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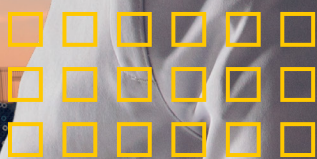
Magazine



Team Sports

Is Your Child's Coach Abusive?

Summer Activities



April 2023 // Vol. 38 No. 4

9

Ways to Prevent Summer Learning Loss

Provide educational and enrichment opportunities throughout the summer months

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A note from the publisher

Our publishing company, SomberSail, was founded one year ago this month! I want to thank our readers and advertisers for making this year a great one. We've learned tons, and I hope our readers have too. I want to take this opportunity to ask that if you have something to say, anything at all, please feel free to reach us at our website or through my email listed on this page.



Andres Flores

Author Kimberly Blaker writes about how you and your family can spend your summer. There are several activities for you to choose from!

Find on page 18



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04

Calendar

To see more upcoming events, follow the QR code or visit our website at ourkidsmagazine.com



Cinema On Will's Plaza | Encanto
April 14
Opens 6:30 pm

Encanto - Cinema on Will's Plaza – FREE EVENT The Will Naylor Smith River Walk Plaza opens at 6:30 PM. The movie begins at 7:30 PM. Full concessions and bar available. Please bring your lawn chair or blanket.



San Antonio Book Festival
April 15
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

SABF is a free, family-friendly event that draws anywhere from 15,000 to 20,000 festival goers to downtown San Antonio. Find the festival schedule at sabookfestival.org The 2023 SABF will assemble a wide array of authors—for all ages



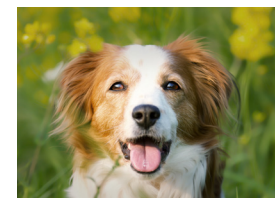
Fiesta San Antonio
April 20-30
All Day

We celebrate our rich heritage with vibrant parades, food-centric events, and lively, local entertainment. The event has transformed into a way to share in the fun of celebrating our city's largest city-wide party with a purpose, Fiesta.



Kid's Day Out in New Braunfels
May 5
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Explore The DoSeum's fun interactive exhibits alongside your family for free! A link for ticket reservations will be posted on thedoseum.org at 8 AM the morning of Free Family Night. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis.



Second Thursday At The McNay
May 11
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Looking for a way to spice up your Thursday night? Then come on down to the McNay Art Museum for a dog-friendly night of live music, art activities, drinks, and food. Up until 9 p.m., admission to the main collection galleries will be free.

Reach the publisher:
Andres@ourkidsmagazine.com

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SOMBERSAIL

Summer Learning Loss is Real: Here are 9 Fun Ways to Prevent It

Story by
Kimberly Blaker

Education experts have known for some time that kids who don't go to school year 'round experience summer learning loss. Still, most schools and districts have yet to extend the school year in light of this information.

Statistics on summer learning loss vary depending on the study. But those studies most commonly cited have found kids lose, on average, 2.6 months of math and 2 months of reading skills over the summer. Other studies have found varying results, as noted in "Summer learning loss: What is it, and what can we do about it?" by

David M. Quinn and Morgan Polikoff. But most notably, those in lower-income families tend to have more significant learning loss during the summer than kids from higher-income families. Experts believe this is primarily attributed to the lack of resources available to lower-income families and in more impoverished communities.

The good news, however, is there are ways to reduce your child's summer learning loss. You can help your kids by providing them plenty of educational and enrichment opportunities throughout the

summer months ahead. The following fun activities will keep your kids' brains active. These activities will also help kids retain what they learned throughout the school year or even expand upon it.

Keep 'em reading. Public libraries offer an array of summer programs for kids. Take your kids to the library often for special programs. Also, have them bring home a selection of books to read during the summer.

Play word, money, number, and logic games. Look for board, video, and computer games,

particularly those that have won educational awards. Also, search online for ideas for boardless games that don't require materials. Another idea is to turn it into an art activity. Have your kids create their own board game to play.

Incorporate learning into your travel. Before you go on your family vacation, do some advance research. Look for science centers, history museums, and historical sites to build into your trip. Then have your kids join you in mapping out the trip. This will help keep geography fresh in their minds while also learning



map skills.

Summer journaling. Give your kid a journal to write in. It can be fancy or just a spiral notebook. If your child hasn't kept a journal before, suggest they spend 20 minutes writing in it every night about their day's adventures and activities. Let your kid know it's their private journal and promise not to read it unless they choose to share it with you. This might encourage your child to invest more time and thought into their journaling.

Messy science. If there's anything kids love, it's making messes. So summer is the perfect time for messy science experiments they can do outdoors. Pick up a kids' science experiment book from your library. Then have your child read through and choose some experiments to do. Your child will learn a lot just from reading about the different experiments. Then they'll have a blast pulling them off.

Summer camp. Look for a summer camp that has a

strong emphasis on learning activities. It could be one that offers an array of activities that support a variety of subjects. There are also many summer camps with a particular focus. Your child could choose one in an area they excel and have a specific interest in. Or you could help your child select one in an area of difficulty that'll help your child better grasp a particular subject.

Baking and cooking. This helps kids in both math and science.

Have your kids choose a recipe they'd like to make. But have them make half a batch, or triple the batch. This will require them to calculate the measurements.

Form a neighborhood or friends book club. This can be done in a couple of different ways, depending on the age of your kids. Kids of similar ages can choose one book each week for everyone to read. Then they can meet to talk about the book they read. They can discuss the

plot and characters, what they liked about it, didn't like, and their take away from it. Another type of book club, especially for younger kids, will require more parent involvement. Create a logging system so each child can keep a record of the books they've read. At the end of the summer, hold a pizza party for all the participants. Create homemade certificates and give out inexpensive prizes to all the participants. Then honor the winner with a special award.

Workbooks or puzzle books. Give your child a workbook for the grade level your he or she just finished. Have your child work on it throughout the summer to keep what they learned fresh in their mind. Another fun option is puzzle books available in most subject areas. There are mathematical, logic, word search, crossword puzzle books, and more.



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Is Your Child's Coach Abusive? Beware of These 6 Red Flags

Story by
Pam Moore

Sports are known for helping kids develop confidence, leadership skills, and a sense of belonging—most of the time. But when the pressure to perform and unhealthy coaching practices do the opposite, kids find themselves in a tough situation where they may need parental guidance. The problem? Most parents don't know the abuse is happening until the damage has been done.

The problem

While research shows an outsized focus on young athletes' weight can be damaging, it's not the only way in which coaches hurt young athletes. According to the *European Journal of Sport Science*, abusive behavior may be physical, verbal, or denial of attention and support.

According to sports psychology consultant Dr. Kay

Porter, it's not uncommon for kids to stay quiet in these situations. For high school athletes who dream of making a Division I college team, quitting doesn't feel like an option. "It's incredible pressure," says Porter. So, she says, they simply "suck it up."

Jaye, a Colorado mom whose daughter endured emotional abuse by her gymnastics coaches, can relate. Her daughter, now 14, had loved gymnastics since she started the sport as a toddler. But when she was ten, new coaches changed that.

Jaye (who asked to be identified by her middle name so she could speak candidly) eventually learned the coaches took a punitive, fear-based approach, rarely, if ever, offering positive reinforcement. She recalls her daughter calling

for a ride home in the middle of practice. She thought perhaps her daughter had misbehaved. It turned out she was being penalized for failing to master skills. “[The coaches] would say ‘You’re not taking this seriously. Go call your mom.’” In her absence, the coaches would use Jaye’s daughter as an example, according to another mom, who requested anonymity. Despite having signed a contract that stipulated parents should contact the coaches with any issues, Jaye says, “The coaches would tell the gymnasts, ‘Do not have your parents email me.’”

“Looking back I feel terrible I didn’t pull her sooner from that gym,” says Jaye, whose daughter finally quit in 2017 after two years in the program. But her daughter felt trapped. She loved her teammates and felt guilty about quitting the sport in which she and her parents had invested so much time and money. Knowing her coaches would retaliate against her in practice if her parents talked to them, she was reluctant to speak up. But Jaye says her daughter appeared depressed during her final year of gymnastics. “I just felt like she lost her happy little spirit.”

According to Porter, it’s not uncommon for athletes to experience a loss of self-esteem and to develop self-doubt that bleeds into all

aspects of their lives as a result of an unhealthy coaching relationship. The experience can also rob athletes of their joy for the sport.

There are, however, steps parents and kids can take to find sports programs that support kids’ personal and physical growth.

Vetting a Sports Program

Porter recommends asking any potential coach and their supervisor about their coaching style. Specifically, she advises parents to ask whether the coach utilizes resources from Positive Coaching Alliance, a non-profit dedicated to creating positive, character-driven youth sports environments. Other questions to ask include “What is the sport culture?”, “How do you support the athletes?” and “What are the consequences of losing?”

Conversations with current athletes and their parents can also be helpful. According to Porter, the most revealing source of information is often a chat between the child and a current member of the team.

“Always watch the coach,” advises Porter. She recommends attending a competition and observing coach-athlete interactions. Amy Manson, a trainer with Positive Coaching Alliance, says parents should ask themselves: “Do the kids and

coaches look stressed out? Happy? Is coaching done with a teaching spirit rather than a critical or degrading spirit?”

Another factor to consider, particularly for younger children, is the time commitment. Melody Fairchild, director of the Boulder Mountain Warrior youth running club and former high school prodigy, says parents of younger children should be cautious of any program that practices more than three days a week. Fairchild, who was a high school running prodigy herself, doesn’t advise kids younger than eleven to focus on a single sport. “Multi-sport athletes are more well-rounded mentally and physically,” she explains.

The training schedule should also allow kids to have a family life, says Fairchild. Jaye recalled feeling anxious about emailing her daughter’s coaches about the family’s annual summer vacation, knowing her daughter would be berated for being “behind” upon her return.

Red Flags

While there’s no clear line between sub-par coaching and abuse, certain signs may point to a deeper problem.

1) Yelling/name-calling. “Look at the coach’s anger,” advises Porter. If a coach yells at or calls players names, there may be a deeper issue at play. “A



good coach builds up, they do not break down,” cautions Manson.

2) Crying after losses. Porter notes that while it’s not unusual for kids to cry after a loss, parents should find out why, particularly if there are multiple athletes crying on a frequent basis. Jaye says

there was a period just before her daughter quit gymnastics when she cried herself to sleep every night.

3) Humiliation. Porter says parents should be wary of coaches who publicly criticize or single athletes out.

4) Dismissed concerns. If

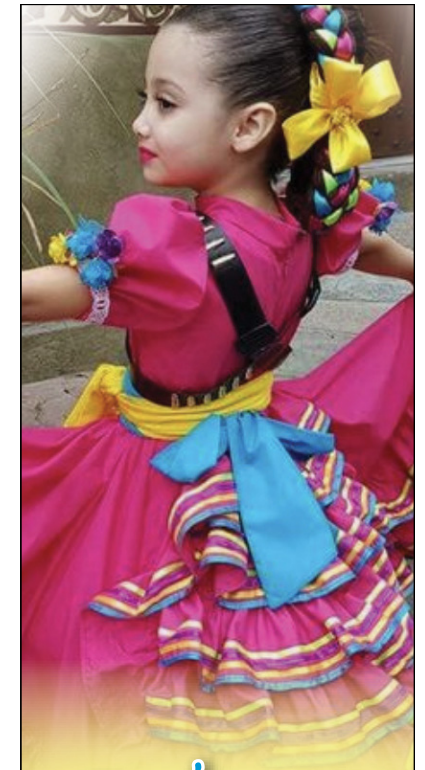
athletes and/or their parents are raising concerns to the coach or their supervisor and nothing changes, this should raise a red flag.

5) Overemphasis on weight. While a leaner frame is an advantage in many sports, excessive pressure to lose weight is unhealthy.

6) Loss of joy. Every expert we spoke with said an athlete’s loss of love for the sport should ring an alarm bell. Jaye says she wishes she’d been more proactive when she saw her daughter had lost her enthusiasm for gymnastics. Since quitting the team, she’s found a new sport: climbing.

With coaches who emphasize fun, “her self-esteem has been rebuilt,” says Jaye.

It’s not always easy to spot an unhealthy sports program. When in doubt, says Fairchild, trust your gut. “Instinctually we know when a situation is not life-enhancing.”



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Story by
Andres Flores

Team Sports: All The Benefits

Team sports are a fantastic way for children and teenagers to engage in physical activity, develop important life skills, and build strong relationships with their peers. Whether it's basketball, soccer, or any other sport, participating in team sports can have a multitude of benefits for kids of all ages. In this article, we will explore the many benefits of team sports for children and teenagers, and suggest some alternative activities for those who may not enjoy traditional team sports.

Physical Benefits

One of the most obvious benefits of team sports is the physical exercise that they provide. Regular physical activity is essential for healthy development in children and teenagers, and team sports can be an excellent way to encourage this. Participating in team sports helps to build strength, endurance, and cardiovascular fitness, all



of which are essential for maintaining good health. Team sports also provide a great opportunity to get outside and enjoy fresh air and sunshine, which is essential for overall wellbeing.

Social Benefits

Team sports provide a unique opportunity for children and teenagers to develop important social skills. When playing on a team, kids learn to work together, communicate effectively, and support each other. They also learn about the importance of teamwork and the value of individual contributions. These skills are essential for success in school, in the workplace, and in personal relationships. Additionally, team sports can provide a sense of belonging and community, which can be especially valuable for children and teenagers who may feel isolated or disconnected.

Mental Health Benefits


Playing team sports can also have a positive impact on mental health. Physical exercise has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, and team sports

A close-up photograph of a young boy with dark hair, smiling and looking down at a plate of fresh fruits. The fruits include strawberries, kiwi, and banana slices. The text 'CHANGE SNACK TIME' is overlaid on the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

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can provide an additional outlet for stress relief. In addition, participating in team sports can boost self-confidence and self-esteem, which are essential for healthy psychological development. Children and teenagers who play team sports also tend to have better mental health outcomes overall, including lower rates of depression and anxiety.

Life Skill Benefits

Finally, participating in team sports can help children and teenagers develop important

life skills that will serve them well into adulthood. For example, team sports can help to develop discipline, time management, and goal setting skills. They can also provide opportunities for leadership development and help to build resilience and perseverance. All of these skills are essential for success in school, in the workplace, and in personal relationships.

Alternative Activities

Of course, not every child or teenager will enjoy traditional team sports. For these

individuals, there are many alternative activities that can provide similar benefits. For example, individual sports like running, swimming, or martial arts can provide many of the same physical and mental health benefits as team sports. Other activities like dance, yoga, or hiking can also provide opportunities for physical exercise and socialization.

Conclusion

In conclusion, team sports can provide a multitude of benefits for children and teenagers,

including physical health, social development, mental health, and life skill development. However, it is important to remember that not every child or teenager will enjoy traditional team sports, and there are many alternative activities that can provide similar benefits. Whatever activity your child or teenager chooses, encourage them to stay active, engage with their peers, and have fun.

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Story by
Kimberly Blaker

Family Fun in the Sun:

Summer Recreation and Activities for the Whole Family

It's the season your kids have been waiting for, so how will you maximize the long lazy days of summer with your family? Celebrate the carefree season with these outdoor activities and adventures your whole family will enjoy.

BACK TO NATURE

Trailblazing – Head to a local, state, or national park and

have a day of nature hiking. Before you go, list things for your family to find and identify, such as a black oak tree, woodpecker holes, a garter snake, or a raccoon paw print. Carry a backpack with binoculars, sunscreen, visors or sunglasses, and plenty of water and snacks. Don't forget your hiking shoes and a lightweight jacket if the shade becomes cool.

Ride 'em, cowboy – You don't have to be a horse owner to enjoy riding one of these majestic beings. Visit your nearby horse rental stables and catch the sunset on horseback. For a stable near you, visit <http://www.horserentals.com/index.html>. Make sure your child is provided a helmet for his safety before you ride.

Z is for zoo – Summer wouldn't be summer without a trip to the zoo. Check out animals at one of the many zoos that have created natural, spacious settings, and teach your kids the importance of these habitats. Check the schedule for animal presentations, and don't miss the petting zoo, where youngsters can walk and talk with the animals and feed them.

The strawberry patch – Perk up those taste buds because strawberries are now in season. Round up the family and head to the strawberry patch for a day of fruit-filled fun. When you get the berries home, work together rinsing them, removing stems, and preparing them for shortcakes, smoothies, and fresh strawberry pie.

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

Beach bummin' – Load up the beach ball, buckets, and blankets, and prepare for a day at the beach. For added fun, take goggles, snorkels, and fins for underwater exploration.

Wet your whistle....and more – Spend a smoldering summer



day cooling off at one of the many water wonderlands. Your family can swoosh down waterslides, catch the man-made waves, and tube around narrow canals. Before you go, ask about age and height requirements and what activities are available for the younger set. Also, don't forget to protect your family's skin. Apply sunscreen throughout the day.

A trip downstream – Canoeing is a fun-filled family adventure for all ages. Look for canoe rentals on a clear river, and take a refreshing dip

“Canoeing is a fun-filled family adventure for all ages.”

when the day heats up. Carry belongings such as your wallet, keys, and snacks in a waterproof bag that floats. Tipping over isn't uncommon (although it can easily be avoided if caution is

exercised) but can be half the fun. Be sure to give the kids plenty of opportunities to paddle and steer.

Ride the waves – If you don't have an ocean nearby, don't despair. You can likely find plenty of wave action at a wave pool in your own community or nearby. These pools often supply tubes and rafts for riding the waves. Call in advance to find out. If they don't offer these amenities, ask if you can bring your own.

Backyard water blast – Plenty of cool fun can be had right in your own backyard. Make it a family tradition to have an annual water spree. Fill water balloons, and play a game of catch. Or hook up the sprinklers for a refreshing game of tag. Don't forget to fill up the squirt guns and super soakers to ensure everyone stays drenched. Then take a refreshing break in a wading pool.

Putt around the lake – You don't have to live

on a lake or own a boat. Contact your nearby marinas, lakeside stores, and resorts to find out where to rent a pontoon or motorboat for a cruise around the lake.

YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Under the stars – Enjoy the peaceful summer nights and camp in your backyard. Kick off the evening by watching the sunset. Then build a bonfire (if permitted in your area), roast marshmallows, and gaze at the stars. Bring your guide to the stars, and see what you can spot: the Little Dipper, Hercules, or Sagittarius.

Croquet champs – Set up this outdoor game the whole family can play. Then hold a summer's end family croquet match. Give handicaps to each family member based on their most recent scores for a game so it's fair to everyone.

Up, up and away – Is the wind hampering your fun? It won't be for long. Make the most of that

breeze, and get your kite up in the air.

Step right up – Organize a backyard carnival to raise funds for your favorite charity. The whole family will have a ball putting on this event. Hang posters in local businesses, and submit a news release to your local radio station and newspaper. Ask friends and neighbors to help staff the booths. Then set up games such as a bean bag toss or

“Organize a backyard carnival to raise funds for your favorite charity.”

number wheel, a baked goods stand, fortune telling, face painting, and refreshments.

Green thumbs – Make summer gardening a family affair. Ask each member to choose a favorite vegetable to plant. If you're getting a late start, look for starter plants that have already sprouted. Work together to get the garden ready and plant



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it. Then give each person his or her own responsibility for keeping it up: watering, pulling weeds, picking ripe produce, cleaning it, and preparing it to eat or store.

Swiss family, who? – What’s a backyard without a hideout or special place to kick back? Younger kids will thrill at building a treehouse or fort. Older kids will look forward to a covered hangout, such as a gazebo, for visiting with friends. Whatever you make, have the whole family pitch in. Small children can feel a part of the project by carrying small materials, dispensing nails, and occasionally swinging the hammer with close supervision.

OUT AND ABOUT

Dancin’ in the street – Summer abounds with fairs and festivals along riverfronts and in the streets. Enjoy live music, new foods, boating and ski shows, magic acts, and arts and crafts. Look for upcoming festivals online or in the entertainment section of your newspaper, or pick up an event guide from your state travel bureau or chamber of commerce.

Batter up – Family fun centers offer a variety of recreation for the whole family. Get ready to practice your batting swing, holler “fore,” speed around the race track, bump another boat, or have some wacky golfing fun.

Recycled treasures – Join the craze, and spend the day

rummaging for treasures. This is an excellent way for kids to get the most out of their limited earnings and teach them the importance of recycling and how to get the best value for their money.

Summer sights – Places and things to see during the summer are abundant, from checking out the big city with its tall skyscrapers,

“For a better workout and to keep everyone moving at an equal pace, have small children ride bikes while older ones and parents push off on their blades”

old architecture, murals, and art displays, to viewing the wonders of nature, from dunes and mountains to waterfalls and shorelines.

Performing arts in the park – Unwind listening to a summer concert in the park or taking in a movie under the stars. These events aren’t always well-publicized, so contact area parks for a summer schedule.

Big wheels and small – Paved trails are popping up everywhere: in parks, along riverbanks, and even

through many towns. Pull out your bikes and rollerblades, and take advantage of these smooth paths. For a better workout and to keep everyone moving at an equal pace, have small children ride bikes while older ones and parents push off on their blades.

Coasters, cars, and Ferris wheels –A trip to a theme park can be the highlight of the season. If your kids are at different ride levels, invite another family or two with children similar in age to yours. Then divide up so everyone can get

the most out of the day. Meet up for lunch and dinner to swap kids so all adults get time with each age group.

Park play – Take your kids for a picnic and an afternoon at the park. Scout your area for an updated park with a large, enclosed fort-style playground. Bring along a playmate for your child, and they’ll be content for some time. Don’t forget to bring your reading to catch up on.



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