

Although some parents try to avoid youth sports until their kids are older, like 9 or 10 years old, I feel it can be a huge advantage in multiple ways to begin young. The biggest fears some parents have in starting young is the “Burnout” factor when they get older. If young kids are having fun while learning the fundamentals in a healthy environment then it is ALL positive. Below are some of the benefits of starting sports early, in addition to teaching responsibility, teamwork, and commitment.

- 1. Begin a healthy lifestyle.**
- 2. Avoiding childhood obesity.**
- 3. Building motor skills.**
- 4. Develop balance and coordination.**
- 5. Begin to learn the game.**
- 6. Making new friends.**
- 7. Less time to watch TV!**

At HOOPZONE our camps begin at the age of 4 years old. Is this too young to learn dribbling, shooting and certain aspects of the game, absolutely NOT. Bring the game to their level with shorter goals, smaller balls and use games to teach the fundamentals. The main point is to bring it to their level and have lots of FUN! As kids develop through our events you see the balls getting bigger, hoops higher and skill levels getting tougher.

It's cute to watch a group of 4 and 5 year olds dribble weave thru cones and come to a jump stop, pivoting 90 degrees and shoot a basket on a 6' rim. Kids this age can do it; we see it over and over again at our Lil Dibblers camps and these kids love every minute of it!

While having time to just 'play' with their friends is also very important, being in an organized sport with set practice and game times can help ensure that your child gets started early toward a lifetime of healthy habits and avoid childhood obesity. Remember that sports at this age is not about competition, it is about having fun, being physically active, learning the basics of the sports, and building coordination and motor skills.

While an early start in most sports is good, don't let your child focus on the competitive nature of the sport and don't encourage them to 'specialize' in a single sport at too early an age. Encourage your children to try many sports and activities and not think of specializing or playing competitively until older. Talk to them about the importance of building on the fundamentals, learning the rules and definitions and the competition will come later.

Participating in sports is a healthy way, both physically and socially, for your children to channel their youthful energy in a positive direction. Make sure your children's first experience encourages them to begin a lifelong interest in physical activities and good health.

We encourage you to start young at HOOPZONE, stay involved throughout the year with our many event options, and progress up through our ladder of success. Start with small steps over and over again and you'll be amazed!

"HOOPZONE Basketball, a great place to start, a great place to stay, a great place to be!"

Good luck with your game,

Coach 