

What children really want from sport

Sport provides many valuable learning experiences, but for most children enjoyment is the most important outcome. If they don't have fun, they will not want to play.

Ask children and you'll discover the scoreboard, trophies and winning are not really that important. While they may not remember the score from a game played just two weeks ago – they will recall a funny incident or who they played with after the match. In fact, one of the most satisfying things about sport for children comes from being with their friends and being part of a team.

All adults involved in children's sport – parents, spectators, coaches and officials – can help children get maximum enjoyment from sport by focusing on what they like most about the game. Emphasise the importance of effort and having fun, rather than the score.

Top tips

- ✓ Talk about trying hard and having fun, not just winning
- ✓ Don't pressure children – it's their game not yours
- ✓ Never criticise or ridicule children
- ✓ Discuss with children what they enjoy about a game.