

CHILDREN ARE NOT MINI-ADULTS

Earlier in this chapter, you were asked to identify three words that described your childhood sports experience. You also were asked to compare those to how sports are set up and managed today.

Things have changed. What did you notice as the key differences? Perhaps you spent more time outdoors and less time online. Perhaps you had more opportunity to engage in free play with your friends and a wider mix of activities.

Today, sports are organized by adults and are heavily structured with a focus on specialization, competition and winning at an earlier age.



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In the resources section, there is an interview with New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, who compares and contrasts his experiences with those offered to his children. He hopes the opportunities he had growing up to play with friends and sample a range of sports are still available to his children to avoid early specialization and burnout.

These observations are consistent with decades of research that reinforces one key message that should underpin your coaching: Children are not mini-adults.

The following screens explore some of the differences.

