

Media is the Message

Project Play: Don't Retire, Kid

62% of children are dropping out of sports by age 9. Why? They're not "having fun." Because parents and coaches have prioritized winning at all costs. But with kids quitting sports at an alarming rate, it's clear what the costs are.

To raise awareness of the role adults play in the decreasing participation in youth sports, we created #DontRetireKid, a first-of-its-kind integration with ESPN *SportsCenter*. When viewers tuned into breaking news expecting to see a story about a star, they found 9-year-old Derek announcing his retirement from sports. The typical athlete press conference format highlighted how children are expected to play like pros as Derek spoke of the pressures that all kids face.

Then one of the biggest sports stars who happens to be a youth sports coach, Kobe Bryant, appeared on a live ESPN segment to offer solutions to the problem. From there, other huge names in sports joined the #DontRetireKid movement and ignited the conversation online. Some planned, most organic. Even legends like Billie Jean King and Wayne Gretzky rallied behind the #DontRetireKid effort to change the game and keep kids in it.