YOUTH IN COMPETITIVE SPORTS

Practice Problem 1

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Millions of children around the world participate in competitive youth sports every year. Involvement in organized sports teaches many essential life skills – teamwork, confidence, the value of hard work, and discipline. While some competitive sports promote activity and a healthy lifestyle, others build skills such as mental agility. The hyper-competitiveness of youth sports raises concerns that children are pushed too hard to win and succeed. The sports options for youth are also evolving, as competitive e-sports emerge.
Competitive sports can heighten aggression, pressure to win, and put children – who are still growing and developing – at risk for injuries. In many places, increasing costs of club sport-memberships and insurance exclude those who need social interaction and fitness the most. The costs of maintaining and running facilities can also limit the accessibility for youth.

How much should we push young people to participate in competitive sports? Do the benefits of structured competition outweigh the costs of over-competitive behavior and possible injury? How does participation in sports impact the wellbeing of youth and their families?
Central Theme 1: Three Key Players: Athletes, Coaches, and Parents

Youth Sports Suffering from Dropping Participation, etc. - Washington Post

Pressure and Youth Sports (Infographic)
Central Theme 2: Specialization, Overuse, and Injuries

The threat of youth basketball - ESPN

Sports Safety 101 - Safe Kids Worldwide
Central Theme 3: Definitions of “Sport” and “Athlete” are Evolving

The Future of Sports

Is Spelling a Sport? - Medium

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Central Theme 4:
Youth Sports is an Industry — and It's Not Good for Everyone

How Kids' Sports Became a $15 Billion Industry - Time

The High Cost of Youth Sports is Causing Some Families to Go Into Debt - ABC Tucson