

## Youth Competition – Research Highlights May 2009

**The Report:** “Competition and Cooperation: Helping Youth Strike a Balance”

**Where It’s From:** University of Nevada, Reno

**The Findings:** By striking a balance between competition and cooperation, youth will feel better about themselves, have higher self-esteem and have a greater desire to participate in future activities and experiences. This article focuses on the following topics related to youth competition:

- Positive Approaches to Competition
- Benefits of Youth Cooperation
- Avoiding the negative side of competition
- Making competition effective
- Supporting and guiding youth to balance competitive and cooperative activities

**Some Specifics:**

- Studies have shown that results of competition are negative when they focus only on the outcome or winning.
- Children are extremely sensitive to adult attitudes about winning and losing.

**Read the Full Report:**

[www.unce.unr.edu/publications/files/cy/other/fs9386.pdf](http://www.unce.unr.edu/publications/files/cy/other/fs9386.pdf)

**The Report:** “Competition Versus Play in Youth Sports”

**Where It’s From:** Cape Fear Soccer Association

**The Findings:** Both play and competition are extremely vital elements of sports. At the youth level, the emphasis should fall on healthy development and nurturing the player, rather than on a team’s record.

**Some Specifics:**

- A study done by Michigan State University revealed that by age 13, about 70% of kids have quit sports
- A 1997 report by the Center for the Study of Sport in Society indicated that youth residing in Boston had only one-third the opportunities for after-school physical activities offered in suburban communities.
- Bruce Svare, the director of the National Institute for Sports Reform, says, “What is happening at the high school level is, we’re principally satisfying kids who are elite athletes -- the best, the most skilled, the most developed in their particular sport. We’re forgetting everyone else in terms of their health and fitness needs.”

**Read the Full Report:**

<http://sportinsociety.blogspot.com/2007/07/competition-versus-play-in-youth-sports.html>