

CALCULATE THE TRUE COST OF YOUTH SPORTS



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Many of us with kids who play sports have bonded over similar stories of rushed (or missed) family dinners, urgent uniform changes in the car, or how much caffeine it takes to overcome sleep deprivation and just get through the day.

Besides the dollars we spend on our kid's sports experience (and these are certainly climbing), are we fully aware of the true cost of youth sports on our children and families?

Consider these questions as you calculate the total impact of your family's involvement in youth sports - including the toll it takes on everyone's quality of life. Answer by checking Yes (Y) or No (N).

Y N

- 1** Do you regularly skip family dinnertime to attend practices, lessons and games?
- 2** In a typical week, do you eat more than 3 take-out and/or drive-through meals?
- 3** Does your youth athlete and/or other members of the family sacrifice a healthy amount of sleep so they can finish homework and other chores early in the morning or late at night - after you've all spent several hours of the day at practice or games?
- 4** Have you ever had to make a choice between paying for sports-related costs (uniforms, equipment, private lessons, league fees), and sticking to a healthy savings plan - or worse - delay paying a household bill so that you can meet financial obligations for your kid's sports participation?
- 5** Do you sometimes worry that other children or members of your family feel neglected because you're spending all your time making it possible for one child to pursue increasingly competitive youth sports opportunities?
- 6** Do you spend as much or more time coordinating transportation to get to and from games and practices as you do planning for other, important family priorities?
- 7** Does your child frequently miss games or practices because of injuries?
- 8** Do you or your child struggle with anxiety or chronic frustration because of feeling rushed and overtired?

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YOUR SCORE

Give yourself a point for each time you answered Yes to one of the questions.

1-2 Points

Focused and feeling good. Anything worth doing takes commitment, and certainly you are making some sacrifices to keep your kids in the game. You're balancing the demands of youth sports activities with enjoying all aspects of your life. Everyone is eating well, sleeping well, and enjoying experiences together. Keep it up!

3-5 Points

Stressed and struggling. You spend so much time rushing through the day; you know that your health is being compromised by eating-on-the-go and not getting enough rest. You're all feeling generally good and engaged, but there's a growing, underlying stress that is creating more and more disharmony, leaving you questioning whether or not you need to re-evaluate everyone's sports participation goals.

6-8 Points

Bummed and burned-out. You've spent so much time, emotional and physical energy, and money on sports; you're determined to keep going even though it feels more a grim chore than a delight for everyone. Fatigue and relentless stress, both physical and emotional, are making it hard to remember why you joined your first team. And, chances are good your child is ready to drop out.

The reality is, youth sports can and should be a tremendously positive experience for the young athlete and their family. The opportunities for physical, emotional and mental growth are profoundly important, and playing games – both organized and free-style – is essential to a healthy childhood.

Visit us at inCourage.com to see our free series of videos created to help parents, young athletes and coaches find solutions to problems. We all know the problems. Let's focus on building the healthiest youth sports culture for our teams and community.

Together, we can improve the culture of youth sports and keep more kids in the game.

