

SHOULD EVERY KID GET A PARTICIPATION AWARD?

It's the last game of the season, and after the whistle blows, the coach gathers their team. Even though the other team scored more goals, the coach still goes one by one, giving each player a trophy. But why? It's a participation award--a trophy, ribbon, or certificate recognizing the athletes' work over the season. These awards are common in kids' sports, but some people disagree about whether kids should get them. Some like that participation awards create a fun and friendly sports environment, but others worry they may take away from the value of awards earned through hard work.

WHAT IF ... ?

What if we had no awards at all in kids' sports?

What if, instead, we gave awards for teamwork or improvement?

Do kids even care about these awards?

In 2022, **58%** of all kids in Ohio played a sport.



YES, KIDS SHOULD GET PARTICIPATION AWARDS

Giving out awards to all players helps create a positive sports environment. When young kids play sports, whether they're chasing a soccer ball or learning to dribble, the goal is to have fun, improve health, and build social skills. They're not meant to be overly serious! It's not right to only give awards for winning, since that's not the only important thing in sports. We should also value effort, sportsmanship, and teamwork. When a baseball team turns a double play, they're showing great teamwork, even if they don't win. Participation awards are a great way to celebrate the different ways kids engage with sports.

NO, NOT EVERYONE NEEDS AN AWARD

If everyone gets an award, some kids may feel less motivated to practice hard, improve their skills, or push themselves during games. Awards are more meaningful when they are hard to get! At the end of the day, some teams win and some teams lose. This is true for everyone, from kids playing in the Little League to professional athletes competing for gold in the Olympics. Failing is part of life, whether in sports, school, or work, and kids need opportunities to learn how to handle that disappointment. Otherwise, some kids may begin to expect awards and praise without needing to put in effort.

