, and to her surprise, she loves to watch. She tells us about some of the life lessons learned from baseball:
  - You have to take turns.
  - People are counting on you.
  - Pay attention!
  - Shake it off!
  - Umps sometimes make bad calls.
  - It’s not all about you.
  - Make your contribution.
  - You get better with practice.
  - Go to the bathroom before getting dressed.
  - You don’t always get what you want.
- ❖ It’s great, her kids go outside, get exercise, make new friends, are part of a team, and are creating new skills. What’s not to love?
- ❖ For them, baseball is completely overwhelming their family routine. As she describes it, “Baseball is a huge, time-sucking, money-sucking, energy-sucking beast.”
- ❖ Constant running from school to practice, games, eating dinner and doing homework. With multiple kids, this type of schedule could have you on opposite sides of town at the same time multiple days in a row. Louise is trying to be gung-ho about it all but inside she’s whining.
- ❖ Most parents agree that academics come first so why are we making such a huge effort for our kids to play sports? It’s time consuming, it’s expensive, winning seems too important and parents can be intense.

- ❖ Are sports a way for parents to show off their kids? And by kids I mean themselves by association?
- ❖ Is there too much pressure for our kids to perform? Or are there life-lessons to be learned? Louise and her husband remind themselves “It’s character-building. It’s useful to learn how to perform under pressure. This is what it means to play competitive sports.” (66)
- ❖ Do we have an attachment to our kid’s performance? What does that say about the parent?
- ❖ Louise points out that “Youth sports can become an arena in which parents inadvertently act out their own issues.” Have you noticed this in yourself?
- ❖ More cause for concern:
  - There are insane news headlines when it comes to athletes revolving around doping, cheating, violence and murder. Unfortunately, this news isn’t just limited to the professional athletes, it happens with youth athletes as well.
  - Youth sports are becoming professionalized. For example, “Did you know there’s an official Little League World Series banana, detergent, sugary breakfast cereal, and popsicle? ESPN broadcasts 32 LLWS games from South Williamsport, PA. The stadium and surrounding areas accommodate over 40,000 fans. The top 10 Major League Baseball teams ranked by 2012 attendance averaged 35,899 fans per game.” (67) Let’s revisit this question: is there too much pressure for our kids to perform?
  - “Adults sometimes teach bad lessons...There’s a lot of yelling. Parents yell at their kids. Coaches yell at the kids. Parents yell at coaches. Parents irritate coaches. Coaches yell at officials. Parents assault officials and each other.” (67)
  - Are we paying too much attention to the stars of the team and not enough to the less-capable?
  - Are kids starting rec sports too young? Many are now starting around ages 4-5.
  - Is it too intense? How many hours of practice a week is your coach asking for? “Sports psychologist Richard Ginsburg cautions that a child that age can’t differentiate his performance from who he is as a person.” (67)
  - Did you know that Children are getting injured at an unprecedented rate; 3.5 million children under 14 are treated for sports injuries annually. Nearly half are overuse injuries and more than half are preventable.” (67)
  - Parents can be aggressive spending a lot of money and time to their child’s sports. Kids in this situation find it difficult to switch sports or stop playing.
  - It’s important to stay on the look out for parents and their expectations. Mark Hyman, author of *Until It Hurts: America’s Obsession with Youth Sports and How It Harms Our Kids*, says, “some children even contemplate suicide rather than confront parental disappointment.” (67)
- ❖ Parents, remember to chill out, pay attention and have fun. Moderation is key. Our children need to know that we’ll always support them; they need to know it’s OK if they don’t want to play any more.

## Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

“Eye On the Ball: Why we need to fix youth sports” by Bob Bigelow

<http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Wellness-Lifestyle/eye-on-the-ball-why-we-need-to-fix-youth-sports.html>

“The Adultification of Youth Sports” <http://changingthegameproject.com/the-adultification-of-youth-sports/>