

## ***Athletic Transferable Skills***

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Every year thousands of kids end their sports careers – primarily due to injury, deselection (or getting cut), or by their own decision. Sadly, the vast majority of kids compartmentalize their athletic experience shortly after quitting sports, and oftentimes all the invaluable skills they have learned are either taken for granted, forgotten, or never even realized and appreciated to begin with! This month, I would like to discuss many of the terrific things kids learn by playing sports – today known as Athletic Transferable Skills.

Regardless of the age of your child, specific sport(s), he or she plays, or level of competition he or she competes against, it is inevitable that your child is growing physically, cognitively, and emotionally through playing sports. In fact, many people would argue some of their greatest life lessons have come through goals they set and achieved in sports. Unfortunately, in far too many cases kids today are not taught and reminded of the value of skills learned by playing sports – the very same skills that can later become invaluable across settings, including school, interpersonal relationships, and even their future careers.

One reason why children do not always recognize the value of Athletic Transferable Skills is that these skills are so often used that they become taken for granted. Kids who regularly play sports sometimes do not think about the importance of being a team player, exercising self-discipline, and playing with integrity. Furthermore, many kids believe these skills are the same skills all kids are learning, whether or not they play sports.

Listed below is a brief overview of some of the more common Athletic Transferable Skills:

- Setting and achieving goals. Young athletes regular set individual and team goals, as well as develop ways to monitor their success. Goal setting has been found to be positively correlated to increased performance – both in sports and other various non-athletic endeavors.
- Overcoming adversity. Anyone who has ever competed knows that losing comes hand in hand with competing, and that the only way you ever succeed is to learn ways to cope with failure. Athletic competition provides a great learning environment to develop skills to deal with frustration and losing.

- Self-discipline and motivation. Being an athlete often requires diet and exercise routines, demanding practices, and making choices that non-athletes do not usually experience.
- Time management. Young athletes learn very early on in sports that practices, training, and competition can be very demanding. Keeping a tight schedule and taking advantage of down time is quite common for many athletes.
- Relaxing under pressure/staying composed. Athletes deal with nerves quite regularly, and oftentimes they develop specific skills to help them overcome their anxiety. Learning how to relax under pressure is an invaluable skill in the classroom, too, especially when taking a test or giving a speech in front of the class!
- Decision making. Whether it's making a quick, spontaneous decision during a game or weighing out options about what sport to play or what exercise routine is the best to follow, athletes usually get quite a bit of practice when it comes to making decisions.

Obviously the list above is very abbreviated as there are plenty more Athletic Transferable Skills to discuss. Make sure to take time out of your schedule to sit down with your child and brainstorm all the skills he or she is learning through sport participation, then show him or her how those skills can be used across various settings. By taking time to identify Athletic Transferable Skills, your child will increase his or her self-confidence and likely improve his or her performance, too.

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Dr. Chris Stankovich, known as “The Sports Doc” for his segment on Ohio News Network and featured column in Columbus Parent magazine, is a national expert in the field of sport psychology and offers an entire line of peak performance educational training products for student athletes, coaches, and parents. Please visit [www.drstankovich.com](http://www.drstankovich.com) to learn more.

