

The Mission and Purpose of Youth Sport

The mission of the Arizona Interscholastic Association Academy (AIA Academy) is to assist our partners in the development of healthy sport experiences for all children. The Academy defines healthy sport experiences as those that emphasize participation in developmentally appropriate activities that provide opportunities for children to learn life lessons, particularly with regard to healthy lifestyle choices and sportsmanship.

The AIA Academy believes that the purpose of youth sport is to help participants learn important lessons for life, e.g. character development, social skills, responsibilities, teamwork, healthy lifestyle, and the lifelong enjoyment of sport and physical activity. Therefore, a primary goal of this program is to assist partnering organizations in the promotion of healthy experiences that will assist youth in the development of:

- Healthy Lifestyles. Assist in providing youth with information they need to make healthy decisions when faced with many of life's issues.
- Important Life-long Lessons. Use sport as a vehicle to teach youth important lessons for life. The development of character traits such as leadership, teamwork, and responsibility are a top priority. Research has shown that these lessons are not learned through participation in sport alone, they must be taught by coaches.
- Positive Feelings About the Sport Experience. The development of positive feelings about the sport experience plays a large role in children's overall level of enjoyment and desire to continue participation. The AIA Academy uses the C.H.I.L.D. curriculum to enhance the social conditions necessary for developing positive feelings about the sport experience and a life-long commitment to being physically active.
- Fundamental Sport Skills. The AIA Academy teaches fundamental sport skills through the use of developmentally appropriate drills and lead-up games for children. Teaching children fundamental sport skills not only increases the chances that a child will continue to be physically active into adulthood, but also increases the likelihood that the child will develop the core skills necessary to move into other physically active pursuits both within and outside of organized sport.

