



Improve a Child's Happiness by Joshua Griffin, Grade 6

In sports, there is always talk about whether everyone should be awarded with a medal or trophy, just for participating. People sometimes think that only winners should get a medal while others think that everyone should be getting one just for showing up. However, I disagree because I think that young children, under the age of ten, should get a medal for participating in organized sports. Awarding them will help increase the likelihood that they want to play again, encourage the winning team to continue to improve, and teach young children that sportsmanship and teamwork are important.

Firstly, medals and trophies are motivating for young children. If everyone receives a medal, they will want to play again. This makes them feel proud of their accomplishment and encourages the child to continue in that sport. However, if they don't get a medal for participating, they will be mad and discouraged, and may not want to play any more. It is important to encourage children to play sports because it provides a great opportunity for exercise and learning. According to psychologists, "Giving children a reward for their efforts is great, because it shows them the value of being present, working hard, and contributing to a team" (K2 awards.com). Overall, giving all young children a medal for participating will help encourage children to persevere and continue playing their sport.

Participation medals not only benefit the losing team but will also motivate the winning team as well. Giving out participation medals puts everyone on a level playing field. This motivates the winning team to continue to improve their skills. However, if participation medals were not given out, the winning team might think that they are already far better than everyone else and will not be motivated to improve. According to Jonathan Fader Ph.D., phrases like "you're a winner" or "you're a natural" can actually be toxic to how kids deal with losing" (Psychology Today). Therefore, for these reasons, it is important to award all participants.

Lastly, giving participation medals or trophies teaches children that winning isn't everything. Children will learn that participation, effort, and teamwork are also important skills learned in team sports. An example of this may be when coaches give out awards for sportsmanship and most-improved, not simply for the best, most-valuable player. According to Parker Abate, a sophomore athlete who studies communications at [Misericordia University](#) in Dallas Pa, "Participation awards begin to instill the idea in a child's mind that working with a unit can lead to success. Does success always mean coming in first? No. Success can mean working collaboratively and becoming a team," (New York Times). Think about the impact of giving an award to every player! The skills you build during team sports are more important than the final product and should therefore be awarded.

After considering all of these great facts, we clearly need to move forward with the idea of giving children under the age of ten a medal or trophy just for participating in sports. This will encourage children to keep going with their sport, motivate the winning team to get better, and place emphasis on sportsmanship and teamwork instead of the notion that winning is everything. When faced with a choice, wouldn't it be better to encourage all kids to continue to play sports?