



## FACTS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF COACHES

Research shows that trained coaches can have a positive impact on children and youth. Coaches can be the determining factor in whether or not a child gets involved and stays involved in sports—thus, reaping the academic, health, and social benefits associated with sports participation. Under the guidance of a trained coach, youth experience more enjoyment from sports, they remain involved over a longer period of time, and they are more physically active. Furthermore, trained coaches can have a positive effect on the self-esteem of their players, particularly girls and children who suffer from low self-esteem. Coaches also act as mentors and children who play sports enjoy the unique benefits associated with group mentoring programs.

Volunteer coaches have a tremendous capacity to influence youth. That's why Team-Up for Youth invests in quality coach training and supervision to create the best chances of success for kids—in school and in life.

### **Trained coaches facilitate more enjoyable experiences for youth**

- A 2007 study of 268 boys and girls who played basketball showed that the quality of a young person's experience with sports has far more to do with the quality of her coach than her team's win-loss record. "In terms of athletes' ratings of how much fun they had and how much they liked playing for their coach, our results showed that a positive coaching climate was about 10 times more influential than was the team's win-loss record."<sup>1</sup>
- Coaches who are trained to increase their instructional effectiveness and behave more supportively receive higher marks from their players and their teams have more fun.<sup>2</sup> Having fun is an important component of long-term participation in sports. In a national survey of nearly 1,000 youth, "I was not having fun" was cited by both boys and girls as the number one reason for dropping out of sports.<sup>3</sup>
- A study that examined the connection between coach behaviors and psychosocial outcomes (enjoyment, self-esteem, connection to coach), found that the children with the most positive outcomes played for coaches that used positive reinforcement techniques.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Smoll, F.L., Smith, R.E. (2010). *Conducting psychologically oriented coach-training programs: Social-cognitive approach*. In J.M. Williams (Ed.), *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance* (6e., 392-416). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Publishers. *Forthcoming*

<sup>2</sup> Smoll, F.L., Smith, R.E., Barnett, N.P., Everett, J.J. (1993) *Enhancement of children's self-esteem through social support training for youth sport coaches*. *J of Applied Psychology*, 78(4):602-610.

<sup>3</sup> Sabo, D., Veliz, P. (2008) *Go out and play: Youth sports in america*. East Meadow, NY: Women's Sports Foundation.

<sup>4</sup> Smoll, F.L., Smith, R.E. (2010).

## **Trained coaches promote sustained participation in sports.**

- Coaches trained in positive coaching techniques decrease attrition from organized, team sports.<sup>5</sup>
- Supportive coaches encourage high-quality social interactions and improve youth's perceived athletic competency,<sup>6</sup> two factors which promote continued participation in physical activity.<sup>7</sup>
- Trained coaches increase the odds that a youth will participate on a daily basis.<sup>8</sup>

## **Trained coaches help kids get more physical activity**

- Numerous studies demonstrate physical activity specialists, teachers and other adults who are specially trained to promote physical activity in a school setting, are able to significantly increase children's levels of physical activity.<sup>9,10,11</sup> The results were stronger when the physical activity specialists were non-teachers.<sup>12,13</sup>

## **Trained coaches improve self-esteem for certain youth**

- Youth with low self-esteem who play for a trained coach make significantly positive gains in self-esteem, while players with untrained coaches show no change.<sup>14</sup>
- Coaches who participate in a psychosocial coach training intervention can improve the self-esteem of their players. The effects were strongest for younger participants and for girls who began the season with low self-esteem.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Barnett N. P., Smoll F. L., Smith R. E. (1992). *Effects of enhancing coach-athlete relationships on youth sport attrition*. The Sport Psychologist. 6(2): 111-127.

<sup>6</sup> Ommundsen Y., Roberts G. C., Lemyre P. N., Miller B. W. (2006). *Parental and coach support or pressure on psychosocial outcomes of pediatric athletes in soccer*. Clin J Sport Med. 16(6): 522-526.

<sup>7</sup> Barnett L. M., Morgan P. J., van Beurden E., Beard J. R. (2008). *Perceived sports competence mediates the relationship between childhood motor skill proficiency and adolescent physical activity and fitness: a longitudinal assessment*. Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act. 5:40.

<sup>8</sup> Smoll, F.L., Smith, R.E. (2010).

<sup>9</sup> Sallis J.F., McKenzie T.L., Alcaraz J.E., Kolody B., Faucette N., Hovell M.F. (1997). *The effects of a 2-year physical education program (SPARK) on physical activity and fitness in elementary school students*. Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids. Am J Public Health. 87(8):1328-1334.

<sup>10</sup> McKenzie T.L., Sallis J.F., Prochaska J.J., Conway T.L., Marshall S.J., Rosengard P. (2004). *Evaluation of a two-year middle-school physical education intervention: M-SPAN*. Med Sci Sports Exerc. 36(8):1382-1388.

<sup>11</sup> Taylor R. W., McAuley K. A., Barbezat W., Strong A., Williams S. M., Mann J. I. (2007). *APPLE Project: 2-y findings of a community-based obesity prevention program in primary school age children*. Am J Clin Nutr. 86(3): 735-742.

<sup>12</sup> McKenzie T. L., Sallis J. F., Kolody B., Faucette F. N. (1997). *Long-term effects of a physical education curriculum and staff development program: SPARK*. Res Q Exerc Sport. 68(4):280-291

<sup>13</sup> McKenzie T. L., Stone E. J., Feldman H. A., Epping J. N., Yang M., Strikmiller P. K., et al. (2001). *Effects of the CATCH physical education intervention: teacher type and lesson location*. Am J Prev Med. 21(2): 101-109.

<sup>14</sup> Smoll, F.L., Smith, R.E., Barnett, N.P., Everett, J.J. (1993).

<sup>15</sup> Coatsworth, J.D., Conroy D. (2006). *Enhancing the self-esteem of youth swimmers through coach training: Gender and age effects*. Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 7(2): 173-192.

## **Group mentoring, the form of mentoring that coaches provide to players, offers unique benefits for children**

- Group mentoring programs can attract youth participants who would be intimidated by one-on-one mentoring programs and desire opportunities to interact with peers.<sup>16</sup> Group mentoring programs also disproportionately attract African American youth.<sup>17</sup>
- Group mentoring programs tend to attract less-educated, lower-income adult volunteers. Women and African Americans are also more likely to mentor in group settings.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, the demographics of these volunteers are more likely to match those of their low-income, urban youth mentees.
- Youth who participate in group mentoring programs significantly improve their social skills. They can become less inhibited, improve their ability to communicate with others, and improve their conflict resolution and anger management skills.<sup>19</sup>
- Participation in group mentoring programs leads to improved relationships with adults and peers, including teachers, parents, and friends.<sup>20</sup>

## **Youth who are most at-risk have the most to gain from mentoring programs**

- Outcomes are strongest for mentoring programs that are designed for children with particular environment risks (such as children from families with low socioeconomic status).<sup>21</sup>
- Mentor relationships within the context of after-school programs are particularly beneficial for youth who face adversity in their lives.<sup>22,23</sup>

## **College students can be effective mentors for at-risk youth if they are appropriately supported**

- College-aged adults are readily available to volunteer and sign-up for service activities at incredible rates. In 2008, 8.2 million young adults volunteered their time. This figure represents a 5% increase compared to 2007 and is the largest increase for any age group.<sup>24</sup>
- College student mentors require comprehensive pre-match training or orientation. They are most successful as mentors if the program pre-determines the logistics and the content of their interactions with the youth.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Herrera, C., Vang, Z., Gale, L.Y. (2002). *Group mentoring: A study of mentoring groups in three programs*. Public/ Private Ventures.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> DuBois, D.L., Neville, H.A., Parra, G.R., Pugh-Lilly, A.O. (2002). *Testing a new model of mentoring*. In G.G. Noam (Ed.-in-chief), J.E. Rhodes (Ed.), *A critical view of youth mentoring* (New Directions for Youth Development: Theory, Research, and Practice, No. 93, pp. 21-57). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

<sup>22</sup> Hirsch, B. J. (2005). *A place to call home: After-school programs for urban youth*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association and New York: Teachers College Press.

<sup>23</sup> Mahoney, J. L., Schweder, A. E., & Stattin, H. (2002). *Structured after-school activities as a moderator of depressed mood for adolescents with detached relations to their parents*. *J of Community Psychology*, 30:69-86.

<sup>24</sup> Kinzie, S. *Volunteer work went up in US last year*. Washington Post: July 29, 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Tierney, J.P., Branch, A.Y. (1992). *College students as mentors for at-risk youth: A study of six campus partners in learning programs*. Public/ Private Ventures.