

5-7-2011

# Parent Education Trainings for Youth Sports: A Look Into Administrators Feelings about Need for Trainings

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## Recommended Citation

Woodside, Christopher W., "Parent Education Trainings for Youth Sports: A Look Into Administrators Feelings about Need for Trainings" (2011). *Master's Theses*. 49.  
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# Parent Education Trainings for Youth Sports: A Look Into Administrators Feelings about Need for Trainings

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B.S., Eastern Connecticut State University

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

at the

University of Connecticut

2011

# APPROVAL PAGE

Master of Arts Thesis

## Parent Education Trainings for Youth Sports: A Look Into Administrators Feelings about Need for Trainings

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2011

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The benefits of youth sports have been well documented. They include socialization, increased physical activity, increased health, better eating habits, and lower drug usage (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2007; Le Menestrel & Perkins 2008; Taliaferro, Rienzo, & Donovan, 2010). With all these benefits it is no surprise that millions of children are enrolled in youth sports programs across the nation (Engh, 2002). But there is a disturbing trend occurring in sports, as the dropout rate is alarmingly high, especially for youth participating during 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade years (Engh, 2002).

One of the main reasons for drop-out by youth sport athletes is burnout. According to the literature the leading causes of burnout in youth are; lack of playing time, overemphasis on winning, boredom and no longer having fun (Gould, 1987; Rotella, Hansen, & Coop, 1991). While institutions like varsity athletics, AAU programs, and travel teams are predicated on winning as a goal, many recreation programs have been emphasizing the same thing (Gould, 1999).

Recreation leagues have tried to combat this trend by requiring coaches to complete, at a minimum, the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) training before they are allowed to coach a youth team (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). During the training coaches sign a code of ethics that includes pledging to place the emotional and physical well being of players ahead of the coaches desire to win, and to remember that they are youth sports coaches and that the game is for the children not for the adults (NYSCA Coaches Code of

Ethics). Since these individual are the leaders of their respective teams it is thought that this training will lead to a better environment for youth sports athletes. Unfortunately while they are educating one person, the parents of each player are left uneducated.

While there is research showing a link between parental behaviors in sport to that of their children ( Aurthur-Banning, Wells, Baker & Hegreiness, 2009; Kanters, Bocarro, & Casper, 2008; Lavoï & Stellino, 2008; Wiersma & Fifer, 2008), there are still no systems in place to ensure parents understand positive sporting experience. In one youth basketball study it was found that positive spectator behaviors lead to positive behavior by players while negative spectator behaviors lead to negative behaviors by players(Aurthur-Banning, et al., 2009).

There are several studies about coaches trainings and their effectiveness ( Barber, et al., 1999; Smith & Smoll 1997; Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). Since a majority of volunteer coaches are parents, (Engh, 2002) this information can be useful in trying to identify what the most appropriate means for educating all parents are.

The purpose of this study is to examine, using qualitative methodology, basketball league administrators thoughts about parental involvement in youth sports and the need (or lack thereof) for education specifically designed for parents. This study will contribute to the socialization literature regarding parental involvement in youth sports as well as provide information regarding needs for education programs. By examining the responses of the administrators we will

be able to identify the areas parents need to be educated in as well as how to best reach them. The following research questions guided this study:

- 1.) Do youth basketball administrators perceive a need for an educational program designed specifically for parents similar to youth sport coaching programs?
- 2.) If there is a perceived need for such programs, what factors influence whether such programs are made available to parents?
- 3.) What information should be included in the programs?
- 4.) What are the best ways to administer these programs?

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The benefits of participating in youth sports are almost endless. Several studies have confirmed that participation in youth sports leads to things such as improved cognitive skills, increased physical activity, increased health, better eating habits, lowered drug usage, increased grades, improved social skills and many more (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2007; Hansen et al., 2003; Le Menestrel & Perkins 2008; Oman et al., 2004; Taliaferro, Rienzo, & Donovan, 2010). For children, participating in youth sport could be the most important activity in their lives (Brustad, 1993). Taking a closer look at youth sports illuminates how participation leads to all these benefits.

Participating in youth sports provides a social setting that may not otherwise be present. Being part of a team allows children the opportunities to connect with their peers (Hansen et al., 2003). Through sport children learn how to deal with conflict not only among teammate but among others involved with the game as well (i.e. opponents, officials, coaches, etc.) (Hansen et al., 2003). These skills translate beyond the field of play as children now have learned to better communicate with others. Conflict management skills serve them just as well in the classroom and real world as they do on the court (Sommers, 2006).

Health is another area where children participating in sports excel beyond their peers. With the overall obesity rate of children in America at an all time high, this might be one of the most important benefits sport has to offer to children (Taliaferro et al., 2010). Some of the health benefits experienced by children who participate in sport are increased physical activity, better eating

habits, and decreases use of drugs and alcohol (Taliaferro et al., 2010). Also youth sport participants are more likely to have higher self-esteem and worry less about trying to lose weight (Pate et al., 2000).

Participation in sport can be directly linked to increased physical activity because children have built in periods of exercise (practices and games) with their sport( Taliaferro et al., 2010). Male and female high school sport participants both have been reported as more likely to participate in three or more 20-minute sessions of physical activity in the previous week (Pate et al., 2000). Children are also more likely to engage physical activity away from their sports as participants want to stay in shape, or increase strength, speed, etc to become better at their sport (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2007). Being part of a team can also directly lead to better eating habits due to either team enforced meal plans, less time to snack due to participation in sport, and athletes desire to improve performance (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2007). Both male and female sport participants were more likely to eat fruits or vegetables than their non participant counterparts (Pate et al., 2000).

Male and female high school sport participants were found to be less likely than their counterparts to smoke cigarettes, marijuana, or use cocaine or any other illegal drugs (Pate et al., 2000). Athletes have less time due to their sport participation therefore are less exposed to opportunities to try drugs (Oman et al., 2004). Their team also gives them a social backing to avoid the peer pressures of partaking in illegal drugs or alcohol (Oman et al., 2004). Many teams also enforce a no drug or alcohol policy to participate so athletes are required to stay

away from substances in they want to keep involved in their sport (Pate et al., 2000).

Participation in sport, as previously mentioned, also leads to higher grades among athletes (California Department of Education, 2002; Dwyer et al., 2001). Explanations for this directly relate to the social support created by being part of a team (Dwyer et al., 2001). Participation on a sports team gives players a built in social network. This social network consists of the other players on the team, coaches, trainers, and other parents. This network gives players a group of people they can fall back on if they need help or are having trouble. The network also serves as a resource for greater information. Players can pull from this resource to obtain information that would be inaccessible to someone outside of the network (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Whitley, 1999). Also the team mentality that “you are only as good as your weakest link” comes into play and teammates those in the social network will rally around a struggling individual to help bring them back up (Whitley, 1999). To further ensure success of those inside the network, teams implement mandatory study halls and require a certain grade point average to remain eligible to play (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Whitley, 1999). The previous examples only relate to youth on scholastic teams. An indirect benefit of participation of any kind is that it leads to a need to manage time, due to practices and games (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2007). This lifetime skill helps children at all levels prioritize what’s important. With little free time they are forced to get their school work done so that they can continue participation (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2007).

Despite the noted benefits of youth sport participation, there is currently a disturbing trend of dropout within youth sports. Of the twenty to thirty million children who participate in youth sports, it is estimated that 70% will dropout by the age of 12 (Engh, 2002). Several causes for youth sport dropout have been identified, and include both internal and external factors (Gould & Hedstrom, 2004; Linder, Johns, & Bucher, 1991; Seefeldt, Ewing, & Walk, 1992; Vira & Raudsepp, 2000). Internal factors that were commonly linked to youth sport dropout were, children not having fun, having negative experiences, feeling inadequate as an athlete and person, and a desire to try other activities (Gould & Hedstrom, 2004; Seefeldt et al., 1992). External factors linked to youth sport dropout included the inability to afford sport (e.g., fees, equipment), or as a result of a family move, children drop out of their current program (Aurthur-Banning et al., 2009). There is little that can be done to fix the external factors as they are beyond our control, the internal factors, however, provide an opportunity for change.

To best understand the internal factors that cause children to drop out of sport it is important to first understand what drives children to participate in sport in the first place. The top ten reasons both male and female choose to participate in sport, either scholastic or non-scholastic are outlined in Table 1 (Seefeldt et al., 1992).

It is important to note that the top reason children provided regarding participation in sport was to have fun, while playing to win was only listed as a reason for participation by scholastic male participants. This is important to note

because it tells us that children generally do not care about winning and only are interested in participating in sport for fun. Knowing why children choose to play gives administrators a good baseline in designing appropriate sporting experiences.

Merely knowing reasons why children play, does not provide enough information for youth sport officials to accurately evaluate or design a youth sports program. It is also important to understand the top reasons children choose to drop out of sport. This information can help youth sport officials make changes to programs to ensure continued participation. The top ten reasons children provide regarding reasons they drop out of sport are outlined in Table 2 (Seefeldt et al., 1992). Reasons, such as loss of interest, need for more time, and wanting to participate in other activities, do not require much attention as these are unavoidable progressions of involvement in an activity. However, the reasons such as no longer having fun, too much pressure, a greater emphasis on winning, and the coaching downfalls, are valuable items to look at for researchers. Better understanding, of the sources of these negatives, is vital in developing better youth sports programs (Engh, 2002).

Research has shown that parents are the initiators in the sports socialization of their children (Greendorfer & Lewko, 1978), and as such, they are the first place to look to understand what causes these trends (Brustad & Partridge, 2002; Trost et al., 2003). According to Encyclopdedia Britannica;

Socialization is the process by which people become familiar with and adapt themselves to the interpersonal relationships of their social world.

Through socialization, people develop ideas about themselves and about those with whom they interact. Inevitably, socialization is a two-way process that affects everyone to a greater or lesser degree. It takes place throughout one's life, but it is during the early years that the most crucial phases occur. In these phases a person's sense of self, social identity, and relationships with others are shaped.

To better understand children's socialization into sport, Eccles et al. (1983) developed the expectancy-value model. The model outlines all the factors that influence a child's decision to participate or continue in an activity (Eccles et al., 1983). According to the model parents serve three important roles: (1) role models, (2) providers of experience, and (3) interpreters of experience (Fredericks & Eccles, 2002). This shows the importance that parents play in the sports socialization of their children. Since they are most intimately involved individuals in their children's lives, their involvement largely shapes the experience children have beginning with the sports they choose, continuing onto their participation, providing encouragement, to lastly understanding the experiences had while participating (Fredrick & Eccles, 2004). Parent's impact on the socialization process is greatest at young ages. As the child moves into adolescence the parental influence dissipates as the influences of others such as teachers and peers begin to take over (Fredericks & Eccles, 2004; Greendorfer, 1977). Athletes in their adulthood have reported that their parents' behaviors during their childhood were the most influential behaviors in shaping their sporting experiences (Greendorfer, 1977).

Research has shown that children model their parents by choosing to participate in sports in which their parents participated (Gregson & Colley, 1986). This is especially true for maternal modeling as studies have found that maternal modeling relates to both boys and girls positive rating of enjoyment in sport. Fathers modeling however have shown the opposite effect but only in boys (Woolanger & Power, 1988).

In previous research, correlations have been found between parental influence and children's experience. Positive parental behaviors such as encouragement and praise have been found to produce positive results in children such as enjoyment and belief in their own ability. Negative parent behaviors such as criticism, unrealistic expectations, and pressure result in negative result for children such as lower enjoyment and higher stress (Bois et al, 2005; Fredrick & Eccles 2004). This encouragement appears to be especially important for same-sexed children (i.e., a boy and father and mother and daughter) (Greendorfer & Ewing, 1981).

As previously mentioned, expectations that parents place on children have an effect on their sporting experiences. Boys who reported their parents placed great importance on success in sport show greater "professionalized" sport attitudes than boys whose parents did not. (Mcelroy & Kirkendall, 1980; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1985) Children's enjoyment of their sport is directly correlated to the expectations and pressure placed on them by their parents. (Brustad, 1988; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986; Woolger & Power; 1988)

One study conducted by Arthur-Banning et al (2005), found direct links between parental behaviors at games and that of children. The study examined children in third through sixth grade recreational basketball league and their parents to determine if there was a connection between parent and players behaviors. They found that for every four positive parent sportsmanship behaviors, such as cheering on opponents and checking on an injured player, there was one additional positive behavior displayed by the children. Conversely, negative parental behavior, such as taunting opponents, yelling at officials or acts of aggression, was also a key indicator in negative sportsmanship display by children participating. This relationship was not as strong as that of the positive behavior link but still significant (Arthur-Banning et al., 2009).

Another study, conducted by Lavoie and Stellino (2008), found that parents who emphasized task orientation led to more good sportsmanship behaviors (e.g., congratulating an opponent on a good play) by their children while parents who emphasized ego orientation led to more negative sportsmanship behaviors (e.g., trash talking) by their children. Task orientation defines success based on the mastery and learning of skills while ego orientation defines success on being the best or displaying superiority over others. Participants in this study ranged from 10 years old to 16 years old and were part of a youth hockey league (Lavoie & Stellino, 2008). These findings further support that there is a link between parental behaviors/involvement and children's outcomes

Research has suggested that there is a curvilinear relationship between a parent's directiveness and their children's enjoyment. (Averil, 1987; Woolanger &

Power, 1988) This relationship indicates that either too low or too high a level of directiveness can be associated with lack of enjoyment by children. For optimal enjoyment of sport participation children need their parents to fall into that middle area between under-involved and over-involved (Woolanger & Power, 1992). This is important to note for fathers, who have been associated with giving greater amounts of directive to children than mothers. (Wuerth & Lee, 2002)

However, there seems to be disconnect between parents and children. While the research shows parents affect their children, it seems that parents are ambivalent to the affect they are having on their children. Researchers have found that parents and children do not agree on the amount of pressure on children or support provided to children in youth sport (Kanters, Bocarro, & Casper, 2008). The study, conducted by Kanters et al, looked at children aged nine to eleven and their parents involved with travel hockey teams. They found that parents perceived that they were putting far less pressure on their children than what was reported by the children. Parents also reported offering far more support than was reported as being received by children (Kanters et al., 2008). These findings are significant because, as previously stated, researchers suggest that children's perception of parental support and pressure was a direct predictor of their reaction in sport (Fredericks & Eccles, 2002).

Researchers suggest most parents believe that they are doing what is best for their children in an effort to give them every opportunity to continue to compete in their sports (Baker et al, 2005; Wiersma & Fifer, 2008). There has been a growing trend of professionalism in youth sports, which has lead to earlier

youth sport specialization and year round training (Gould & Carson, 2004). However, the effectiveness of this approach has been proven to be more myth than fact. Specializing at an early age requires that children be identified as gifted before puberty. While there are some sport prodigies, such as Tiger Woods, who can be identified at young ages, athletic ability cannot be identified in most individuals at a young age (Kearney, 1998). In sports that emphasize speed, height, or other physical traits such as basketball, a child who matures earlier than his peers will have a distinct advantage at a young age, but may not maintain that advantage as their peers mature (Gould & Carson, 2004). Since we cannot accurately predict athletic talent before puberty, it is more advantageous for youth athlete to participate in several sports as that will help them develop the fundamental motor skills needed for any sport as well as help limit overuse injuries and taper off burnout (Gould & Carson, 2004). The last item that is important to note in the argument against specialization is that less than 2% of all youth athletes will continue on to become elite athlete. So, children should have the opportunity to experience participating in several sports instead of being forced into one (Wiersma, 2000).

With a system in place that promotes specialization, the problem facing youth sports is disseminating information to parents about the facts and myths surrounding specialization. This responsibility falls upon the administrators of the league to provide this information to parents. Administrators need to focus on programs that promote good sportsmanship behaviors as well as discourage the negative ones (Arthur-Banning et al. 2009). The answer for how to best

administer this information can be found by looking at current education programs provided to youth sports coaches.

Youth sports coaches consist mostly of parents of children participating in the program (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). Researchers have indicated that coaches have similar effect on children's behavior and enjoyment of the game as the parents do (Apache, 2006; Barber et al, 1999). Knowing these two facts suggest that understanding the effectiveness of coaches' education programs can lead administrators to a better understanding of how to educate parents.

Wiersma and Sherman (2005) did focus groups with twenty five different youth sports coaches to find out their perspectives on Coaching Education/Certification. The study found three major themes related to education content area, barriers and problems of coaching education, and education format recommendations. These themes should also prove true in parental education.

Under the theme of education content areas the coaches felt trainings should focus on three major areas; pedagogical aspects, psychological aspects, and management/leadership aspects (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). Some of the pedagogical aspects were making practice fun, communicating with children and injury prevention (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). Psychological aspects included child psychology and teamwork, while managerial/leadership aspects included overinvolvement/commitment issues and dealing with parents (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005).

The coaches in Wiersma and Sherman's study indicated that demands on volunteers and concerns with quality education were some of the barriers to

education. They also mentioned that they felt informal methods of training such as books and web resources were an ideal way to improve their effectiveness (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). But they also felt recurring trainings, and things like roundtable discussion and hands on workshops would be highly beneficial (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005).

Knowing that coaches are made up of mostly parents, it can be hypothesized that these themes will prove to be true for parent education. The purpose of this study is to find out if this hypothesis is true and to see if league administrators identify similar areas of necessity in parental education programs.

## Chapter 3

### Setting

This study was conducted using qualitative research methods, specifically personal interviews with youth basketball league administrators. Since there are very few parental education programs specific to youth sport participation and little research available regarding the effectiveness of such programs, this study looked to examine if youth sport administrators perceived a need for parental education programs. Youth basketball league administrators were chosen due to their intimate involvement with youth sports programs from registration, to scheduling, staffing, to all the other details required. Their insights provided information about a better look into parental education needs in the youth sports realm.

### Method

For this study I interviewed youth basketball league administrators in the Northeast. The participants were both individuals known through personal contact and also those who responded to a request for participation in the study. Participants were all the head coordinators of their youth basketball program, as those individuals would have intimate knowledge of all aspects involved with running a basketball league.

The participants were four male and three female youth sport administrators. The experience level of the participants varied from as little as one year to thirty years experience. The majority of participants identified as White/Caucasian (n = 5) there was one participant who identified as Latino and

one who identified as African American/Black. Size of respective youth sport programs also varied from only 200 children to nearly 1,000 children.

### *Participant Descriptions*

Michael- White Male, 10 years experience, program size -400 children

Dwight - White Male, 5 years experience, program size - 650 children

Angela – White Female, 3 years experience, program size – 200 children

Oscar – Latino Male, 30 years experience, program size – 800 children

Pam – White Female, 1 year experience, program size – 550 children

Darryl – Black Male, 4 years experience, program size – 950 children

Kelly – White Male, 6 years experience, program size – 450 children

### Procedure

Interviews for this study were guided by a one page interview protocol (Appendix A). These interviews were audio recorded so that they could later be transcribed to ensure accuracy. Each of the interviews was conducted at a location of the participants choosing. All but one chose to do the interviews in person at their offices, while one chose to do an online interview. This was done via Skype. The length of the interviews varied from 20 minutes to 40 minutes each.

Following the interviews, data were transcribed based on the interview recordings. Upon completion of transcriptions, as a form of member checking, participants were sent copies to confirm that the information represented in the interview came out as they had intended. Once the participants confirmed the accuracy of their transcript, I began data analysis.

For this research study I used the principles of inductive analysis to gain understanding of themes prevalent in the interviews. This was the best choice for this study because inductive analysis calls for the data to speak for itself (Grenier, 2011). The researcher is asked to look at the data with an open mind and allow themes to arise from the data (Paton, 2002). This type of analysis requires that the researcher “bracket” (put aside) their subjectivities as to not carry them into the coding process (Merriam, 2009). This was my first step in the inductive analysis approach. I had to understand my built in subjectivities so I would be able to ensure I did not let that persuade what I was finding in the data.

#### *Subjectivity Statement*

My experience in youth sports is very vast. I have experienced youth sports as a participant, coach, league administrator, referee, and spectator. Each of these experiences has had an effect on my beliefs about parental involvement in youth sports.

As a participant in youth sports, I have seen both positive and negative behaviors from parents at youth sporting events. In middle school I saw a parent take a coach and throw him against the wall after a game because the coach did not play his son enough. I have listened as parents yelled out obscenities at players on opposing teams and home teams alike. I have watched parents take my own teammates and hit them for making mistakes during games. I have seen supportive parents as well, who cheered on both teams and tried to pick up players when they are down, encouraging individuals regardless of the outcome. Unfortunately, as a participant, these examples of positive parental behavior in

youth sports were very few and far between. The voices of the negative parents carried farther and louder than those of the positive parents.

As a coach, I have also had several positive and negative experiences. These experiences ranged from absolutely wonderful to awful. I have had players on my teams burst into tears because they were afraid of what their parents were going to say after they did not perform up to expectations. Parents have confronted me about who I was playing in the games. Some parents questioned why I was playing one of the less skilled players when it obviously hindered our chances of winning. Once, a parent challenged me to a fight when I would not let him help out with the team. On the positive side, I have also had parents come up to me asking about ways they can help their children grow, or ways they can help the team. I have had parents throw team parties to help give the kids something more than sports. The biggest difference between the two groups of parents I have had experience with is that the parents I have had negative experiences with were sport-centric, focused solely on the sport and winning and losing, while the parents I have had positive experience with seem to be more child/development oriented.

As a referee for youth sports programs, I have had very few positive experiences in dealing with parents and a plethora of negative experiences. Most often you get parents who yell at the referee if the calls did not go their way. What the parents failed to see is how their yelling and screaming about the game was affecting the kids. I have had 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade participants apologize to me for their parent's behavior because they were embarrassed by their actions. I

have had to throw parents out of games because their behavior was out of control. What has always surprised me is that other parents have not spoken up against the negative behaviors of other parents. Often the jeering only started with one or two parents, but instead of asking the loud individuals to quiet down oftentimes the other parents have joined in.

Being a league administrator I have had a much different experience regarding parents' involvement in sports. Instead of witnessing their on-court actions, in the bleachers or sidelines during games and practices, I was able to see how they acted outside of the court. Unfortunately, my experiences in league administration have been as negative as my experiences in coaching and refereeing youth sports. I have had parents meet with me who have asked to have their children moved down a level because they wanted them to dominate. Parents have come in asking to have their child moved up a level, when the child was not ready, because the parent felt they should be playing against older children. I have had parents come in and complain that their child is not getting enough playing time, and even have seen parents take their child out of a league because they did not think they were going to get enough exposure in that league. In a strange instance, I once had a parent come in to complain about an individual's coaching methods, but when asked if he (or she) would be willing to make complaint official in writing he (or she) asked that I not address it and only wanted to keep the complaint between the two of us.

My personal belief is that all issues in youth sports stem from parents. While parents are an integral part of putting on youth sports programs they are

also a detriment to a positive sporting experience. I feel that the biggest reason for this is lack of education about positive sporting experience and proper child development. I do not think children should specialize in any sport before high school and sports programs should be built around the concept of getting everyone involved.

### *Data analysis*

With my subjectivities clearly outlined, I was able “bracket” them begin the process of inductive analysis as outlined by Gribich (2007). The first step was to just read the data without making any notes. This allowed me to become reacquainted with the conversation before making judgments. Next I reread my research questions so I could become reacquainted with what I was looking for in the data. Then I reread all the data this time highlighting passages on hard copies of the transcripts as I read. I then went back through the highlighted sections and gave each of the passages an initial code. Using the initial coding I was then able to begin grouping the data together into categories and similarities. Once grouped it was easier to pull out the data that were pertinent to answering my research questions. It was from this information that I was able to report my findings.

Knowing that my subjectivities were very strong, it was important to ensure my findings showed limited bias. Two fellow grad students performed inductive analysis on the data. Each presented me with the themes that they had found in the data. I then compared their findings to my own and had them do the same to ensure the findings were in agreement. Taking it another step farther, I

sent initial findings to the participants themselves to see if they agreed with what I had pulled out of the interviews. Any themes that could not be agreed upon by all parties were removed from the findings.

### Limitations

It is difficult to make generalizations through these interviews because of the relative small sample size and the sampling techniques that were dictated by the participants' willingness to partake in the interview. Those who participated likely had previous experiences or biases in such that they were concerned about education of youth sports parents. Another point of caution is the sample consistent of predominantly individuals who identified as White/Caucasian. Only two individuals who identify as minorities participated in the study. The primary reason for this occurrence is the lack of minorities who hold the role of league administrator in Eastern Connecticut. Therefore, the ratio of White/Caucasian to minority participants is likely representative of the ratio of White/Caucasian to minority league administrators in the area. Lastly administrators were chosen in a limited geographical area. As such there views may not translate to different geographical regions.

## Chapter 4 Results

Raw data from the seven interviews provided the basis for the following results. Inductive analysis led to finding 234 meaning units, which were then synthesized into twelve lower order and three higher order themes. The results are organized around these three higher order themes that best capture the views of the participants: (1) parental involvement, (2) barriers and problems to education, and (3) education format recommendations. An overview of the lower and higher order themes is presented in Table 3.

### Parental Involvement

Participants were asked to discuss the parental involvement in their program. Additionally they were asked to discuss both the positive and negative behaviors of parents in their program. From these discussions three general topic areas arose: (1) over-involved parent, (2) effective parent, and (3) under-involved parents. Within these topics were six lower order themes that encompassed administrators feeling about parental involvement.

### *Sideline Coaching*

A major issue that administrators raised was parents who coach from the sideline. Coaching from the sideline is defined as yelling out instructions to the children that are participating in the activity by a person who is not the coach or supervisor of the children. This encompasses all parents who are not one of the official coaches and can take place in both games and practices. Administrators felt that this type of behavior undermined not only the coach of the team but the

entire league. This is best summarized by Dwight who said, "a parent who is coaching from the sideline can be a distraction and a disruption to the league."

Coaching from the sideline sets up an atmosphere where children are not sure whom to listen to. They can become detached from their team and teammates because they are paying attention to their parents more than the game. There were incidences reported that children would leave the bench during the game to sit next to the parents or the parents would come sit on the bench next to their child to try and coach them. Michael, when talking about parental involvement, said, "It's amazing to me, you get these parents, who are coaching from the sidelines and they'll sit right behind the bench to talk to their kid, or some will even try to sit right on the bench or have their kids sit next to them."

#### *Negative Sportsmanship*

The sportsmanship of parents was something that was discussed in depth by the participants. Specifically discussion about different negative sportsmanship behaviors they have seen in their programs throughout the years. It has become common to hear parents on the sidelines yelling at everyone from other parents, to coaches, to officials to the children. One of the biggest problem areas is parents and officials. Pam pointed out, "We use staff members that are essentially high school kids and college kids to officiate the games and [parents] think that the kids that are paid nine dollars an hour should be professional officials." Many of the officials in these recreation programs are not professional officials, it is a combination of high school and college kids, along with staff from

the recreation center. There tend to be more mistakes because of this and parents have a tough time coping when things do not go as they expect them to. Whether their child gets hurt or they think a rule is unfair parents are quick to voice their displeasure with an official's call. This phenomena is best summed up by Dwight who stated, "You are dealing with referees who are not exactly top grade and you have parents who are excited because their child is on the court and if things do not go exactly right, parents tend to fall off the rail of sanity."

Parents do not only display their negative sportsmanship towards the officials. There were also several instances reported discussing behaviors pointed towards everyone from coaches to players on other teams. Darryl discussed the effect overzealous parents have at the game.

I remember one incident [where one mom] she chirped a lot from the stand, A LOT from the stands, to the point where I would have to call timeouts, not because our teams doing bad but because I would have to to give her a look and say hey you know you need to relax. It just was not pleasant for the other parents in the stands, I know it wasn't fun for her own child. It wasn't fun for me.

Kelly, when talking about the behavior of parents, stated;

I've had those parents in the stands who are saying play Jonnie to his left hand because he has no left hand...and parents when a kids shooting foul shots that are clapping and not to be positive but just to be annoying.

*Program Support*

Parents play an important role in supporting the recreation program. Without their help many of these programs would not be possible. Oscar stated, "We have youth sports organizations that are totally run by parent volunteers. The right group of dedicated parents can fill all of the necessary roles." Administrators discussed at length the importance of parents in offering the program. They talked about parents who help set up on game days, whether it be working concessions, pulling down hoops, doing score books, or running the clock, parental support was needed in all aspects. Parents were also identified as having helped hold pizza parties for teams or do luncheons for coaches and players.

#### *Volunteer Coaching*

The group of parents that administrators spoke the highest of was parents who volunteered to coach. The volunteer coach is vital to a recreation program because without them you cannot field teams. This also was the group of individuals who administrators identified as the most involved with their children. Administrators also stated that this was one of the hardest positions to get parents fill. This sentiment is best summed up by Michael, who stated, "The most difficult thing is finding volunteer coaches...this year I have 30 teams and only eight to ten parents coaching."

#### *Lack of Attendance*

Attendance at children's games and practices was another issue raised by the administrators. Administrators felt there was a large group of parents who do not attend anything their children are participating in, with Dwight saying, "a lot of

parents will just drop off their kids and go." This is a problem because the children have no one there to support them.

Lack of attendance is not the only issue related to attendance, there is also the distracted attendee. These are the parents who do other thing while in attendance, i.e. read, talk on the phone, etc. Administrators likened the affect this parent has on children as the same as a parent who does not attend the games at all. Michael discussed the effects of a distracted parent.

It's amazing to me how many parents show up but would read the paper or read a book while the game is going on...or they're grading papers for school...what you are saying to your kids is "yea I'll come to the game but work is more important.

#### *Lack of Knowledge*

Parents in these programs showed a continual lack of knowledge of league policies, the mission of the program, the rules of the game, and how their behavior affects the children. Not knowing the league policies was especially frustrating to the administrators because they felt they had put a lot of work into ensuring the safety and fun of the children, while parents had no understanding of what was going on. Michael lamented on this subject:

I would like them to be aware of the fact we try and spend a lot of time with background checks and communicating to parents that we only have coaches out there that have been certified and background checked by our department and there shouldn't be any other coaches or bodies trying

to coach the team. I guess I would just like the parents to be aware of who coaches their kid.

Failing to understand the mission of the program was recognized as a big issue. It seemed parents were unaware of the goals of the program. As Oscar stated, “[Parents] need to understand this is not a travel league, it is not all about winning and losing.” Dwight lamented about parents’ lack of knowledge about the rules, “There are certain rules that are pretty unique in our league, no double teaming no full court press, and parent just do not know this. If they did it could avoid some of the conflict with officials.” Lastly administrators talked about the lack of knowledge parents had about how their behavior affected their children. Pam talked about a little girl who got disappointed in a practice. “I was there the other day and I had this kid say mom look at me and she kind of looked at her kid and then just looked away as the kid took a shot” Oscar said parents do not understand, “the psychology of youth sport and the effects that certain behaviors and outside influences can have on a child.”

### Barriers and Problems to Education

Another major theme that presented itself through the interviews was the barriers and problems to education. Through discussions not only about potential parent education programs, but also the current coaches education programs, three common barriers/problems emerged. These were: (1) demand on parents, (2) participation and (3) cost.

#### *Demands on Parents*

Administrators seemed to be very aware of the demands on parents. They discuss in depth what is being asked of parents. Kelly stated that she, “think(s) parents are busier these days. This is a generation of people expecting parents to get out there and provide for the family”. Dwight commented, “Now you have both mom and dad working forty hours a week and they are expected to help out with school stuff and drive their kids to and from practices, they are very busy.” Parents are being pulled in every direction with demands from work, from school, and from sports leagues. They are asking to volunteer time and resources to each of these areas. Recognizing that parents do have all these demands on their time, administrators did not think it would be realistic to expect parents to be able to attend “mandatory” trainings scheduled at inconvenient times for parents.

### *Participation*

Related to the demands on parents is the issue of getting their participation. Getting the parents to participate in any sort of extra training was one of the biggest hurdles administrators saw in providing parent education programs. Beyond the fact of lack of time for parents, some parents have shown an overall lack of interest in the program so getting them to participate would be difficult. Dwight discussed the issue with mandatory training and a non participating parent. “We have parents who, like I said before, just drop their kids off and do not know their coaches names. How do you pull that parent in? Do you make it mandatory? Then, do you want to punish the child because their parent doesn't show up to a training?”

### *Cost*

Cost of the program was the only thing that would keep administrators from offering it. Unlike the previous two barriers, cost of the program is the only barrier not related to the parents. Administrators felt if they had to pay for the program there was no way they could offer it. When discussing the potential parent education Angela stated: "If it was a program that cost us money...that would never happen!" Given the current economic state, programs are experiencing decreases budgets. As such, they have had to cut programs and do not have the financial flexibility to offer programs that do not bring revenue back. Therefore, there is no money available to offer new training programs.

### Education Format Recommendation

The last theme to emerge from the interviews was education format recommendation. This theme came from discussion about what was effective and ineffective in current trainings. Administrators shared what they thought would and wouldn't work with parents and what should be included in such training. From these discussions about potential parent education programs with administrators, three main recommendations came to the surface. These recommendations were: (1) informal vs. formal, (2) online vs. face to face, and (3) content included.

#### *Informal vs. Formal*

Formal methods of training are those that are being taught to the participants. These trainings are generally done in classroom/assembly settings where the participants will listen to a trainer. These can also be done online in

webinars or proctored internet trainings. Upon completion of the training there is some sort of recognition gained, either by certification or credits. Informal methods of training are self regulated. It involves offering resources to participant to take as they please. While a signature may be required confirming the participant read the documents, there are no certifications or credits received during these trainings. Discussion with administrators focused on which of these training methods would be most effective in reaching the parental population.

Administrators felt it would be easier to reach parents using informal methods than formal methods because these types of materials could just be distributed through mailings or handed out to players. The problem with informal methods is there is no way to know if it reached the parents. Michael lamented, “I get concerned sometimes that online is something they can go through at their own pace to get information but I’m not there to really see do they value the information are they absorbing the information.” Often mailings are lost or thrown away without ever being read. The same holds true for handouts and flyers. Parents are constantly fed flyers and mailings to the point they do not always read them over. Kelly commented that, “we hand out the rules and policies of the league at the beginning of the year and ask parents to read the code of conduct and sign and return it. While most return the signed code I get the feeling they do not really read it or any of the handouts.” Formal ensures you know parents have seen it but the difficulty with that is getting everyone to participate as previously mentioned.

If the program was going to be formal, administrators stressed it had to be short. Dwight stated, "it couldn't be more than 20 minutes, it would have to be in and out, you can only keep a captive audience that long."

#### *Online vs Face to Face*

If a program were to be formal there were two specific ways to offer it, either online or face-to-face. In conversations about the current coaches education programs administrators made their preferences clear. While online training seemed to be the easiest way to reach the greatest amount of people there was no accountability as to whether or not the parents truly completed it. Pam, when discussing how effective she felt the online trainings were, answered, "I do not think they are effective at all." Dwight discussed fear about how the information is being received, "My concern is, online you can just bang through it and are you really absorbing the information as opposed to you know a human being and going through the program and sitting in a classroom instead of sitting in your living room with your laptop."

Face-to-face training was preferred by the administrators. They felt that it is a much more effective training and they are able to interact more with parents. The face to face training gives administrators a chance to see who is absorbing the information and who isn't. Not only is it helpful for the administrators but also the parents as well. Michael said, "I think its good for [parents] too because they can get immediate feedback from me." This personal interaction they feel leads to greater retention of the material being put forth. The downfall with face to face is the time it requires. Also trying to get hundreds of parents to commit to one

time frame is very difficult. To avoid this issue, administrators suggested that, if face to face was going to be the method of presenting material, the training be done in small groups, such as at the first practice. This way you have the most parents there and you are only dealing with 15 to 20 parents at a time. Dwight suggested, "Do it at the first practice and potentially grab the parents...that way it is in a smaller environment and that can work. Pam said, "You can do it on different nights, have 40 parents one night, 40 another, and 40 the next to split it up."

### *Content*

When discussing potential content areas for parental education administrators had several recommendations. Recommendation fell into three categories: (a) physical effects of participation for children, (b) psychological effects of participation for children, and (c) league policies.

The physical effects of participation are one of the easiest things to quantify. You can see the physical effects through injuries and soreness. These physical effects can be seen with our own eyes and therefore are easier to talk about. Under this category administrators felt it was important to stress effects of concussion. With all the new information that is coming out about concussions, administrators felt that parents needed to be more aware of the signs, symptoms, and treatment of concussions. Another important aspect to focus on was proper nutrition. Pam stated, "Nutrition is one of the biggest points that I think would be important to hit....what they should eat before and after practice to get the most

from their practice or work out...its true for college athletes and its true for athletes in third grade."

The psychological effects of participation are much harder to quantify but just as important to stress to parents. These are things that cannot be seen by the naked eye, unlike an injury such as a sprained ankle, it is hard to quantify things that go on with emotions. Administrators talked about the effect parents' behaviors at the games have on the children. Kelly said, "Parents do not understand that their behaviors in the stand...children imitate them on the court. So if a parent is getting irate in the stands the child becomes irate on the court." Others talked about how important youth sports is in building interpersonal skills and self confidence, and they felt that parents just did not understand these benefits nearly as well as they did the physical benefits. Darryl, when discussing things he felt parents did not understand, said that. "it is bigger than just winning and losing and becoming the greatest, the next LeBron James. The parents do not understand that, there is a wide range of positives coming out of this program other than your child scoring 52 points every Saturday."

The last area administrators wanted to focus on was league policies. Many conflicts that arise during games and practices could be avoided if parents fully understood the leagues rules and policies. They need to first know the rules of the game so that they can decipher what is occurring on the court. The modified rules of the game seemed to confuse many parents. Example of these modified rules were things like no double teaming or full court press. Many of these misunderstandings of the rules lead to confrontations or outburst from the

stands. If parents were fully aware of the rules then this could be avoided. Oscar commented that, "There are certain rules that are pretty unique in our league, no double teaming no full court press, and parent just do not know this. If they did it could avoid some of the conflict with officials." Dwight stated that, "If the parents understood [the rules] it would definitely help them out. You would not have the father coming across the court going oh my daughters getting fouled what are you going to do about it?"

In conclusion the major themes that arose from this study were (1) parental involvement, (2) barriers and problems to education, and (3) education format recommendation. Each of these major themes included three sub themes. The theme of parental involvement was broken down into (1) over-involved, (2) effective, and (3) under-involved. Barriers and problems to education was broken down into (1) demands on parents, (2) participation, and (3) cost. Lastly education format recommendations was broken down into (1) informal vs. formal, (2) online vs. face to face, and (3) content.

## Chapter 5 Discussion

The aim of this study was to determine youth basketball league administrators' feelings about parental education programs and their potential place in their programs. Interviews with the seven administrators resulted in three major themes, specifically, parental involvement, barriers and problems to educate, and education format recommendations.

The parents discussed in this study displayed several of the same qualities found in previous research. Administrators talked at length about both the under-involved and over-involved parents and how they affected children's enjoyment of the program. This coincides with the curvilinear relationship found by Woolanger & Power (1988). Parents who fell on either extreme of the spectrum were considered poor sports parents. Administrators did not however discuss a difference between fathers and mothers involvement. They gave examples of both fathers and mothers negative and positive behaviors at sporting events. This finding is contrary research done by Wuerth and Lee (2002) that identified fathers as the individuals giving directives to the children.

Behaviors of parents at games and practices were discussed in depth. The recounting of these experiences with parents supported previous research by Bois et al. (2005) and Frederick and Eccles (2004). Parents who criticized or pressured their children were likely to have children who had lower levels of enjoyment, while the parents who provide encouragement and praise were seen as having children who gained more enjoyment from the program.

Administrators in this study felt very strongly that there was a need for parental education. Parental involvement, ranging from over-involved to under-involved, in all of their leagues showed a need for further education. Parents serve as role models for their children (Eccles, 1983). Administrators stressed that, similar to research previously done by Aurther-Banning, et al. (2009), parental behavior at games had a direct effect on players' behaviors. If parents are displaying negative behaviors in the stands their children are sure to follow. Children look to their parents throughout the game to try and help them interpret the experiences of the game (Eccles et al., 1983). They take the parents reaction as a sign of how they too should react.

While the over-involved parent accounted for a small portion, similar to number reported in research done by Wiersma and Sherman (2005), their effect on the program was felt more than any other group of parents. This group had the ability to affect everyone at the game from the coaches, to players, to officials, to other parents and spectators. Educating these parents is of greatest immediate concern.

Under-involved parents are a much larger group than the over-involved parents according to the administrators. Educating this group of parents is just as important as the over-involved parents. Since these parents are not in attendance their effect is only felt by their children. Research done by Fredricks and Eccles (2002) found that children's perception of parental support was a direct predictor of how they reacted in the sport. With the over-involved parent at least the child has someone there, even though the support or behavior being

presented by this parent may not always be positive. Parents are supposed to be the interpreters of experience for the children (Eccles et al. 1983). With no one there children have to decipher the emotions of the game on their own. They have no person to look to, to contextualize the happenings of the game from the gameplay to the fans reactions. Children are then forced to look to others to help them understand the emotions of the game. This is why it is important that parents be in attendance at their children's events, to ensure they properly understand the experiences they are having.

Knowing that it's the parent's role to interpret the experiences for the children further supports the need for education. Parents need to know how to properly contextualize the experiences for their children to ensure they get the most positive experience. Based on the participant interviews, it was not apparent that parents understood how to do that or even that it was their responsibility to do so. Proper parental education would ensure parents' better understanding of the roles they play in their children's sporting experience.

While educating these parents is agreed to be important, the issue comes when figuring out how to administer such educational programs. Getting the parents to commit their time to do such a program was a major concern of the administrators, especially finding a way to bring in the under-involved parents who do not attend any game or practices. This is consistent with research done by Wiersma and Sherman (2005) on issues with trainings for coaches. Getting individuals to commit their time is the biggest hurdle. There is hesitation to make the training mandatory for fear that some parents would choose not to enroll their

children. In this scenario the child loses out on the opportunity to play and that is unacceptable to sport administrators. The goal of all the administrators was to be able to provide this opportunity of participating in youth sports to as many children as possible first, and then second, to make the experience the best experience possible.

The other issue with making parent education mandatory was logistics. Administrators were not sure how they could effectively administer training to a group of 200 to 300 parents. Also getting all those parents there at the same time, as previously mentioned, would be a hassle. Potential solutions to avoiding this problem included offering multiple trainings, provide hand-outs, and have training at practice presented by coach. Each of these solutions presents their own difficulties.

Offering multiple training sessions would entail offering the training on several different nights to give parents an option to choose from. This would spread out the amount of parents in attendance at each session, making it easier to dispense information and it would ensure parents had multiple options to fit their busy schedules. Research done by Wiersma and Sherman (2005) found that coaches felt the need for multiple training sessions and having one training session was not sufficient. Administrators in this study however did not feel that was possible. The difficulty for administrators would be procuring space for multiple nights for training sessions and getting a trainer to be at each of the dates. These things cost the department extra money that they do not have available at their disposal. There is also the issue of what to do with the parents

who are unable or did not attend. Finding make-up dates to offer the training to these parents becomes a hassle and an additional drain on resources of the department.

Providing an educational hand out to the parents is the easiest option. This can be done at sign up or at the first practice. Parents could be required to sign a page acknowledging they had read the information that the league could keep on file in case of an issue. This is also the cheapest option as the only cost would be the printing of handouts. The issue with this option is it has the least amount of accountability. There is no way to know if the parents have read or even understood the information that has been presented to them.

Administrators' fears go against what coaches in Wiersma and Sherman's study stated. In their study coaches thought handouts and online resources would be very helpful and they would use them frequently. (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005)

The last solution was offering the training at the first practice. This would entail gathering all of the parents at the beginning of practice and providing the training. Since most parents drop their children off at practice this would be an ideal time. The audience would be relatively small, 15-20 parents, making it very manageable. The only downfall to this is requiring volunteer coaches to provide the training, meaning each of the trainings could be different depending on the coach.

Cost of the trainings was the next biggest concern for administrators. It was clear if there were any cost associated with providing the trainings that they would not be able to offer such training. Budget constraints make it impossible

for departments to take on new expenses according to the administrators. This eliminates the possibility of bringing in an outside source to offer the program.

After thoroughly understanding the hurdles that come with offering an education program, it was important to understand how to best administer an education program and exactly what content should be included. Administrators agreed that face-to-face training were the most effective. This is in agreement with the research done by Wiersma and Sherman (2005). Coaches in that study felt they gained the most information in live trainings such as roundtable discussion and hands-on trainings (Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). Both the individuals involved and the administrator get more out of this type of training than any other. Administrators in my study and coaches in Wiersma and Sherman's (2005) both liked the opportunity to be face-to-face and with other coaches because it stimulated discussion about given topics.

The content of the training should revolve around the physical effects of participation for children, psychological effects of participation for children and league policies. These are similar to content areas coaches identified as needed in their trainings in Wiersma and Sherman's study (2005). Administrators in this study were not as focused on teaching the skill development areas as the coaches in Wiersma and Sherman's research (2005). Instead administrators wanted to focus mainly on the psychological effects parents behavior has on their children. They felt it was important that parents understand just how their behaviors affect kids both on and off the court of play. As previous research has shown (Aurthur-Banning et al., 2009; Lavoie & Stellino, 2008; Kanters et al., 2008;

Wiersma & Fifer, 2008) children's enjoyment of the game, sportsmanship behavior during the game and understanding of the experience all stem from how their parents act. Lastly it was very important to league administrators that the rules of the program be made clear in any training. Misunderstanding of rules and expectations led to many of the problems administrators faced.

### *Research Implications*

The implications of these findings are important to the understanding of parent education. A parent education program that is carefully designed to meet the needs of youth sports parents could better the experience children have at youth sporting programs. Parents who are educated about proper youth development, proper sportsmanship, and league policies will be better suited to provide a positive sporting atmosphere.

In looking to design a parent education program, the cost of the program must be taken into account. With administrators making it clear that they do not have discretionary funds to pay for such a program it is important to design something that could be very low to no cost for the leagues to offer. The results of this study found that for trainings to be most effective they must be able to be distributed in multiple ways, to ensure reaching all the parents. The training should not exceed 30 minutes and should highlight the important areas.

Resources that discuss each area, such as league rules, concussion information, and other important information should be made available to parents following the training. This way parents have an opportunity to further educate themselves beyond the training.

### *Programmatic Recommendations*

The following are my recommendations, based on the data provided in this study, for the creation of a parental education program. These recommendations are outlined in Table 4. The program must be available at low to no cost to the sports league. A manual that includes both the training and outline on how best to administer it should be created. This manual should include information about proper nutrition, sleep, and injury prevention. There should be a section of time allocated to discussing the league policies and rules. This should not be included in a manual, as each league will have unique policies and procedures. Next, should be a section discussing the positives of a sporting experience for children followed by a discussion about how parental behaviors affect children's experience in their sport. Since all of this information will not be able to be covered in a one hour session, parents should be given a manual to take home. It is important to take the time in the training to focus on the most important aspects, knowing not all parents will read the rest of the manual once leaving the meeting. Parents will be given a test to take home that they must return that covers all the topics of the manual. Along with this test they will return a parent code of conduct in which they agree to abide by the code at all games, practices, or recreation functions. Any parent who has a problem during the year will be required to meet with the league administrator.

### *Future Directions*

Future research in this area should look into parents understanding of the league rules and how their behavior affects their children on the court. This would

show how much parents already know about their league and their involvement. It would also be beneficial to see if administrators' perceptions about parental lack of knowledge are accurate. The findings from this study could provide additional information regarding what parents need, or do not need, for trainings.

Research could also look to parents feelings about parental education. Are they open to partaking in a parental education program and do they feel like their program could use it? Trying to find out what they feel would be most beneficial in a program could further help in designing a more effective program.

In areas that have begun adopting parent education programs researchers could look into the effectiveness of those programs. Researchers could get perspectives from the coaches, administrators, children, or parents themselves as to how well the trainings have helped their program. In addition, if there were a community that currently does not have a parent education program, but would be willing to start a program, it would be interesting to compare and contrast behaviors of parents who participated versus those who did not participate.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, there is a significant need for parental education in youth sports. Parents' behavior and involvement at youth sporting events is vital to the outcomes of the program. It is necessary that they understand how their behavior affects their children's experience. Leagues are responsible for making sure parents are properly educated, so they can offer the most positive sporting environment for all that are involved. While this task is lofty, administrators have responsibility to come up with innovative ways to educate parents with their

limited resources. They must keep in mind the demands on their parents and offer alternative ways to gain education. This will ensure the most positive sporting environment for their program.

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Table 1: Reasons children choose to participate in sports

<b>Male</b>	
<b>Scholastic</b>	<b>Non-Scholastic</b>
1. To have fun	1. To have fun
2. To improve my skills	2. To do something I'm good at
3. For the excitement of competition	3. To improve my skills
4. To do something I'm good at	4. For the excitement of competition
5. To stay in shape	5. To stay in shape
6. For the challenge of competition	6. For the challenge of competition
7. To play as part of a team	7. To get exercise
8. To win	8. To learn new skills
9. My parents or close friends want me to	9. To play as part of a team
10. To go to a higher level of competition	10. To go to a higher level of competition
<b>Female</b>	
<b>Scholastic</b>	<b>Non-Scholastic</b>
1. To have fun	1. To have fun
2. To stay in shape	2. To stay in shape
3. To improve my skills	3. To get exercise
4. To get exercise	4. To improve my skills
5. To do something I'm good at	5. To do something I'm good at
6. To play as part of a team	6. To learn new skills
7. To learn new skills	7. For the excitement of competition
8. For the excitement of competition	8. To play as part of a team
9. I like the coaches or teachers	9. To make new friends
10. For the team spirit	10. For the challenge of competition

Table 2: Reasons why children choose to quit sport

<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
1. I was no longer interested	1. I was no longer interested
2. It was no longer fun	2. It was no longer fun
3. The sport took too much time	3. I needed more time to study
4. The coach played favorites	4. There was too much pressure
5. The coach was a poor teacher	5. The coach was a poor teacher
6. I was tired of playing	6. I wanted to participate in other non-sport activities
7. There was too much emphasis	7. The sport took too much time
8. I wanted to participate in other non-sport activities	8. The coach played favorites
9. I needed more time to study	9. I was tired of playing
10. There was too much pressure	10. Games and practices schedule when I could not attend

Table 3 Lower order and higher order themes emerging from 234 meaning units from seven interviews.

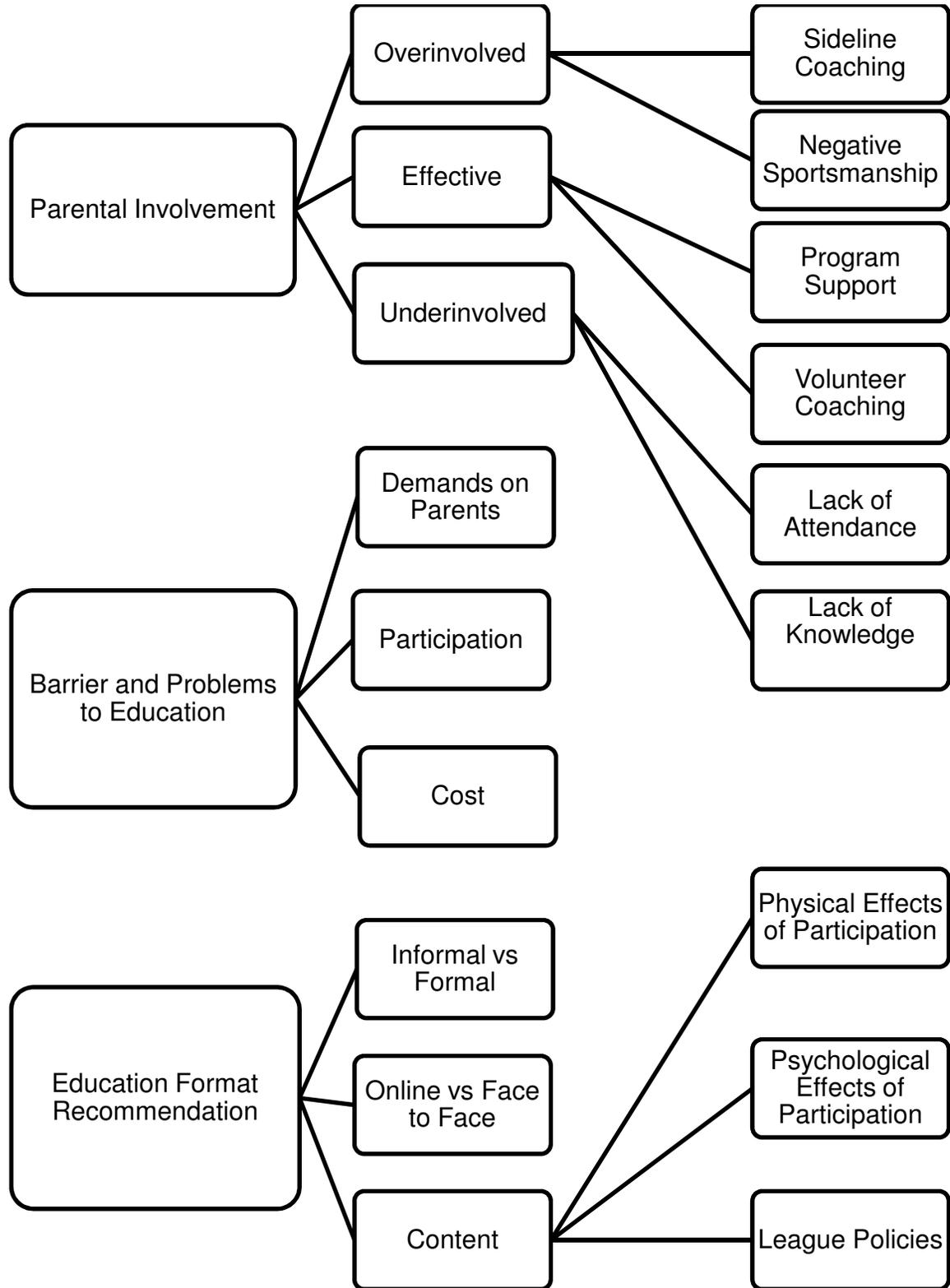


Table 4. Recommendations for parental education

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1. Incorporate the league rules and philosophy. Make sure to highlight rules that may be different in the league than anywhere else (i.e. no double teaming)
2. Point out positives of sporting experience, that it builds self confidence, inter personal skills, promotes teamwork, problem solving skills, and communication skills
3. Explain how the parental involvement affects their child. They need to know how the support and pressure they apply on their child shapes their sporting experience
4. Emphasize that sports is more than just winning and losing, especially at the recreation level.
5. Make it available at no cost
6. Offer the education multiple times or in different forms to ensure all parents are able to receive it
7. Discuss importance of proper nutrition to get the most out of the physical activity.
8. Include information about concussions, the signs, symptom and effects. Also timetable for return and how to effectively prevent them

## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

### *Interview Questions*

*I'm going to be asking you a series of questions about your experiences as a Youth Basketball League Administrator.*

- A.) How many years have you been involved with Youth basketball?
  - a. What roles have you played?
  - b. How many years at each role?
- B.) What is the structure of your recreation league?
- C.) What has been the most difficult part of your involvement in youth sports?
  - a. As an administrator
  - b. In any other role (parent, coach, referee)
- D.) What do you feel is the biggest challenge/issue facing your program?

*Now I am going to be asking you a few questions pertaining to parental involvement in your league.*

- A.) How involved would be the parents of children in your program? In what ways?
- B.) What role do you feel parents should play in youth sports and your program?
- C.) Can you give me an example of a positive experience in working with parents in youth sports?
- D.) Can you give me an example of a negative experience in working with parents in youth sports?

*I have a couple questions about your experiences working with Coaches training*

- A.) Do you require your league to do NYSCA Coaches training?
  - a. If yes, how well is this received? / If no, why not?
- B.) Do you do any additional Coaches trainings?
- C.) How effective do you think the Coaches trainings are?
- D.) What could be done to make the coaches trainings better?

*Now I'd like to discuss your feelings about a potential Parent Education Program*

- A.) What are the potential benefits of a Parent Education program designed especially for youth sports?
- B.) What are the potential hurdles or drawbacks?
- C.) What type of things would you like to see in a Parent Education Training program?
- D.) Would your program be interested in implementing such a program? Why/Why not?
- E.) What do you think parents responses would be to having a mandatory Parent Education training similar to the coaches training?

*Is there anything I did not ask that you'd like to share with me?*

