



Youth Athletic Programs: Keeping Them Safe and Positive

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) serves New York's public by promoting the safety, permanency, and well-being of our children, families, and communities. In partnership with [municipal youth bureaus](#), OCFS supports [opportunities for youth](#) to participate in athletic and sport activities through the administration of [Youth Team Sports \(YTS\)](#) and [Youth Sports and Education Opportunity Funding \(YSEF\)](#). This list of resources is intended to assist funded programs and other adults who support youth athletics to create a healthy, safe environment and promote the well-being of youth in sports.

OCFS provides links to other governmental agencies in the State and federal government and other organizations to provide additional resources. If you click on these links, you will be leaving the OCFS website. The information and the links to these additional resources are provided in good faith; however, OCFS makes no representation, endorsement or warranty of the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of any of these websites. These external websites operate under the auspices and at the direction of their respective owners. If you have a question or comment about any of these external sites, please contact them directly on their site. If you have any questions or suggestions for this guide, please contact YouthBureau@ocfs.ny.gov.

Educational Connection and Achievement

Goal: Participation in athletics/sports results in more youth attending and completing school, increased educational attainment, and/or collegiate placement success.

1. A manual for youth coaches: [Coaching Education](#)
2. Educational success and lifelong participation: [Benefits of Youth Sports](#)
3. A literature review on the impact of organized sports on youth from the American Academy of Pediatrics: [Organized Sports for Children, Preadolescents, and Adolescents](#)
4. Information on how college athletic recruitment works: [NCSA College Recruiting](#)
5. The power of being a youth coach: [Coaching Resource to Support Positive Youth Development](#)
6. A Special Olympic Young Athletes Resource Library: [Young Athletes Resource Library](#)

Physical Health and Well-Being

Goal: Participation in athletics/sports results in increased physical activity and positive relationships to one's body and physical activity.

1. Physical and psychological benefits of youth sports: [The Benefits of Youth Sports in Child Development](#)
2. A literature review on the impact of organized sports on youth from the National Institutes of Health: [Youth sport: positive and negative impact on young athletes](#)
3. A summary of the health benefits of youth sports from the Aspen Institute: [Youth Sports Facts: Benefits](#)

Mental Health and Well-Being

Goal: Participation in athletics/sports results in improved youth mental health, social and emotional skills, and connectedness.

1. A robust look at how youth sports can support youth mental health from Global Sports Matters: [Mental Health: A New Priority in Sport](#)
2. Psychological benefits of youth sports: [5 Ways Youth Sports Can Boost Mental Health](#)
3. How youth sports support youth well-being: [How can sport help youth well-being?](#)



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4. Teaching youth mental health skills through athletics: [Benefits of Youth Mental Coaching](#)
5. How coaching can support youth resilience and well-being: [The Lasting Power of a Coach's Words](#)

Employment

Goal: Participation in athletics/sports results in increased qualifications and skills, such as collective problem-solving, teamwork, and dispute resolution, which help prepare youth for employment.

1. How youth sports can enhance employment skills, from the International Labour Organization: [How can sports help to promote youth employment?](#)
2. Building skills through athletics to prepare youth for entry into the labor market: [Sport can build young people's employability skills](#)
3. A literature review on using sports as a strategy to address barriers to youth employment: [A comprehensive sport for development strategy using collaborative partnerships to facilitate employment among youth facing barriers](#)
4. Career-building skills through youth sports: [5 Ways Youth Sports Provides Career-Building Skills](#)
5. The impact of youth sports on adult employment: [How Youth Sports Can Lead to a Better Job Later in Life](#)

Community Cohesion

Goal: Participation in athletics/sports breaks down barriers to reduce discrimination, crime, and violence in communities and helps young leaders emerge.

1. Guidance for coaches on developing team cohesion: [From "Me" to "We": Promoting Team Cohesion Among Youth Athletes](#)
2. Benefits of youth sports in local communities: [Importance of Youth Sports in Local Communities](#)
3. Resource guide on how to develop strong relationships with youth: [Relationships First: Creating Connections that Help Young People Thrive](#)
4. A literature review summarizing how non-parents can support youth connectedness: [Review of What Youth Programs Do to Increase the Connectedness of Youth with Adults](#)

Sports Safety

Goal: Participation in athletics/sports safely will promote the overall well-being of youth.

1. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) resource site on concussion: [Trainings for School and Sports Professionals](#)
2. A CDC resource site on traumatic brain injury (TBI): [Traumatic Brain Injury & Concussion](#)
3. A sports safety tipsheet for parents and coaches: [Sports Safety Tips](#)
4. A overview on sports-related head injury data: [Sports-related Head Injury](#)