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F A M I L Y G U I D E

RUNNING SCARED

Topic: Pressures of Youth Competition

The Facts

- 43% of 13- to 14-year-olds say they feel stressed *every single day*; by ages 15 to 17, the percent increases to 59%. (Liberty Mutual and SADD, 2003)
- Teens say the biggest stressors are the pressure to *overachieve* (83%) and their relationships with their parents (57%). (Liberty Mutual and SADD, 2003)
- Childhood stress is a key factor in young adult depression. (University of New Hampshire, 2003)

Start a Conversation with Your Kids

- Do you think kids really feel the kind of pressures talked about in *Running Scared*?
- How does it make you feel when you try really hard to achieve something or reach a goal, and don't do as well as you wanted to? When was the last time you felt that way?
- Ask your child: Are you feeling pressure from anyone or about anything in your life? What can we do together to help you work through this pressure?

Advice From the Experts

Before enrolling a child in competitive activities, consider the following:

- Is my child physically and psychologically ready to handle the demands of the activity?
- Is the competition too serious or intense for my child?
- How does my child react to pressure to perform?
- Is my child showing signs of anxiety over the competition?
- Does my child handle winning and/or losing well?
- Is this activity a stress reliever or a stress inducer?
- Is my child interested in competing – *or am I?*

