Child Sports: Benefits and Risks

With the first Winter Youth Olympic Games\(^1\) around the corner and campaigns like Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move!*, today’s youngsters are being encouraged to exercise more now than ever before. But as important as sports can be for kids to stay fit, these activities can come with a range of injuries. A new survey by the American College of Sports Medicine finds an overwhelming majority of Americans calling for more ways to guard against these risks.

1) **CHILD’S PLAY**

- **Kickoff to a Fit Future.** Involvement in sports is a fun way to exercise and learn responsibility and teamwork. Over nine in ten (91%) Americans know this, agreeing that playing sports is integral in ensuring healthy, active youngsters.

- Ninety-five percent of Westerners feel that sports involvement is crucial in keeping kids active and healthy, compared to 90 percent of those in other regions of the country.

\(^1\) [http://www.olympic.org/yog](http://www.olympic.org/yog)
Safety First. However, vigorous athletic activity like this carries some risks with it. According to the Centers for Disease Control\(^2\), sports injuries are on the rise, with high school athletes accounting for about 2 million injuries and half a million doctor visits. Almost all (94%) Americans would like more awareness and preparedness about this issue.

More women than men (58% vs. 50%) and Americans ages 55+ than 18-54-year-olds (63% vs. 50%) strongly believe in additional measures to guarantee the safety of young sports participants.

\(2\) [http://www.datalyscenter.org/](http://www.datalyscenter.org/)