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After an unprecedented school year of remote learning and intermittent in-school experiences, the 2021 back-to-school experience is in a class of its own. There's even more anticipation and excitement than usual as students and parents prepare for a return to classrooms or virtual learning this fall. Despite the changes and challenges of this back-to-school season, students of all ages are gearing up for a new school year. Ready, set, learn.

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Back to School 2021!



Five reasons to participate in scholastic sports

Many kids are introduced to sports at an early age. Though young children may enjoy the recreational aspect of playing sports, a serious passion for a particular sport may develop as children reach high school. Such passions can be encouraged, as participating in sports can be highly beneficial for young people.

1. Learn resilience: Compared to generations past, when children may have had jobs during the school year, today's children do not have many demands placed on them beyond schoolwork and maybe some light chores around the house. The average student may use sports as a way to learn about and overcome challenges. Participating in sports can teach kids how to recover from setbacks (being the losing team) or dealing with adverse situations (sports-related injuries).

2. Improve fitness: School sports require ongoing physical activity, which is advantageous to children in an age when lifestyles are increasingly sedentary. A report from the National Federation of State High School Associations found that when female students are given

more opportunity to engage in athletics in high school, their weight and body mass improve. Sports can help students overcome the negatives of sedentary lifestyles.

3. Relieve stress: Exercise in any shape or form can help relieve stress. The camaraderie that develops within a team setting also can boost self-esteem and help some students overcome any feelings of isolation they may confront during adolescence.

4. Boost brainpower: School sports may work the body but they also benefit the brain. A report from the Institute of Medicine indicates children who are physically active show greater attention, have faster cognitive processing speed and perform better on academic tests than those who are sedentary.

5. Develop confidence and leadership skills: A study from Cornell University says teens who played sports developed stronger leadership skills and developed better confidence. That can work in a team or solitary setting, and translate into skills that serve a person well throughout life. (MCC)



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