

Nurturing a child's interest in a sports career

PARENTING



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With fewer than 2 percent of the 460,000 NCAA student athletes playing professional sports, going pro is a lofty dream for most. Fortunately, there are many lucrative careers within the business side of sports that are easily attainable and keep your child connected to the game they love.

Opportunities exist in nearly every major industry, ranging from medicine to marketing to engineering. Alongside the traditional roles of coaching, officiating and scouting, there are sports attorneys who negotiate player contracts, athletic trainers who push players to reach their full potential and fashion designers who are developing the next generation of lighter,

stronger, and safer sportswear.

Although there are dozens of career options, most fall under three broad umbrellas:

Sports medicine

The medical industry is growing at unprecedented rates, and the need for skilled, diverse physicians and assistants is “one of the most pressing health care challenges facing the nation,” notes the Association of American Medical Colleges ([AAMC](#)). The sports medicine industry, which focuses on the health and well-being of recreational, amateur and professional athletes, grew by 24 percent nationally between 2006 and 2010 and by 17 percent in Ohio and Kentucky.

Specialties vary widely, ranging from physical therapists and physician assistants to nutritionists and sports psychologists, although most sports medicine doctors choose family medicine residency, according to the American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine ([AOASM](#)). There are 30 accredited schools for sports medicine in Ohio and Kentucky, and average professional salaries range from \$77,750 to \$96,991.

Sports engineering

Sports engineers live on the cutting-edge, constantly seeking new ways to create sleeker sportswear, design lighter high-tech equipment and produce stronger protective gear to aid athletes in developing their abilities. The consumer side of the sporting goods industry generates \$63 billion annually as demand keeps increasing for a never-ending supply of better exercise equipment, high-performance balls, footwear, racquets and clubs and licensed athletic apparel.

A second career in this field blends technology with medicine. Biomedical engineers develop support devices based on how the body functions and muscle movements to decrease and treat athletic injuries. This can involve fabricating gadgets that reduce jarring impacts on joints, creating cardiovascular regimens to improve performance or inventing new weight training equipment.

Ohio University in Athens offers both undergraduate and master's degree programs in biomedical engineering. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the largest employers of this rewarding career, which comes with an average salary of \$91,406, are medical equipment and supplies manufacturing companies, scientific research and development as well as the pharmaceutical industry. Teaching Engineering offers a great activity for encouraging youth to think critically and creatively about how to design protective padding for athletes. The [Bumps and Bruises exercise](#) involves a bit of foam and tape, several raw eggs and an open imagination.

Sports management

The broadest and most prolific sector of the industry is in sports administration, a \$250 billion business that offers an annual salary range of \$52,330 to \$153,530. The vast array of professional roles includes event facility managers, scouting and recruiting, coaching and officiating, marketing and public relations, athletic directors for universities, executive directors of fitness organizations, player agents, equipment managers and sporting goods merchandising.

Since 1978, more than 800 alumni have graduated from the [Sports Management program at Ohio State University](#) in Columbus. Students can earn a Bachelor or Master of Science in Sports Management, Education Coaching or Athletic Administration at [Ohio University](#), where the programs focus on foundations in fitness and ethics is sports. At the [University of Cincinnati](#), Sport Administration students have opportunities to participate in study abroad programs and internships with the Cleveland Browns, the YMCA, Kentucky Speedway, Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame and Game Day Communications. There are a total of 36 accredited sports management schools in Ohio and an additional 13 in Kentucky.

Nurturing your child's innate enthusiasm for sports is sure to lead to a career that your child truly enjoys waking up to each day. You can encourage the pursuit of their passion by visiting college campuses that offer sports-related majors and helping them research job titles in the industry. For example, [Nike](#) has employees in 53 countries working on everything from designing

the next pair of Air Jordan sneakers to scouring the globe for specialty materials to pioneering the next generation of weaving looms.

A closer look at sports jobs

If you are curious about potential sports jobs, here are a few resources:

[NCAA Market](#) - for jobs in college athletics

[Work In Sports](#) and [TeamWorkOnline.com](#) - for a broader range of sports jobs

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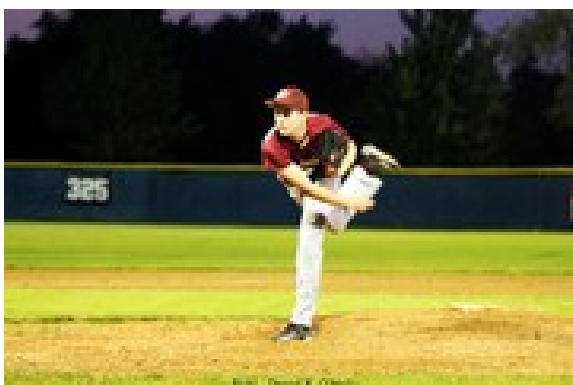
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