Introduction page

* In 2013, the Aspen Institute launched Project Play.
  + The vision” an America in which all children have the opportunity to be active through sports”
  + One of the key downstream metrics we follow is the percentage of kids who are sedentary—those who don’t participate in any one of the 120 sports and fitness activities tracked by the SFIA (sports & Fitness Industry Association)
    - The latest research shows that “17% of children age 6-12 engaged in no physical activities in 2017”
* Invited 80 leaders from sport, health, media, philanthropy and other sectors to take measure of how well children were being served through sports and to consider ways to improve the state of play.
* The impetus was a growing sense that youth sports had become untethered to the needs of many youth and communities.
  + Obesity rates were climbing, as were the percentage of kids who were physically inactive (sedentary)
  + Earlier than ever, children were being burned out, pushed out or locked out from sports.

**Most youth coaches are still winging it**

* Many barriers exist to training the 6.5 million youth coaches, most of whom are volunteers.
  + Turnover is high as parents who volunteer stop coaching once their child moves on to an advanced level or leaves the sport
  + Volunteers are pressed for time, and organizations are reluctant to ask them for more of it to get trained.
  + The cost -even an online training course can run $25+

**Kids from lower-income homes face increasing barriers to participation**

* According the annual participation survey conducted by SIFA
  + Trackability and measurement
* While inactivity rates for the overall population are down, most improvement is among kids from upper-income homes who can afford the growing fees associated with youth sports.
  + Households with incomes of less than $25,000 have fewer kids participating in physical activities
  + The same is true of kids from homes with $25,000 to $49,999 in income
* Meanwhile, smartphones, tablets and video games continue to get exponentially better in providing experiences that attract kids.
  + According to KidSay research: 64% of kids 8-15 report using the internet “many times a day”
    - This means the competition for a childs attention in increasingly more about providing an experience that engages children and families as expertly as technology does.
  + There is still opportunity here.
    - Kids are getting tired of technology. Its not new to them anymore, like it was 10 years ago.
    - They want to do more things offline.
    - They’re looking for someone to say; “Hey, do you want to play catch or shoot a basketball?” and let it grow from there
      * BDP identifies these opportunities and has a system in place to drive progress.

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* “Revitalizing recreational leagues depends on improving both the quality of the offering and the quantity of available kids.
* Sports providers need to develop business models that wring less money out more participants and look into new places to grow the pool of players (participants)
* There is an arms race over sports equipment that has priced out many kids.
  + USA baseball created new “standard” baseball bats that cost $45-$350 *(work cited 22)*
  + USA Swimming’s high tech swimsuits that cost as much as $500, they planned to vote in Sept 2018 to vote on banning the suits
* “The idea that inactivity is related directly to household income should be a wakeup call to every one of us. That is morally unacceptable and it’s socially undesirable for the country, in terms of economic pproductivity andwhat that means for the long term impact on health care” -Tom Cove, Sports and Fitness Industry Association, CEO

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* Growing access to play spaces starts with the small, simple, smart moves that hold great promise.
* When schools agree to share their playing fields and facilities, it gives families and kids more places to play.
  + The available transportation to school sites is vital, because research has shown that people living within a mile of a park or recreation opportunities are four times more likely to participate than those who live further away.
* Funding enables, but so do small gestures of other support (like BDP) Which is another way of saying: Be Creative. (BDP accepted this challenge)
* Michael Capiraso, New York Road Runners president and CEO said: “Access is the greatest challenge in youth sports. So we find champions who can help provide access- to programs, information, equipment, whatever…We’re going into schools that may or may not have fitness programs, and we find a champion who can give the kids access to programs” (introducing BDP!!)
* School became a prominent space for physical activity because it helps academics
  + Politicians and educators took the research to heart that proves that to improve academic performance, they must do something about their students physical fitness as well.
* A before/after school exercise program may help make students happier and healthier.
  + Harvard University 2018 study showed that students who exercised three times a week almost all improved their body mass index and fewer qualified as obese (cited 31) These same students also reported feeling deeper social connections to their friends and with school and an overall greater happiness with life (the very best medicine for our
  + One hour sessions that consisted of running, calisthenics and group games like tag, led by parent voluteers (2009 Massachusetts moms)

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* Developmentally appropriate programming is the software in a child’s sport experience, and leading governing bodies recognize it as the organizing framework to deliver what kids need to grow as both athletes and people. Adoption of this type of programming is seen as a tool to stem attrition and advance physical literacy.
* “Americas approach to the development of the youth athlete is broken. As a leader in amateur sports, the NCAA is committed to supporting and promoting solutions to healthy, sustainable long-term athlete-development strategies in youth sports.” (cited 45) -Oliver Luck, NCAA executive vice president, and Brian Hainline, NCAA Chief medical officer

Pg 14 **Train all coaches**

* Coaches are the deliver mechanis for quality sport programming. They determine how much exercise occurs during practice. Research aggregated by the Presidents Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition shows that good coaches also lower kids’ anxiety levels and lift their self esteem.
* They can make an athlete for life
* Trained coaches do the best. Only 5% of kids who played for trained coaches quit the sport the next year, the attrition was 26% otherwise.
* “I think we tend to overlook the significance of (coaches) and the impact it can have on children—their emotional development, their ability to imagine, dream and hope. The idea of training coaches and understanding their significance is really important”-Kobe Bryant, NBA legend
* The quality coaches, who commit extra time to hone their skills as a coach, leave the recreation level to go into clubs or competitive leagues because they can earn a living there.

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* “We must protect, support and empower athletes, young and old, elite and beginner. Olympic and Paralympic sport in the United States must be a shining example, able to provide athletes with the benefits of participation….” Sarah (McDougall) Hirshland, U.S. Olympic Committee CEO (cited 58)
* Health-incentives law moves closer to adoption.
  + The US House of representatives passed the Personal Health Investments Today (PHIT) Act,
    - a bill that would provide Americans with a tax break for gym memberships, yoga classes, athletic equipment and other qualified fitness expenses (cited 53)
  + The idea is the PHIT Act will encourage Americans to stay healthy now, which will save the government and individuals money on medical expenses later.
    - Critics of the bill question whether the bill would actually benefit lower income Americans –or youth—who need the move the most (cited 54)

**Pg 7.** **The Play: Ask kids what THEY want**

* It’s rule number one in business: know your customer.
* Video games, and the technology industry more broadly, provide much of what children want out of a sport experience, including:
  + lots of action,
  + freedom to experiment,
  + competition without exclusion,
  + social connection with friends as co-players,
  + customization,
  + and a measure of control over the activity.
* Simply put the child is at the center of the video game experience, all made possible by research and feedback loops that seek input from its young customers. Now imagine if youth sport provider worked half as hard to understand the needs of kids, especially those who are left out or who opt out of sports.

**Electronic “sports” entered the mainstream even more-and the popularity is not subsiding**.

* In 2018, the first time since 2000, The national Federation of State High School Associations gave esports a stamp of approval by recommending it as a new sport/activity by rolling out an esports competition in high schools across the nation (citation1)
  + what about climbing or weightlifting or parkour?

**Kids want to play with friends**

* + US Soccer Federation lost 17% of its participants in 2012 when it mandated that teams be formed based on calendar year birthdates instead of the former teams formed based on birthdates that fell within the same school year.
    - This move forced many teams that had been playing together for years to split up and not play with the kids in their same school grade.
    - In 2017 25.2% of youth who used to play soccer left the game. (citation 2)

**NCAA changed its recruiting model in response to the desires of college athletes.**

* High School recruiting can now begin September 1 of their junior year
  + The NCAA described this move as a “first step toward regulating a recruiting process that can begin in middle school-and sometimes sooner.”
    - And said that the new model allows recruits more time to make “thoughtful” post high school decisions.
      * *But these kids are still children (under 18) and so the decisions are driven by their parents*. And we wonder why mmillenials are stereotypically incapable of the maturity required to be successful in a work environment and basic survival in the real world.
  + The chase for college scholarships is a major factor in early sport specialization that has many children committing to only one sport by age 11 or 12.
    - Bryant Gumble story and the parents banking that the $ they invest in youth sports will mean high return on investment in regards to scholarship, contracts and beyond.

**Given opportunities, kids tried new sports.**

* The State of Play: Harlem report showed that the tops three sports youth in Harlem want to try are skateboarding, fencing and ice hockey. (citation 4)
  + Why Fencing?
    - Because someone (Olympian Tim Morehouse) offers free after school fencing instruction and equipment at a nearby school.
* In Detroit, six teenage boys won the 2018 National Urban Squash Team Championships
  + How?
    - The “Racquet Up Detroit” program offers year-round squash instruction.
* “There is some fairly concerning data about the number of kids that we see churn out of youth sports at different ages, There’s a (attrition) band at 8 years old and another at 12 years old. A Fair amount of that is associated with such a high level of competitiveness where kids feel overwhelmed or just disenfranchised that they haven’t made the top team, at a relatively early age.” – Justin Kaufenberg, SportEngine CEO

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* Experts recognize the need to reintroduce free play given the science: “To promote lifelong, intrinsically motivated sport participation, it is imperative to build a foundation during childhood”
* “Inclusion of high amounts of deliberate play activities early in development provides that motivational foundation” -Jean Cote, sports psychologist
* The Ralph C. Wilson Foundation and the Tony Hawk Foundation teamed up to build skateparks in underserved communities in Wester New York and Southeast Michigan, and committed $10 million over the next several years to expand the development and support of facilities.

**New obesity studies show epidemic continues.**

* Obesity rates increased in ALL age groups among children 2 to 19 from 1999 to 2016
  + 41.5% of teens are obese by the age of 16.

**Many blame the increased rates of obesity on technology?**

* Center for Humane Technology along with Common Sense media launch an anti-tech -addiction lobbying effort in 55,000 public schools.
* Two WallStreet investors asked Apple to study the health effects of its products on children.
* Pediatric and mental health experts called on Facebook to abandon a messaging service they introduced for children as young as 6.
* “We need to realize that the youth sports model is being disrupted in the same sense that the newspaper industry, cable TV, books and so many other sectors have been. … What we need to do is redefine the value proposition and show that physical activity is a much better experience than digital entertainment for kids because it provides so many benefits from the standpoint of health, social interaction, and development of interpersonal skills.” -Chris Marinak, Major League Baseball executive vice president