

In "children need to  
play, not compete,"  
jessica



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In "Children Need to Play, Not Compete," Jessica Statsky argues that organized sports are not good for children between the ages of six and twelve and should therefore be replaced by sports that emphasize on fitness, cooperation and sportsmanship.

Statsky claims that highly organized sports such as Peewee Football and Little League Baseball are played according to adult standards with undesirable effects on the development of children. She goes on to state that the physical action that is necessitated by overly competitive sports exposes children to danger through injury. The danger to children is not only limited to physical injury as Statsky asserts that "competitive sports pose psychological dangers to children". The author claims that the games are counterproductive to children and they only serve to provide occasions for parents and coaches to fulfill their own fantasies and needs. She reveals that the obsession with winning leads to adults degrading the quality of the playing experience for children. Statsky provides examples of incidents where brawls have broken out between adults as a result of completion. Statsky concludes by proposing that local programs which emphasize sportsmanship, cooperation and fitness should replace the overly competitive programs currently in place. (197 Words).

## **Response to Children Need to Play**

I strongly agree with Jessica Statsky's article "Children Need to Play, Not Compete." As a person who underwent a childhood in which I was exposed to competitive sports, I agree with Statsky's proposal that the high competition in children sports should be done away with. I agree with the

author's observation that the competitive nature of the games takes the fun element out.

From my childhood experiences, sports were always more fun when they were undertaken in a spirit of cooperation and friendliness. When winning became the major factor, everything changed and the game could no longer be played in a fun atmosphere. In my opinion, a major strength that the author demonstrates through her article is that she uses words that are vivid in her descriptions. For example, her description of the scene where the player in the Pee wee Football game takes himself out of the game by faking a stomach ache is very moving. By such vivid descriptions, the reader can paint a mental image of the negative effect that excessive competition can have. Statsky's treatment of the subject is balanced and the arguments expressed by the author are not restricted to the side she supports but also the opposition. Statsky does not shy away from presenting the opinion of the proponents of competitive sports for children.

As a matter of fact, she frequently references the Little League Online which is a website that advocates for competitive sports among children. The author especially gives fair considerations to the other points of view. After stating that children run the risk of physical injury as a result of competitive games, she quotes the proponents of competitive sports activities who document that the injury risks are infrequent in nature. By doing this, Statsky gives us a balanced view on the issue as opposed to only giving space to her point of view.

This increases the credibility of the essay to me since the author is not trying to use the ignorance of the reader on the matter to force her point home.

The author also makes use of statistics to reinforce her claims therefore making them more credible. For example, she asserts that according to a study, " 90% of children would rather play regularly for a losing team rather than warm the bench for a winning team". Even more importantly, the author includes references as to which studies she is referring to therefore increasing the validity of the results since one can confirm her reporting should they wish to. For all the strengths of the article, I find Statsky guilty of using many generalizations which may not necessarily be true for the majority of the population. She states that in instances where children are not injured, " fear of being hurt detracts from their enjoyment of the sport." while this may be the case for some or even a majority of the children, it is highly unlikely that it is the case for all the children involved in competitive sports. Statsky's presents a strong argument and her case is made especially powerful by the author's use of authoritative sources to back up her argument.

Through this it is clear that children not only risk physical but also psychological damages as a result of overly competitive programs. I agree with her assertion that this situation should be reversed and less competitive sports programs devised for children so as to ensure that children have a fun and constructive childhood.

## **Works Cited**

Statsky, Jessica.

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Children Need to Play, Not Compete. Bedford Books. Print.