Supported or Pressured? An Examination of Agreement Among Parent's and Children on Parent's Role in Youth Sports

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The overall purpose of this study was to provide additional evidence that parental attitudes and behavior influence their children's affective reactions from sport participation and to examine the relative importance of parent-child agreement on both the quantity and quality of parent involvement. Within the context of youth sports it appears from the results of this study that parents have incongruent views to those of their children with regard to behaviors perceived as exerting pressure and support. An examination of mean scores for parent and child participants showed that parent's perception of the amount of pressure they imposed on their child were consistently lower than the scores reported by their children. The results also indicated that the child's general feelings about hockey was negatively correlated with pressure from fathers and positively correlated with their perception of hockey. Multiple regression results showed that children's perceptions of parental pressure from fathers was the only significant predictor of general enjoyment in hockey. The results of this exploratory investigation indicate that parent-child agreement may be an important predictor of the affective outcomes typically associated with youth sports participation.

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Parents enroll their children in sport for a variety of reasons. Similar to other life domains (i.e., school, peer relationships, eating habits) the goal is to manipulate an environment that would allow their children to develop and adopt skills and competencies that support a healthy, self-directed, responsible and autonomous form of life (Hutchinson, Baldwin, & Caldwell, 2003). Within the sport domain, parental commitment is a key factor requiring significant expenditures of both time and money (Chafetz & Kotarba, 1995; Duncan, 1997; Hellstedt, 1995). Parents have also come to view sports participation, especially competitive sports, as a key component of their children's overall socialization (Coakley, 2006).

A growing body of literature presents compelling evidence that the socialization activities of fathers and mothers not only impact children's initial sport involvement they also predict future sport activity choices (Fredericks & Eccles, 2005). Several studies have confirmed that parent involvement in the form of emotional support and role modeling is positively related to both enjoyment and participation levels in sport (Babkes & Weiss, 1999; Brustad, 1993; 1996; Fredericks & Eccles, 2005; Green & Chalip, 1997). In addition, activities such as paying registration fees and purchasing equipment, providing transportation, and attending games and practices are often interpreted as positive support for sport participation by children (Stein & Raedeke, 1999). The beliefs and subsequent socialization activities of parents are so powerful, especially during the introductory stages of a child's sport participation, that they have been shown to significantly influence children's sport-related beliefs and can create gender differences (Eccles & Harold, 1991; Fredericks & Eccles, 2002). For example, Eccles and Harold (1991) found that boys view sports as more important, useful, and enjoyable than did girls. Similarly, parents typically report that sport is more important for their sons than it is for their daughters (Brustad, 1993; Eccles, Jacobs, & Harold, 1990; Jacobs & Eccles, 1992).

The literature on parent involvement in children's sport tends to focus on either negative or positive outcomes. It seems important to point out that parent involvement in their child's sport experiences is neither inherently good nor bad. A critical determining factor is the child's subjective evaluation of their parent's involvement (Stein & Raedeke, 1999). Highly involved parents can be perceived as providing either appropriate levels of encouragement and support or excessive amounts of pressure. For example, Scanlan and Lewthwaite (1984) found that children who reported higher pressure from parents were worried about meeting their parent's expectations and experienced higher levels of state anxiety. Similarly, previous research has reported that pre-competition anxiety, perceived competence, and internal control was directly linked to parental expectations, involvement, and perceived pressure (Gould, Eklund, Petlichkof, Peterson, & Bump, 1991; Weiss, Weise, & Klint, 1989). As a parent's level and intensity of involvement in their child's sport increases children tend to report feeling "trapped" and may experience sport burnout (Coakley, 1992). Therefore, both the nature and

quality of parent-child interactions is critical to understanding and predicting affective outcomes experienced by children in sport (Brustad, 1996).

Welk, Babkes, and Schaben (2004) suggest that the direct and indirect influence experienced by children in sport is mediated by two social-cognitive constructs: outcome expectancies and efficacy expectancies. For children to stay interested and involved in sport they typically evaluate their involvement from two perspectives "Is it worth it?" (outcome expectancy) and "Am I able?" (efficacy expectancy) (Welk et al., 2004). Similar to Eccles and colleagues expectancy-value theory, parents can significantly influence the child's evaluation of their sport involvement by providing access to various sport experiences and by influencing the child's interpretation of these experiences (see Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Fredericks, & Eccles, 2004). Parents with positive values and expectancies are more likely to exhibit pro-social behavior and provide support and encouragement. However, the impact of parent behaviors is entirely dependent upon the child's interpretation of those behaviors. Children that perceive parental involvement as encouraging and supportive are more likely to adopt a positive attitude toward sport and exhibit higher perception levels of competence. Conversely, children who perceive parental involvement as negative may have lower perceptions of competence and lose interest in sports.

Although the child athlete's perceptions would appear to be most important when examining children's outcome and efficacy expectancies in sport, a parent's assessment of their own involvement in their child's sport may also be important. Miller (1981) for example argued that parents rarely perceive their children's subjective experiences accurately and that children typically learn to accommodate parents by describing experiences in a manner that is consistent with their parent's perception. Green and Chalip (1997) offer partial support for this notion in the context of youth sports reporting that children's satisfactions were not related to parent's satisfaction. Green and Chalip (1997) further note that both children's and parents' satisfaction are important predictors of enduring involvement in youth sports yet each are independent and cannot be inferred reliably from the other. Within the context of parental involvement in their child's involvement in sports it seems reasonable to draw a similar conclusion. A parental value system about the importance of sport for their children and their expectancies about their child's success in sports has been shaped by their past involvement in sports and the values and expectancies exhibited by their own parents. Therefore, how parents choose to operationalize their values and expectancies may conflict with the child's interpretation of their behavior. For example, parents with positive values about sport combined with high expectations about their child's involvement and success may result in behavior that is interpreted by the child as over involvement and stressful.

A review of the literature reveals that although recent studies have included self-reports from both children and their parents (Fredericks & Eccles, 2005) there has been no attempt to evaluate the relative importance of parent-child agreement when predicting important affective outcomes like outcome and efficacy expectations. A growing body of child psychology research has acknowledged that the level of agreement between parent and child perceptions may be an important factor when assessing the validity of observed and/or self-reported variables in studies of children's emotional and behavioral problems (Tang, 2002). Although this line of inquiry is still relatively new there appears to be evidence that parents and their children do not agree on ratings of health and well-being (Curtis, Dooley, & Phipps, 2002). Curtis, Dooley, and Phipps (2002) also found that parent-child agreement tends to be stronger for observable variables like school performance and weaker for less observable variables such as emotional disorders and indirect aggression. Past research has also reported that gender tends to been an inconsistent correlate with parent-child agreement. For example Kolko and Kazdin, (1993), and Verhulst and Van der Ende (1992) both reported that girls tend to have greater agreement with parents than boys where Handwerk, Larzelere, Soper, and Friman (1999) found no significant differences between gender groups. Findings concerning age tend be fairly consistent in the literature in that younger children tend to have greater agreement with parents than older children (Achenback, McConaughy, & Howell, 1987; Handwerk, Larzelere, Soper, & Friman, 1999). Although previous studies (e.g., Curtis et al., 2002; Handwerk et al., 1999) have found that parents and children disagree on observable health and well-being variables and that gender and age can affect the level of agreement, there has not yet been any attempt to examine the impact of agreement or disagreement on other important predictor variables. For example, do children in families with greater disagreement report higher scores on measures of health and well-being? It seems logical to apply this line of inquiry to our study of children's sport behavior. First, do parents and their children disagree on the amount and nature of parent's involvement in their child's sport? If so, then to what extent does disagreement predict the child's assessment of involvement in sports? The current study looks to answer these questions.

The following research questions are examined in this study:

1. Do children's perceptions of parental support and pressure impact their level of enjoyment and self assessment of skill in sport?
2. Do parents and children agree on perceptions of the amount and quality of parental involvement in the child's sport, ratings of child enjoyment, and ratings of child skill?
3. Does the level of agreement between parents and their children on measures of parental support and pressure predict child self-reports of enjoyment with sport participation?

This study contributes to the literature on the impact of parent's beliefs and behaviors on children's sport in several ways. First, we included mothers, fathers, and children in the sample. Past research has only recently included measures that directly ask parents about their level of involvement in their children's sport (e.g., Fredericks & Eccles, 2005) and no studies of children's sport have included both parents and their children in the sample. Second, we provided additional validation of the differential effect of parental support and pressure on children's affective responses in sport. The results of previous studies suggest that positive parental support plays an important role with a child's early sport participation (e.g., Brustad, 1996), is positively related to the level of enjoyment resulting from that experience (e.g., Power & Wolger, 1994), and directly impacts the child athletes self-perception of sport skill (e.g., McCullagh, Matzkanin, Shaw, & Maldanodo, 1993). Third, we examined the agreement of parents and their children on measures of parent involvement, child enjoyment, and child skill in sport. Finally, we evaluated the relative importance of parent-child agreement when predicting children's general feelings about sport participation.

Methods

Subjects

Subjects were athletes nine to eleven years of age and their parents involved in 12 select (travel) hockey teams (M Age=9.48 years, SD=1.17 years) in a southeastern United States community. Additional demographic data were not collected on subjects; however, ice hockey is a relatively expensive sport in the southeastern United States and costs for participation on travel/select teams often exceeds $3,000 per year. Consequently, it seems apparent that most study participants could be categorized as upper socio-economic status. Each team included approximately 15 players for a total sample size of approximately 180 child participants and their parents. All communications with subjects were channeled through the participant's coach. The coach of each participating team was asked to send an email to each parent that outlined the purpose of the study and included instructions for both the parent and child to complete separate web-based questionnaires. Each child participants parents self determined whether the father or mother would complete the parent questionnaire. Parent and child responses were linked by a common password. Each parent was asked to enter a short password when prompted by the web-based questionnaire. Parents were also asked to instruct their child to use the same password when completing their questionnaire. This process allowed us to match parent-child responses without jeopardizing subject confidentiality. One hundred and eight children and parents (response rate of 60 percent) fully completed the questionnaires (64 fathers and 44 mothers completed the parent questionnaires).

Measures

Respondents completed a series of questions that self-report measures of parental involvement, child involvement and enjoyment, child hockey skill and ability, and demographic information. An 11 question Likert type scale, modified from Leff and Hoyle (1995), was used to assess parental support (six items) and pressure (five items) from both the child's and parent's perspective. Leff and Hoyle (1995) examined children's perceptions of their parent's involvement in their tennis activity. Modification for this study included changing the activity reference from tennis to hockey and the development of a parallel instrument to measure parent's assessment of their own involvement activities. For parental support, parents were asked to indicate the degree to which they supported and engaged in their child's hockey participation. For example, using a four-point Likert type scale anchored by "not at all like me" to "very much like me", parents were asked to respond to support questions that included: *without pushing too hard, I do all I can to help my child become the best hockey player he can be; I am proud of my child's participation in hockey no matter if he wins or loses.* Similarly, child subjects were asked: *without pushing too hard, my parents do all they can to help me become the best hockey player I can be; my parents are proud of my participation in hockey no matter if I win or lose.* Children were also asked to indicate how each of the support and pressure statements described both their father and mother using the same four-point Likert type scale. Examples of pressure statements were: *I am critical of the way my child plays hockey (parent question) or My parents are critical of the way I play hockey (child question); I put a lot of pressure on my child to do well at hockey (parent question) or My parents put a lot of pressure on me to do well at hockey (child question).* Leff and Hoyle (1995) reported coefficient alpha for individual support and pressure subscales as follows: .75 for support (mothers), .73 for support (fathers), .69 for pressure (mothers), and .77 for pressure (fathers). Results from this study showed similar alpha reliability coefficients: .74 for support (mothers), .79 for support (fathers), .79 for pressure (mothers), and .65 for pressure (fathers).

Parent and child subjects were also asked to respond to five questions designed to assess the child athlete's general feelings about their participation in hockey and their current skill level. For example, *I find it easy to stay excited about hockey practice (child question) or He finds it each to stay excited about hockey practice (parent question); I sometimes wish I had chosen some sport other than hockey (child question), or He sometimes wishes he had chosen some sport other than hockey (parent question); I think that all the time I put into hockey is time well spend (child question), or He thinks that all the time he puts into his hockey game is time well spent (parent question).* General feelings about hockey questions were combined to create a composite hockey feeling score for each child and parent respondent. Coefficient alpha scores were .75 for child respondents, .72 for parent respondents.

Hockey skill was assessed by asking both the parent and child to rate the child's hockey ability/skill level relative to other members of their team (HSP) using a 10 point scale ranging from "worst player" to "average" to "the best player" and to rate overall how they felt about their hockey skills (or their child's hockey skills – parent question) right now (HSN) using a five point scale ranging from very bad to very good.

Results

The results presented in Table 1 show that pressure from fathers (PF) but not mothers (PM) was negatively correlated with general feelings about hockey (GFH) (r = -.502, p<.01). Mean scores for both parent and child respondents were used to assess the degree of agreement between both groups on measures of parent involvement, child enjoyment, and perceptions of skill. A comparison of mean scores for mother and father subgroups (Table 2) indicated that there were no significant differences on measures of parent's perception of their child's skill (t=1.98, p=.-5), parental support (t=-1.37, p=.17), and parental pressure (t= .10, p=.91). Therefore, mother and father subgroups were combined for all subsequent analyses.

Table 1. *Pearson's Correlation Matrix of Father's and Mother's Support and Pressure, Child Feelings about Hockey, and Perception of Hockey Skill*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Child's Gen. Feelings	1					
2. Child's Perc. of Skill	-.053					
3. Child's Perc. Mother Support	-.009	.022				
4. Child's Perc. Father Pressure	-.502**	-.153	.268**			
5. Child's Perc. Mother Pressure	-.171	-.091	.399**	.489**		
6. Child's Perc. Father Support	.037	.149	.545**	.068	.297**	1

Note. * p<.05, ** p<.01

Table 2
Mean Scores for Father and Mother Subgroups on Measures of Child's Skill, Child's Feelings about Hockey, and Perceptions of Parental Support and Pressure

	Fathers	Mothers	*t*	Sig.
Child's Hockey Skill	7.83	7.19	1.98	.05
Child's General Feelings about Hockey	3.55	3.67	-1.70	.09
Parental Pressure	1.52	1.51	.11	.91
Parental Support	3.65	3.72	-1.36	.17

Table 3
Mean Scores and Paired Sample T-Test Results for Parent and Child Measures of Parental Pressure and Support, General Feelings about Hockey, and Hockey Skill

	Measure	Participant Subgroups	Mean	*S.D.*	*t*
Pair 1	Pressure From Father	Child Responses Parent Responses	3.21 1.52	.57 .32	24.39**
Pair 2	Support From Father	Child Responses Parent Responses	3.40 3.68	.44 .28	-5.53**
Pair 3	Pressure From Mother	Child Responses Parent Responses	3.39 1.52	.61 .32	27.91**
Pair 4	Support From Mother	Child Responses Support Responses	3.50 3.67	.46 .28	-3.41*
Pair 5	General Feelings About Hockey	Child Responses Parent Responses	3.49 3.60	.44 .36	-2.10
Pair 6	Skill Relative to Peers	Child Responses Parent Responses	7.59 7.56	1.69 1.62	.11

Note. * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$

Parent-Child Agreement

Mean scores for parent and child responses on measures of parental support and pressure, general feelings about hockey, perceptions about child's hockey skill, and results of a paired samples t-test are presented in Table 3. Results showed that parents' perception of the amount of pressure they imposed on their child were significantly lower than the scores reported by their children. Child participants reported significantly higher scores than parents for both pressure from father (t=24.39, p=.001) and pressure from mother (t=27.97, p<.001). Conversely, parents reported higher scores than their children on measures of support from fathers (t=-5.53, p<.001) and mothers (t=-3.41, p=001). Parent and child participants also did not agree on the child's general feelings about hockey measure with parents reporting slightly higher scores than child participants (t=-2.10, p=.038). Measures of perceived hockey skill showed similar mean scores for parent and child participants and were not significantly different.

Regression Results

Given the exploratory nature of this research, a series of four multiple regressions were run in order to examine the links between mothers' and fathers' sport involvement and their children's general feelings about hockey and perceptions of skill. The parent-child agreement variable was calculated as a difference score (parent score-child's score) for both the parental pressure and parental support subscales. Also, given that only one parent responded with each child participant the data were split into two categories: father-child and mother-child. All relevant predictor variables identified in the literature and included in this study were entered on the first step of the regression analysis. The results presented in Table 4 indicate that only fathers' perception of the child's general feelings about hockey (β =.40, p<.05) and father-child agreement about parental pressure (β =.52, p<.001) accounted for a significant portion of the variability in the child's general feelings about hockey. No significant predictive relationships were found with the mother-child subgroup. Table 5 presents the results of a second regression analysis examining the predictive relationship between the same independent variables presented in table four with the child's perception of their hockey skill as the dependent measure. The results indicate that the fathers perception of their child's hockey skill (β =.38, p<.01), father-child agreement about parental support (β=-.30, p<.05) and mother-child agreement about parental support (β =-.39, p<.001) accounted for a significant portion of the variability in the child's perception of their hockey skill.

Table 4. *Un-standardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients (in parentheses) for Parent-Child Agreement and Other Sport Outcome Factors Predicting Child's General Feelings about Hockey*

Variable	Child's General Feelings About Hockey Skill	
	Fathers	Mothers
Parent's Perception of Child's Hockey Skill	-.04 (-.15)	.05 (.23)
Parent's Perception about Child's General Feelings about Hockey	.40* (.27)	.32 (.28)
Parent-Child Agreement about Parental Pressure	.28*** (.52)	.17 (.29)
Parent-Child Agreement about Parental Support	-.045 (-.06)	-.22 (-.25)
Adjusted R^2	.337	.034

Note. * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$

Table 5. *Un-standardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients (in parentheses) for Parent-Child Agreement and Other Sport Outcome Factors Predicting Child's Perception of Hockey Skill*

Variable	Child's General Feelings About Hockey Skill	
	Fathers	Mothers
Parent's Perception of Child's Hockey Skill	.39** (.38)	.23 (.20)
Parent's Perception about Child's General Feelings about Hockey	-.42 (.22)	-.08 (-.01)
Parent-Child Agreement about Parental Pressure	-.11 (-.13)	.06 (.05)
Parent-Child Agreement about Parental Support	-.37* (-.30)	-.63* (-.39)
Adjusted R^2	.225	.107

Note. * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$

Discussion

The results of our investigation of parent-child agreement presents preliminary evidence in support of the notion that parents and their children do not agree on measures of parental pressure and support in their children's sport. Consistent with results reported in both the education literature (i.e., Miller, 1981) and child psychology literature (i.e., Tang, 2002) parents rarely perceive their children's subjective experiences accurately. Within the context of youth sports it appears from the results of this study that parents also have incongruent views to those of their children with regard to behaviors perceived as exerting pressure and support. The consequences of this incongruence may have both theoretical and applied implications. From a theoretical perspective it has been shown that parent's socialization efforts in the form of encouragement and facilitation impact their children's attraction to sport and their perception of competence (Welk et al., 2004). When there is incongruence between parent and child perceptions about subjective experiences children are likely to describe experiences in ways deemed as compatible with parent perceptions (Miller, 1981) and potentially in opposition to their true affective outcomes. In the short term, children are likely to maintain involvement in sports and continue to exhibit the responses they perceive as expected by their parents. In the long term however, as with other involvements driven by extrinsic motives (i.e., parental approval) children are likely to drop out of sport (Brustad, 1988; Lewthwaite & Scanlan, 1989). As reported by both Bustad (1988) and again by Lewthwaite and Scanlan (1989) children who perceive parental pressure are likely to experience competitive trait anxiety and sport burnout (Coakley, 1992) and are more likely to drop out of sport at an early age (Brustad, 1996). Consequently, parents who believe they are creating a positive and nurturing environment for their child to excel in and enjoy sports may in fact be contributing to their child's withdrawal from sports. These findings are somewhat consistent with those reported by Coakley (1992) who reported that burnout was most frequently experienced by elite athletes with parents who had made significant investments of both time and money.

Some other unique and interesting findings emerged from our investigation of parental pressure and support in youth sports. The perception of parents and their behaviors interpreted by their children as either supportive or stressful has consistently been reported as a significant predictor of children's affective reactions in sport (e.g., Fredericks & Eccles, 2002; Leff & Hoyle, 1995). The results of this study suggest that there may be partial support for this notion. Perceived pressure from fathers but not mothers in this study was negatively associated with the child's general feelings about their current sport involvement. One possible explanation is the lack of involvement that mothers play in what Therberge (2003) has described as a predominately masculine sport with less opportunity for both girls and women to

be involved. Indeed, previous research has clearly shown that father's interactions with children occur much more frequently in the context of physical play activities while mothers interact with their children within other settings (Bronstein, 1984; Russell & Russell, 1987). Furthermore, Coakley (2006) notes that youth sports provides a unique environment for fathers to be involved with their children without challenging the dominant gender ideology. For example, through youth sports fathers can be involved in their children's lives without feeling like they are domesticating their masculinity. Gavanas (2003) pointed out that male parenting in sport arenas can make fathering seem "manly" and consequently more appealing. Thus, within this context it seems logical that fathers would play a more significant role in their son's sport participation and that the beliefs and behaviors of mothers, whether they are viewed as supportive or stressful, would have minimal impact on the child's affective reactions from sport.

Father's but not mother's perception of child skill was again reported as a significant predictor of child's perception of hockey skill in this study. There also seems to be support for the notion that fathers continue to play a more dominant role than mothers in shaping the perceptions and affective outcomes experienced by children in sports (Coakley, 2006). Additional research that further examines the nature of parent-child agreement and its correlates is critical before any theoretical or applied implications can be put forward. In addition, future research should seek to examine factors that may impact or influence parent-child agreement such as gender (Kolko & Kazdin, 1993) and age (Handwerk, Larzelere, Soper, & Friman, 1999). Future studies should also seek to examine the impact of parent-child agreement across time and with a variety of team and individual sports that include both girls and boys. For example, it would be interesting to examine the long term consequences of children's participation in sport given this discrepancy in viewpoints.

It was also interesting to note that neither support from fathers or mothers was significantly associated with the child's general feelings about hockey participation which is somewhat contradictory to previous research. Findings reported by Fredericks and Eccles (2005), for example, showed that mothers', not fathers', encouragement was positively associated with children's beliefs about the value of sport participation. Again, the lack of motherly involvement in this traditionally male sport may have negated Frederick & Eccles' findings. The self selection process used to determine which parent participated in this study may have also impacted our findings.

Past research on parent and child agreement on various social-psychological measures have identified agreement as a dependent variable. For example, heightened family stress and the child's level of emotional and behavior functioning (Kolko & Kazdin, 1993), age, and gender (Tang, 2002) have been noted as significant predictors of parent-child agreement. It

would therefore seem logical to examine parent-child agreement in the same context in this study. Unfortunately, the participants were all male and approximately all the same age. In addition, the child psychology literature appears to be more concerned with understanding the nature and contributing factors to parent-child agreement having acknowledged and established that parent-child agreement is an important social-psychological construct. A similar conclusion cannot yet be made with respect to youth sports. The previous analysis suggests that parents and their children may not agree on several variables identified in the youth sport literature as important constructs in the Welk et al.'s (2005) model of parental socialization influence in youth sports. However, we have not yet determined the relative importance of parent-child agreement when predicting variables such as child enjoyment in sport and self perception of sport skill.

The results of our regression analysis showed that only the father's perception of their child's general feelings about hockey and father-child agreement about parental pressure were significant predictors of the child's self report of their general feelings about hockey. Therefore, when there is disagreement (i.e., higher agreement score indicates greater incongruence between father and child responses) child participants were more likely to report higher general feelings about hockey. This may be due in part to Miller's (1981) contention that children are more likely to exhibit the responses they perceive as expected by their parents. However, when examining the predictive relationship between parent perception and parent-child agreement with the child participant's perception of hockey skill a different pattern of results was found. Unlike the child's general feelings about hockey, parent-child agreement on parental pressure showed no relationship and parent-child agreement about parental support was a significant predictor for both father and mother subgroups. The varying pattern of these results clearly warrants further examination. In addition, the self selection process used to determine parent participation in the study my have limited the external validity of our results. The application of this study's results are further limited by the absence of construct or discriminant validity data in support of both the Leff & Hoyle (1995) measure of parental support and pressure and the measures used to assess child's hockey skill. The study of parent-child agreement in youth sports is an emerging new topic in the study of youth sports; however, continuing research should seek to validate measures of these important constructs. Future studies should also include both parents and/or guardians in an attempt to compare and contrast fathers and mothers level of agreement with their children. Replication of this study with varying ages, gender, sports, and sport ability should be completed before we attempt to explain and generalize the results of this study. One conclusion, however, at this point is clear. That is that parents and their children do not agree on the extent and nature of parental involvement than that this incongruence has implications for children's affective

reactions and potentially their enduring involvement in sports.

From an applied perspective incongruence between parent and child perceptions has implications for sport programming. Recognizing that parents continue to play a critical role in socializing their children into sports and facilitate and even interpret their children's affective reactions from sport, the results of this study suggest that parents may fail to recognize that increasing the degree of involvement in their child's sport may be viewed by their children as stressful rather than supportive. This is critical in that although parent's main objective is to maximize both the benefits and performance of their child, their involvement may be compromising or negatively influencing their child's participation (Woolger & Power, 1993). This is an extremely important consideration particularly among this age group where previous research has shown that the primary reason for withdrawing from a sport was lack of enjoyment (Butcher, Lindner & Johns, 2002; Ewing & Seefeldt, 1996). Mechanisms that open and facilitate the lines of communication between parents and children may create opportunities for children to communicate their feelings to their parents. In the absence of contradictory information, over-involved parents with good intentions will continue unabated.

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