



Benefits of Gymnastics

The Parent who states that they think .."gymnastics would probably be good for their child" might be really surprised to know just how good it is. Obesity is at an epidemic level of 13% of children and adolescents in the United States, getting children away from the tv and the computer and into the gym is a terrific first step toward a healthy lifestyle. The researchers at the Centers for Disease Control report that youth who undertake lifestyle exercise programs that increase their physical activity, reduce the intake of high-caloric foods and involved parents have the best chance of preventing and reducing obesity over the long term. Gymnastics is one of the most comprehensive "lifestyle excersice programs" available to children, incorporating strength, flexibilty, speed, balalce, coordination, power and discipline.

Studies show that children learn cognitive skills more effectively in an enviroment that includes the body as well as the mind (Barett, 1998). Gymnastics and early childhood movement education is directly attributed to developing neurological pathways in students and promoting reading readiness. While the preschool gymnastics teacher runs about and plays with the children in her class, she is preparing her students for successful experiences in school; children who have participated in movement education activities have longer attention spans, increased communication skills, general problem solving skills and improved self-esteem.

Researchers at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School found a relationship between physical activity and children's self-esteem. The more time children ages 10 to 16 spend being active, the higher their self-efficacy and self-esteem were reported to be (Strauss RS, Rodzilsky D, Burack G, Colin M., 2001).

European researchers found that physical fitness in children related to a reduced risk of developing asthma during adolescence (Rasmussen, Lambrechsten, Siersted, Hansen, and Hansen, 2000).

Pysical activity is instrumental in preventing certain cancers; from colon cancer and breast cancer to prostate cancer (Merrett, Theis & Ashbury, 2000). Increased excersise helped reduce the rick of developing diabetes by 58% (Yale University School of Medicine, 2001). Beginning a physical activity such as gymnastics at an early age is no guarantee but active children are more likely to grow up active and healthy adults.

In a study of school-aged youth, researchers found that the risk of substance abuse by adolescents is decreased by physical training programs that incorporate life skills. Better school attendance, lower anxiety and depression, and decreased use of tobacco and alcohol were all reported after a twelve week physical training program (Collingwood, Sunderlin, Reynolds & Kohl, 2000). Recreational sports activities, including gymnastics is a key to balanced human development and has been proven to be a significant factor in reducing alcohol and drug use (Williams, 1994).

The gymnastics team coach is directly responsible for reducing the crime rate in the city; statistics show that children actively engaged in organized “positive choice” extra-curricular activities such as youth sports are less likely to be involved in self-destructive and anti-social behaviors and juvenile crime (Soenstrom, 1986).

Physical activity has been proven to delay the development of high blood pressure and helps reduce blood pressure in adolescents with hypertension (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999).

Many studies have reported the benefits of moderate impact activities such as gymnastics has on the development of bone density and the prevention of osteoporosis. Plyometric exercises (also known as jump training) like tumbling and vaulting have been, beneficial and fun activity for children.

Healthy activities like gymnastics keep our children off the couch and engaged in a healthy lifestyle. Your gymnastics coach is contributing to lower health care cost in the United States; active children are more likely to grow up to become active and healthier adults, reducing the burden on the health care system. Sedentary lifestyles have been linked to the development of coronary heart disease, diabetes mellitus and numerous other chronic ailments. Nurturing the enjoyment of movement and motor skill development at an early age will help to promote continued participation in physical activity. Long range, these active and therefore healthier adults are more likely to be more productive at work, take less sick days, and have fewer “on the job accidents (Paffenbarger, 1986).

Gymnastics also contributes to immediate economic vitality of your local community; gym owners pay rent, employ people, pay taxes and purchase goods.

In addition to everything else, gymnastics provides children with an opportunity to meet with friends, make new friends and have fun!

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