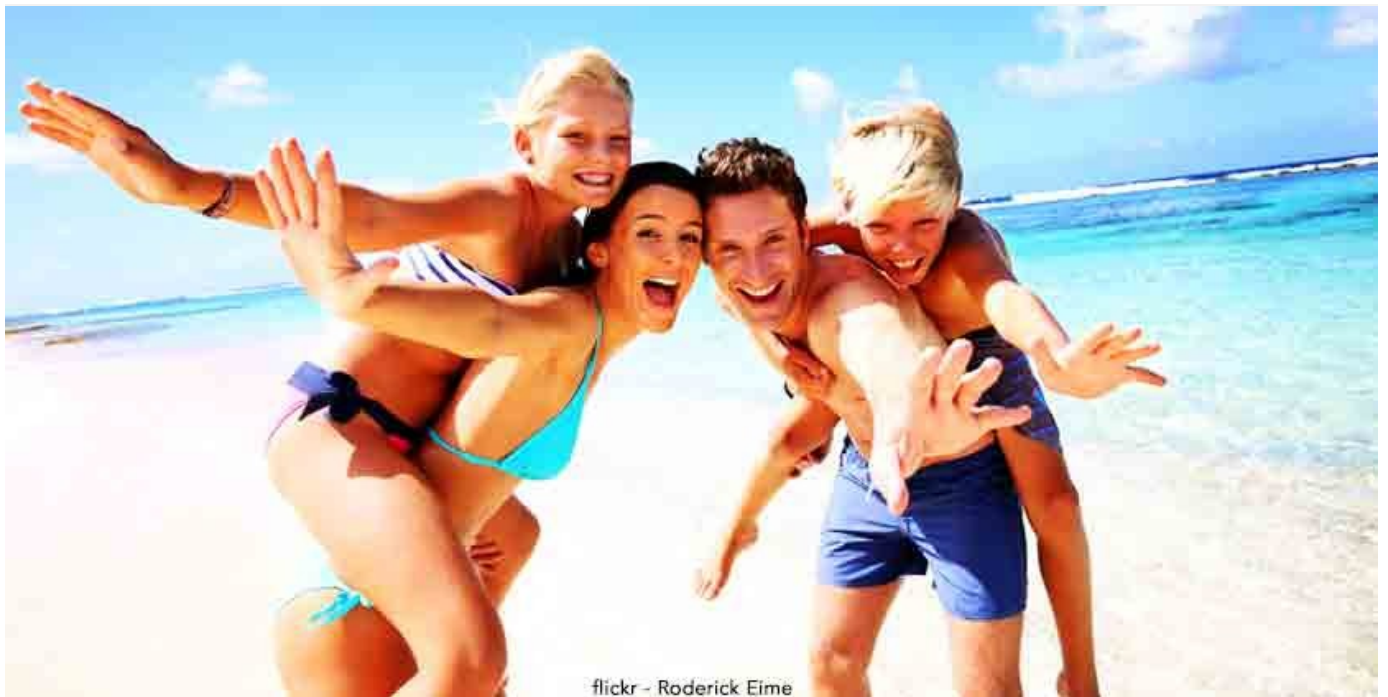


3 ways to balance youth sports and family

MULTI-SPORT PARENTING



Nicole
Kidder



Between school, travel, club and league teams, you have likely found yourself needing to be in two places at once if you have multiple kids playing sports. Successfully juggling the strict schedules of practice and games is an art and a science that requires expert time management and organization skills.

From balancing whose games to attend to creating a master activity calendar, these tips can help you manage a family filled with sports-driven kids.

1. Create a game plan

With only a few hours available each day to devote to sports, schedules often overlap, making it seem like an impossible task to get everyone where they need to be on time. The best way to solve this dilemma is to create a master family calendar that pinpoints who needs to be where and when.

To keep everyone organized, make sure you track:

1. Who needs to go where.
2. The time they need to be dropped off and picked up.
3. The person who is responsible for providing transportation, whether it is a parent, family member or carpool arrangement.
4. In addition to putting practices and games on the schedule, include team meetings, special outings, paperwork deadlines and banquets.

You have several options for the type of calendar you can create, but the most important part is that everyone in the family has instant access to it. The traditional route is to create an activity center in your kitchen. By assigning each child a specific color, you can tell at a glance who needs to be taken care of that day.

Synchronized digital programs are especially helpful when last-minute changes are necessary. There are a number of well-rated online programs and smartphone apps available to keep everyone on track. One of these programs is [Cozi](#), which sends a color-coded weekly schedule directly to your kids' email inboxes, can communicate between Apple and Android devices and allows you to input other appointment reminders.

Another option is to encourage your kids' coaches to adopt team management software, such as [TeamSnap](#). In addition to creating a team roster and schedule, the app syncs with smartphones to send text and email messages about practices and games. It even includes an RSVP function to streamline the planning of events.

Even if you choose to go with a digital option, print out a physical calendar to post in the kitchen to serve as a visual snapshot of what the sports season is

going to look like.

2. Rotate who attends the games

Work schedules and multiple games at the same time often prevent parents from attending every competition. At the beginning of the season, come up with a realistic number of hours that you can devote to supporting your child's athletic endeavors. If you decided to commit 15 hours each month to each child, then make sure you invest those 15 hours. This plan will give your children something to count on and ensures you don't f

avor one child, even if one plays "just for fun" and the other is more competitive. Take a good look at your master schedule and then plug in the most important dates – rival games, playoff dates, traveling opportunities and award banquets. If there is a conflict between events, make sure one parent or another family member can show up to offer their support and encouragement. Finally, h

ave an honest conversation with your kids about why you can't attend certain dates, but once you commit, don't break your word.

3. Get organized

Eliminate frantic, stressful searches for sporting equipment by creating a designated spot for storing supplies. Each child should assume responsibility for dropping off their gear in the right place and either cleaning their own uniforms or depositing the soiled clothing right next to the washing machine. A color-coded basket – the same one that matches their master calendar color – can serve as a catchall for small supplies, signed paperwork and clean uniforms. Add a spot for yourself to store a folding chair and a to-go bag that contains snacks, a water bottle, camera and backup battery, magazine or book, sunscreen and first aid kit.

Next, create a color-coded file for each child that holds important team paperwork, such as parental releases, doctor physicals, team schedules and receipts. One of the best ways to cut back your commitment is by teaming

up with two other reliable team families for the season to arrange carpools to practices, create backup plans and share travel arrangements.

What are your thoughts? Let us know in the comment section below or on our [Facebook page](#).

RELATED: [6 youth coaching tactics that make great parenting techniques](#)



SHARE IT



TWEET IT



PIN IT



EMAIL IT



Nicole Kidder [FOLLOW](#)

A published writer since 1994, Nicole Kidder is a social justice journalist who is pass...
[View Full Bio](#)

0
Comments

Youthletic

Login ▾

Recommend

Share

Sort by Best ▾



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your site

Privacy

DISQUS

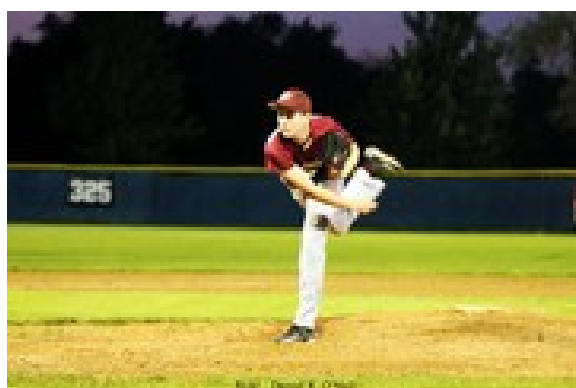
Your Playbook For Youth Sports

Subscribe to our monthly newsletter for expert advice and tips from coaches, parents, and athletes.

sample@example.com

SUBSCRIBE

MOST POPULAR ARTICLES



Overhand or sidearm for pitching, passing and serving?



Why sports specialization may put your athlete at risk



7 volleyball coaching tips for new coaches



A football parent's guide to ACL injuries
(Infographic)



Pre-season basketball training tips



When to feed your athlete carbs, protein and
fats

Latest Stories



Separating fact from fiction: what you need to know about shoulder injuries

KIM BARBER-FOSS,
ATC





5 ways to increase fundraising efforts for your child's sports team

WHITNEY
CANN



CROSS
COUNTRY

PARENTING



How cross country runners can avoid ITBS and debilitating knee pain

REBECCA CONNOLLY





The correlation between social media & sports journalism

UFONLINE





5 helpful golf training aids

STEVE
MILANO





Avoiding youth sports burnout: How to properly nurture your athlete

GEORGE WHITE



[For Organizations](#) [About Youthletic](#) [Jobs](#) [Contact Us](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

© 2015 Youthletic, All rights reserved
2015

☐ Part of the E.W. Scripps Company ©