

WHY GYMNASTICS IS GREAT FOR KIDS



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY LARRY GIBSON

Today's kids are considered the most inactive generation in history due to the popularity in social media and the advancements of computers and video game technology. Instead of kids riding bikes, playing kickball and going to the park, they are sitting in front of the TV or computer screen.

Gymnastics provides a fun and safe activity that gets kids physically active. Not only does the sport provide a good, solid fitness foundation, gymnastics also provides many other benefits, from socialization skills to life skills to basics that can enhance performance in other sports.

If you turn on the local news or read the paper, you'll see that childhood obesity is on the rise. According to the Center for Disease Control, obesity is a serious health concern for children and adolescents. With the trend of a sedentary lifestyle on the rise, obesity is also on the rise.

According to the CDC participating in physical activity is important for children and teens as it may have beneficial



effects not only on body weight, but also on blood pressure and bone strength. Physically active children are also more likely to remain physically active throughout adolescence and possibly into adulthood.

So, enrolling your preschooler in gymnastics is a great foundation for a healthy and active start to life! Let's look at more reasons why.

IT'S FUN

The number one reason gymnastics is great for kids – it's FUN. Where else can kids run, jump, flip, swing, tumble and use all of their energy in a single class. If your toddler is active, climbing on everything and jumping on the bed or other furniture, this is a good sign you should find a local gymnastics club near you. Going to the gym allows kids the freedom to have fun in a safe environment.



YOU CAN START YOUNG

Gymnastics is one of the only activities a child can begin when he or she learns to walk. Most sports requires kids to be a certain age. You can't put your child in soccer, basketball, baseball, football or cheerleading as a toddler. But, gymnastics, allows parents and toddlers to come to class, learn and play. It's the first form of organized activity in which your child can participate. Then, when your child has mastered the parent-tot class, he or she will advance to the big-kid gymnastics class.



DEVELOPS PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Gymnastics teaches both physical and non-physical benefits and these attributes help with any sport that your child decides to pursue. Gymnastics teaches strength, flexibility, agility, confidence, balance, and allows your child to interact with other children in a social environment where he or she will learn how to take turns and interact with his/her peers. When children learn to swing on the bar, kick to a handstand, jump on a trampoline, climb a rope, or run into a foam pit and climb out – these are all challenging and fun activities that develop a multitude of physical benefits that provide a solid foundation for practically every sport. Ask some of the top athletes how they got their start and many will tell you they took gymnastics lessons at a young age.



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DEVELOPS NON-PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Gymnastics also offers cognitive benefits. When children are engaging in gymnastics, they are exercising their brains as well as their bodies. According to Dr. Robyn Silverman, PhD., "Research suggests that there is a strong correlation between physically fit children and academic achievement. This means that every time you send your child to gymnastics class, they're getting an opportunity to engage in physical exercise that encourages healthy brain function. Nerve cells multiply and connections in the brain are strengthened.



It is not surprising that children who are engaging in consistent physical activity like gymnastics are more likely to get better grades than their inactive peers."

Putting your child in gymnastics makes sense for a number of reasons. It's fun, you can start lessons at an early age, it helps your child's physical and cognitive development, it's healthy and encourages an active lifestyle.

Go to www.usa-gymnastics.org and scroll down to find a gymnastics club near you.

Happy flipping!

10 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD ENROLL YOUR CHILD IN GYMNASTICS

1. It's fun
2. Develops strength
3. Develops flexibility
4. Develops coordination
5. Teaches listening skills
6. Gains self-esteem and confidence
7. Provides social interaction with peers
8. Teaches goal setting
9. Develops cognitive abilities to help in the classroom
10. Develops skills to enhance other sports