



# Child's Play: Sport in Kids' Worlds (Critical Issues in Sport and Society)

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Is sport good for kids? When answering this question, both critics and advocates of youth sports tend to fixate on matters of health, whether condemning contact sports for their concussion risk or prescribing athletics as a cure for the childhood obesity epidemic. *Child's Play* presents a more nuanced examination of the issue, considering not only the physical impacts of youth athletics, but its psychological and social ramifications as well.

The eleven original scholarly essays in this collection provide a probing look into how sports—in community athletic leagues, in schools, and even on television—play a major role in how young people view themselves, shape their identities, and imagine their place in society. Rather than focusing exclusively on self-proclaimed jocks, the book considers how the culture of sports affects a wide variety of children and young people, including those who opt out of athletics. Not only does *Child's Play* examine disparities across lines of race, class, and gender, it also offers detailed examinations of how various minority populations, from transgender youth to Muslim immigrant girls, have participated in youth sports.

Taken together, these essays offer a wide range of approaches to understanding the sociology of youth sports, including data-driven analyses that examine national trends, as well as ethnographic research that gives a voice to individual kids. *Child's Play* thus presents a comprehensive and compelling analysis of how, for better and for worse, the culture of sports is integral to the development of young people—and with them, the future of our society.



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