IS PARENTAL PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED SPORTS ASSOCIATED WITH POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT?

by

Lara Andrews

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Approved: _____
Bahira Trask, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
Barbara H. Settles, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of thesis on behalf of the Advisory Committee

Approved: _____
Rena Hallam, Ph.D.
Chair of the Department of Human Services and Family Studies

Approved: _____
Lynn Okagaki, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Education and Human Development

Approved: _____
James G. Richards, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine parents' levels of involvement in organized sports and children's Positive Youth Development (PYD). Many families structure their lives around organized sports, which impact their family relationships and the family system as a whole. Using data from Grade 6 participants (n=629) and their parents from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development, the current study assessed the role of parenting in organized sports and its association with children's overall PYD and each of the five C's of PYD (competence, character, connection, confidence, and caring and compassion). Data analysis was guided by Hellstedt's (1987) family systems theory adapted for the sports environment. Results from this study indicated that higher levels of parental involvement in their children's organized sports was significantly associated with children's higher levels of connection with their family, peers, school, and community. Results also indicated that moderate parental involvement in organized sports was significantly associated with children's higher levels of confidence, whereas higher and lower levels of parental involvement in organized sports was associated with lower levels of confidence. These findings reveal information about parenting levels in organized sports and how this associates with children's levels of connection and confidence.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The value of youth sport as a vehicle for personal development has been recognized nationally and internationally. The First Lady of the United States of America, Michelle Obama, launched the "Let's Move!" campaign dedicated to battle childhood obesity (Let's Move, 2010). The Let's Move! (2010) campaign was developed to inform and foster supportive healthy choices and to help children become more physically active. Michelle Obama states, "The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake" (Let's Move, 2010, p. 1). Similar trends exist in the Canadian Government and British Government, who have also made impacting decisions to increase their population's health. Canadian Parliament passed a Bill in June 2002 called 'An Act to Promote Physical Activity and Sport' (Holt & Sehn, 2008). The Canadian Law and Government Division (2002) developed the bill to educate the nation about the importance of the role of sport and physical activity in Canadian society and culture (as cited by Holt & Sehn, 2008). Britain's government provided greater emphasis on the many health benefits of physical activity, in an effort to change the nation's lens on sports (Holt & Sehn, 2008). The increase in inactivity and obesity in the U.S, Canada, and Britain over the past few years are key factors that have influenced the international push for changing the way organized sport is viewed (Holt & Sehn,

2008). Janssen et al. (2005), states that such crisis in youth's society is common among many countries.

Today's children live a different lifestyle than those of previous generations, especially due to the increase in technology in the American society. Larson (1994) addresses the concerns about the increase in inactivity and the increase in obesity due to playing video games, watching television, and use of other forms of electronics, those of which do not foster the emotional, cognitive, and physical development needed during youth development. According to Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign, one out of three children in America are overweight or obese (2010). Furthermore, Smith, Green, and Roberts (2004) claim, as obesity continues to increase and physical activity is reducing within schools in the United States, "Participation in organized sports appears to be increasing" (p. 25). The sports environment is popular among youth and has the potential to foster essential developmental stages, while providing an avenue for societies to move toward a model of Positive Youth Development through organized sports.

Parental influences in organized sports are broad themes that have received little attention among family researchers and youth sport researchers. Previous studies have established some associations between parental influences in youths organized sports and children's experiences in organized sports. However, the majority of these studies have used parents from the same organization or team. The current study uses a nationwide sample from 13 states, most of which are from different towns and cities. This study provides a perspective from parents and children who are participating in different sports (basketball, ice hockey, baseball etc.), different types of sport arrangements (i.e. team vs. individual sports), and most likely different types of

organizations (i.e. community-based vs. school-based). This provides a more holistic perspective of parenting levels of involvement in a wide range of organized youth sports and its association with children's outcomes.

In particular, the current study aimed to examine associations between levels of parent involvement in organized sports and children's Positive Youth Development (PYD). PYD is a general term used in literature that focuses on the promotion of a variety of desired outcomes or competencies in young people (Lerner, Lerner, Phelps & colleagues, 2008). Such competencies include the five C's: competence, character, connection, confidence, and caring and compassion. By using the PYD framework to explore parents' levels of involvement and youth's outcomes in organized sports, this study was able to examine youth's overall PYD and each of the five C's. Considering this research and guided by the family systems theory, the following research questions are posed:

Research Questions

1. Is the level of parental involvement in children's organized sports associated with Positive Youth Development (PYD)?
2. Is the level of parental involvement in children's organized sports associated with each of the 5 C's of PYD (i.e., competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring)?

Hypotheses

1. There are two feasible hypotheses for how parent involvement in sports would be associated with PYD and the five C's. Firstly, higher level of parental

involvement in organized sports will be associated with higher PYD scores, reflecting a positive linear association.

This hypothesis is based on research conducted by Averill and Power (1995) and Stein, Raedeke, and Glenn (1999) showing evidence of a positive linear association between parent's high level of involvement and children's sports experiences. Woolger and Power (2000) also found a positive association between mothers' high performance goals and children's intrinsic motivation.

2. Secondly, a curvilinear relationship between parent involvement in organized sports and PYD and the five C's, such that the highest PYD scores would be found among children with moderately involved parents.

   This hypothesis is based on a second body of research conducted by Hellstedt (1987) who has suggested that moderately involved parents was associated with better child outcomes in sports. Holt and Sehn (2012) suggest that parents who are moderately supportive in competitive youth sports may help their child to gain positive experiences in sports. Previous studies also found that moderate involvement from parents, rather than extreme levels of involvement in sport, resulted in the most enjoyment for child athletes (Bremmer, 2012; Stein et al., 1999).

3. Finally, parent involvement in organized sports may be most strongly associated with confidence, relative to the other 5 C's.

It is expected that this relationship will be curvilinear, such that the higher confidence scores will be found among children with moderately involved parents. This hypothesis is based on a second body of research conducted by Wolfenden and Holt (2005), in which over-involved parents were found to be perceived as a source of pressure from their children, which in turn may undermine children's confidence. According to Hellstedts (1987) theory and research by Stein et al. (1999), under-involved parents and over-involved parents may cause the child to experience stress and lowered self-esteem.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

During the past decade, a new approach to youth development has been introduced. The Positive Youth Development perspective looks at youth as resources rather than as problems in society (Lerner et al., 2008). The National 4-H study of PYD is a study that used participants who participated in 4-H programs, other out-of-school programs (e.g. sports, arts, community service etc.), and youth who did not participate in any programs. PYD researchers hypothesized that, "the availability of activities that support the Five C's would help steer young people toward a life of successful contributions" (Lerner et al., 2008, p. 8). The current study is focused specifically on organized sports programs and the potential for the sports context to play a significant role in promoting PYD. This review is designed to summarize the current literature on family systems theory and PYD as useful frameworks to describe and critique what is known about participation in organized sports and PYD, parental involvement and PYD, and parents' levels of involvement and children's experiences in organized sports.

Theoretical Approach

Family systems theory emerged in the 1960s but it was discussed long before the theory was developed by other researchers (Smith & Hamon, 2012). According to Smith and Hamon (2012) the basic assumption of this theory is the idea that "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts," and that the family is not just a group of

individuals who are related and live together; rather a family "has a holistic quality" (Smith & Hamon, 2012, p. 146). This theory views the family as a natural social system, as it contains its own communicative patterns, roles, rules, power structures, and characteristics. Instead of analyzing an individual as its own system or part, family systems theory focuses on "The integration of parts" (p. 146). Essentially, the individual can be largely understood only by the context of the whole.

The relationship of parents and their athlete children requires a theoretical framework that incorporates the understanding of both family systems and sports psychology together as one unit. Berryman (1988) expressed that there has been a large growth over the past few decades in sports programs for children. This cultural shift in society has led to significant changes in the structure of the American family. As a result, Hellstedt (1987, 1990, & 2000) developed a way to use family systems theory and adapt it to include the sports environment. Hellstedt (1990) believes, "A family social system has developed which is centered on youth sports involvement of the children" (p. 135). The family system provides a significant amount of the family's money, time, and emotional energy geared towards youth sports for the children (Hellstedt, 1990). Hellstedt, Rooks, and Watson (1988) describe this type of family system as "The athletic family" (p.136). In order to accurately analyze these families and the sports environment, Hellstedt (1987) constructed a descriptive model of athletic families using three levels of parental behaviors: under-involved, moderately-involved, and overly-involved. Much of Hellstedt's work was developed through clinical experiments, which open the door to new opportunities for researchers to explore the dynamics of families with athlete children through empirical and quantitative research.

A framework that is useful when analyzing structural properties of a family is found in Minuchin's (1974) work. According to Minuchin's (1974) model, a family is made up of main structural components including a power hierarchy, interaction patterns, rules, subsystems, and types of boundaries among subsystems. The conceptual model Hellstedt (1987) used is based on two of the main family systems concepts: (a) boundaries, and (b) subsystems. According to Minuchin (1974), "Boundaries define who participates in the system and how they participate" (as cited by Bremer, 2012, p. 237). Families can maintain boundaries by incorporating the goals and policies that are deemed beneficial to the family whole, while at the same time filtering out external elements that could be harmful to the family (Simon & Hamon, 2012). Family boundaries typically can be classified as falling between two extremes on a continuum, from disengaged to enmeshed.

Disengaged families have much personal separation and little involvement with one another (Bremmer, 2012). A specific example of a disengaged athlete family is a child involved in sports without any expressed interest of siblings or parents. Another example may be that a family may have members involved in separate teams, without any interaction with one another. On the contrary, an example of an enmeshed athlete family may be an entire family that is heavily involved in and all participating in the same sport, or even participating on the same team. Boundaries also highlight the degree of separation or overlap between the family unit and the environment. Family systems are composed of one or more subsystems, such as a parental subsystem, a sibling subsystem, and a spousal subsystem (Simon & Hamon, 2012). These are smaller units that exist as different functional units within the larger family system.

A subsystem includes some family members while excluding other family members. Family hierarchy may exist at different levels within subsystems, such as parent and child (Bremer, 2012). Some families might have a child that plays a sport in their own subsystem that, in turn, might exclude their siblings who may not compete in a sport, and therefore potentially leave out other children in the family (Bowen, 1978). While this may be true for some families, others may have healthy functioning sibling systems. Organized sports exist in the outside world, where families are able to have various interactions within their own unit and simultaneously interact with the outside world of youth sports (Hellstedt, 2000).

Athlete families are constantly learning developmental tasks that need to be mastered, as the family unit is moving through the stages of raising their young children to become adult children (Bremer, 2012). Based on the work from Carter and McGoldrick's (1989) developmental model, Hellstedt (1995, 2000, 2005) adapted this model for athlete families and highlighted the importance of the developmental tasks that athlete families need to master using two stages: the family with young children (4 to 12 years) and the family with adolescent children (13 to 18 years). The current study assessed only children within Hellstedt's (1995, 2000, 2005) first stage. Families with young children must master tasks such as: (a) introducing the child to sporting activities (both individual and team sports); (b) providing good coaching and a safe sporting environment; (c) achieving a balance between sport time and family and non-sport time; (d) emphasizing skill development, enjoyment and fun of the game, and minimizing the importance of winning; and (e) parental modeling (not just verbalizing) of family values of hard work and goal attainment (Hellstedt, 1995). These tasks can be challenging for athlete families to undertake, especially while they

are simultaneously working to accomplish the same developmental tasks of non-athlete family's.

The family systems theory is important when analyzing the integration of family members, as individual members can only be understood within the context of the whole family (Smith & Hamon, 2012). Smith and Hamon (2012) states that, "In addition to being a parent, child, student, or athlete, there are common psychological roles that family members take on. Refusing to play one's role can upset the family equilibrium and result in negative feedback" (p. 151). This theory specifically focuses on each member within the family by highlighting the everyday challenges that parents and children face as a family unit. By using family systems theory as a lens to analyze parents' levels of involvement in organized sports, guided by the developmental model adapted for assessing the developmental tasks that athlete families must master, these frameworks provide us with an approach to analyze the various roles and influences that individuals within a family play and how these influences impact their children's outcomes in organized sports.

Positive Youth Development

The emergence of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspective has been used as a lens to look at the development of adolescents. Lerner, Fisher, and Weinberg (2000) created a framework of PYD which reflects five desired outcomes of youth development: competence, character, connection, confidence, caring and compassion, and connection. This perspective focuses on the key idea of plasticity of development, suggesting that individuals have the potential for systematic change across the life span. This perspective is important as it expresses that, "adolescents trajectories are not fixed and can be significantly influenced by factors in their homes,

schools, and communities" (Lerner, Lerner, & Phelps et al., 2008). PYD is a relatively new approach that views young people as resources that can be shaped and developed instead of problems to be fixed or managed. The PYD approach aims to have a more positive vision of youth's potential by focusing on educating, understanding, and engaging in children's useful and productive activities.

The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (NRCIM, 2002), outlines four main categories of youth development: physical, psychological/emotional, intellectual, and social. In the sports setting, PYD includes becoming physically fit, learning positive health behaviors, and developing psychological attributes and specific skills (e.g. stress management and goal setting) (Gould & Carson, 2008). These developmental areas provide many corresponding assets which are suggested to facilitate PYD. These developmental assets include out-of-school activities, which provide youth with many opportunities to interact and work with adults. According to Lerner et al. (2008), the most important developmental asset associated with PYD is people. The authors suggest, "Family members play the largest role in the positive development of youth" (Lerner et al, 2008, p. 11).

Lerner et al.'s (2000) model of National Youth Policy suggests that "Policies must be developed to allow families and programs to foster and promote positive development" (as cited by Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005, p. 23). If these policies take place, especially in youth sports organizations and programs, youth, will in, turn demonstrate the five 'C's of Positive Youth Development (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). As youth transition into adulthood, their growth in healthy physical, psychological/emotional, intellectual, and social development can collectively lead to the sixth 'C' of Positive Youth Development known as contribution (Fraser-Thomas et

al., 2005). As ‘good youth’ develop into adults, they can ‘give back’ or contribute to civil society while promoting positive youth development to the generations behind them.

Positive Youth Development approach focuses on the active promotion of optimal human development and the potential and capacity of each individual young person. According to Hamilton, Hamilton, and Pittman (2004) optimal youth development “enables individuals to lead a healthy, satisfying, and productive life as youth, and later as adults, because they gain the competence to earn a living, to engage in civic activities, to nurture others, and to participate in social relationships and cultural activities” (p. 3). PYD programs recognize the contextual variability in youth’s experiences and what is considered ‘optimal’ or ‘healthy’ development for youth in different settings or cultures. This idea reflects Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, as youth development programs emphasize the interrelationship of multiple social contexts through which the development of a person moves (Lerner et al., 2005).

By nature, PYD is a broad concept that includes the growth of diverse competencies that can help youth in sports, in their current life and their future life. The benefits of youth’s participation in sports have been of interest to researchers for some time; however, minimal research has examined parents’ levels of involvement in organized sports and how this impacts their children’s outcomes. Youth sports can be an important community influence on PYD. Adults (parents or coaches) who are involved in organized sport may be supporting, teaching, affirming, enforcing, or modeling life skills through organized sports, which may provide an avenue for youth participants to achieve positive development.

Participation in Organized Sport

Sports is a context worth studying when analyzing PYD as it has become incredibly popular among youth. According to the National Federation of State High School Association (2009), 7.5 million U.S. high school teens compete in sports. In 2008, 44 million children under the age of 18 participated in community youth sports organizations in the U.S. (National Council of Youth Sports, 2008). According to Hofferth and Sandberg (1998), in the U.S., up to 75% of 3- to 12-year-olds spend up to five hours per week participating in youth sports. According to Corbeil (2000), similar trends exist as 2.2 million children aged 5-14 years regularly participate in school, community and private sports programs. About 51% of these active children participated in more than one sport and were involved in sports activities, on average, about 2.6 times per week, per sport, during their sport's season (Corbeil, 2000). In Britain, 1.6 million children aged 11-15 years participated in sports in 2012; during the same year the percentage of children who participated in sports increased to 86.6% (Department of Culture Media and Sport, 2013). On average, adolescents participate in sports four to six hours per week more than anything else during their leisure time (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; Larson & Verma, 1999). Parents generally consider participation in sports a healthy and educational activity for youth.

Literature about today's youth has highlighted many growing concerns about the increase in inactivity and obesity (Holt & Sehn, 2008; Janssen et al., 2005; Smith, Green & Roberts, 2004; Trost et al., 2003). Some major trends have been developed to minimize these growing concerns. Holt and Sehn (2008) reported a vast increase in youth sport registrations in the U.S., Canada and the UK. For example, U.S. youth soccer registrations increased to 17.5 million participants in 2002 (Hilgers, 2006). Similarly, the Canadian Soccer Association (2005) reported that registrations (both

youth and adults) in organized soccer increased by 300,000 from 1995-2005, and 84.9% of this increase was due to the rise in junior registrations (i.e. individuals under 18 years old). According to Sport England (2003), similar trends were also found in the UK, along with an increase in female participation in team sports, specifically in soccer. As the importance of youth sports increases internationally and nationally, more families are being exposed to the sports environment.

Participating in sports has been associated with a range of outcomes. Youth sports participation has the ability to provide children with sports experience while initiating leadership skills, academic achievement, develop initiative, and goal-setting skills (Gould & Carson, 2008). Youth sports programs are critical when children are learning motor skills, cooperation, discipline, and self-control (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). According to Alfano, Kleges, Murray, Beech, and McClananhan (2002), as well as Perkins, Jacobs, Barber, and Eccles (2004), some positive outcomes that exist in children's participation in youths sports include: reduced body fat, increased physical fitness, and a higher percentage of participation in physical activity and sports in adulthood, compared with children who do not participate in youth sports (as cited by Holt & Sehn, 2012). Furthermore, evidence of higher intrinsic motivation, effort, and concentration exist when children participate in youth organized sports compared with children who socialize with friends and watch television (Larson 1994; Lowe Vandell et al., 2005). Hansen, Larson, and Dworkin (2003) note the significance of the sports context, as it provides adolescents a way in which they are able to explore their emotions and develop their identities.

Additional positive outcomes are also associated with youth sports participation including educational and occupational opportunities (Eccles, Barber,

Stone, & Hunt, 2003; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003), protection against regular cigarette smoking (Audrain-McGovern, Rodriquez, Wileyto, Schmitz, & Shield, 2006), reduced probability of engaging in risky sexual behaviors (Miller, Sabo, Farrell, Barnes, & Melnick, 1998), and protection against suicidal behavior (Brown & Blanton, 2002). Richman and Shaffer (2000) also found that sports participation leads to high self-esteem among female college students in America.

It is important to note that negative outcomes are also associated with participation in youth sports. According to Hellstedt (2005), "The demands of athletic competition and training often present to families unique circumstances that deviate from the 'normal' family life cycle," (p. 907). An example given by Hellstedt (2005) suggested that a child athlete, such as a figure skater or swimmer, must spend many hours per week training, while consuming multiple family resources (i.e. time, money, and energy), thus impacting the whole family. A career-ending injury, after years of training and financial and emotional investments, may cause grief for the athlete and family to endure or resolve. These experiences may negatively affect the young athlete and the family. Although, an alternative may be that a career-ending injury may lead the young athlete into an alternative area of interest, for example: coaching, refereeing, volunteering etc.

Previous research on participation in sports has revealed associations with both positive and negative developmental outcomes (Eccles et al., 2003). Sports is often generalized as one entity; however, there are multiple components within sport that may provide useful insight for studying this topic. An aspect of sports in particular is competition. Holt and Sehn (2008) focus their research on reviewing the process by which PYD is achieved through participation in youth competitive sports. Competition

has been suggested as a key variable in generating positive and negative outcomes within sports (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003). Competition may help encourage positive youth outcomes, such as character-building skills and self-evaluation (Hansen et al., 2003). However, it may also limit some developmental skills, such as collaborative abilities, possibly exposing youth to negative outcomes (Hansen et al., 2003). By looking deeper into sports and analyzing the different aspects that exist within sports - such as competition, winning, or losing - future research may be able to correctly analyze where and how youth can gain developmental opportunities through sports.

Although participation in youths sports programs is supposed to provide the opportunity for personal growth by promoting and providing activities that may positively influence youth development, an understanding of how these programs influence children's and adolescents' development remains abstract. Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) suggest that PYD is likely to be experienced when youth programs include skill-building activities, positive relationships between children and adults, community involvement, and personal recognition (as cited by Holt & Sehn, 2012). This area of research has yet to be examined thoroughly, thus, the current study has examined the potential for organized sports to foster positive development for youth.

Parental Involvement and Positive Youth Development

There is no doubt that parents may play a positive role for youth sports career development; however, parents and their involvement with their child can range dramatically. Grolnick and Ryan (1987) define parental involvement as "The extent to which a parent is interested in, knowledgeable about, and takes an active role in the child's life," (p. 114). In many ways, involvement is a reflection of parents' positive

attention and dedication to their child-rearing process (Holt, Tamminen, Black, Sehn, & Wall, 2008). Sometimes, more involvement is generally perceived as better, especially when parents are providing children with support and resources. However, other times parental involvement can be too much, and over-involvement can undermine their children's autonomy (Grolnick, 2003).

Parents have a unique and prominent influence on their children's psychological growth, motivation, and behavior (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Even though parental influence generally begins to decline as children grow older, parents play particularly important roles in supporting early adolescents (Cote, 1999). This is true in all areas of parenting, especially in children's involvement in organized sports. According to previous work in this field, there is evidence of the impact of parental commitment to their children's sports participation, sports development, and sports career documented by numerous authors (Wuerth, Lee, & Alfermann, 2004). It is usually the parents who act as the primary socializing agents when getting their children involved in any youth activity program. If mom and/or dad participate in a soccer league, the child is likely to be exposed to that environment during practices, games, and social events.

Parents are often a child's first teacher when learning the basic developmental stages of sports skills. According to Wylleman, Deknop, Ewing, and Cumming (2000), much of the previous research suggests that parental support is significant and fundamental to children's success and participation in sports. This idea seems to be consistent across multiple studies. According to Hemery (1987), many young athletes who consider themselves elite emphasize their parents' supportive influence during their sporting career. Parents who have been, or who are active athletes themselves

may be likely to act as their child's first coach, and are likely to show high commitment to the sports career of their children (Wuerth et al., 2004). In order to feel as though they are supporting their child as he/she climbs the ladder of success, parents may invest emotional support, time, and money. These types of support can vary on a continuum; some parents may invest more emotional support, time, and money, while some parents may invest very little in one area, and a great deal in another.

Cotes (1999) researched elite athletes, highlighting the important roles parents play in children's early development. Cotes (1999) presented a study that described patterns in the dynamics of families with talented athletes throughout their development in sport. The participants included one family of an elite tennis player and three families of elite rowers, which are all relatively expensive sports. All the families came from a middle-class background. The study consisted of fifteen open-ended interviews, including all members in each family. Results suggested that individual athletes go through transitional stages from early childhood to adolescence, and that parents are going through the transition along with their children. Specifically, the study found that parents progress from a leadership role in early childhood to more of a supporting and following role during adolescence. This finding is an important concept to understand, as parents have a small window during their children's childhood through adolescences when they have a significant influence on their child's development, especially through an avenue like organized sports. However, this research is based on a small sample of elite athletes and their families, which does not include the general population of participants in American youth sports.

According to research conducted by McElroy (1982), athletes who expressed signs of parental pressure displayed outcomes of lowered self-esteem in comparison to those without perceived parental pressure. Research conducted by Donnelly (1993) found similar outcomes associated with parental pressure, as these athletes were expressing feelings such as guilt and distress. Parental pressure is defined as "Parental behavior that signifies unattainable or high expectations from the child athlete's point of view" (Bremer, 2012, p. 240). Pressure has the potential to manifest in several ways, such as leading to parents who push their child athlete to play at a more advanced level or practice more, or as parents expressing disappointment after the child athlete has a poor performance (Bremer, 2012). Parental over-involvement has been addressed as one type of parental pressure (Hellstedt, 2000). Wolfenden and Holt (2005) conducted a study examining players', parents', and coaches' perceptions of development in elite tennis players. The researchers interviewed nine players aged 13-15 years, four parents, and two coaches. According to this study, over-involvement was found to be problematic at competitions, often causing tension between the child athlete and parent. The parents in this study were perceived as a source of pressure.

Parental Involvement and Children's Experiences in Organized Sports

Parenting behaviors and parenting styles can have both positive and negative influences on children's experiences, in everyday life and especially when the child participates in organized sports. According to Fraser-Thomas et al. (2005), previous researchers have found that children who perceive more supportive, positive, and encouraging interactions and less pressure from parents, display more intrinsic motivation, experience more sports enjoyment, and show more motivation to complete a challenge (Brustad, 1992, Brustad & Weigand, 1989; Scanlan & Lewthwaite, 1986).

McCarthy and Jones (2007) from Staffordshine University examined the sources of enjoyment and non-enjoyment in sports participation. The researchers conducted a focus group interview of fifty-five athletes (22 male, 23 female, mean age for all youth = 10.3 years-old) who participated in youth sports. The athletes participated in multiple types of sports ranging from individual sports to team sports. Parental over-involvement was described as a common experience for child athletes, and as a result, the child athlete's enjoyment for sports diminished (McCarthy & Jones, 2007). The effect of parental expectations and the impact they have on their child athlete varies between different studies. It is the athletes' perception of their parent's expectation or involvement that plays a vital role in understanding parental pressure or over-involvement.

Parental involvement can be viewed by two constructs within involvement: (1) the level of involvement and (2) the degree of involvement - which can range from too little to too much (Bremer, 2012). Variations of outcomes have been found among studies analyzing parental involvement. Evidence of positive linear relationships between parent involvement and the child's sports experiences have been indicated within three particular studies (Bremer, 2012). A study conducted by Stein et al. (1999) included forty-two participants aged 13-14 years old who were involved in youth soccer, football, and volleyball. The athletes completed a survey during regular scheduled practice. Athletes were asked to rate their parents' involvement level and degree, and also completed a survey on the related stress and enjoyment created by the parents in sports. Stein et al. (1999) found a positive association between fathers' and mothers' high level and high degree of involvement and the child's enjoyable experience in sports. Averill and Power (1995) found a positive association between

mothers' high performance goals and the child's enjoyment of participation in youth soccer, but no association was found between fathers' high performance goals and child's enjoyment of participation in youth soccer. Woolger and Power (2000) found a positive relationship between the mothers' high performance goals and the child's intrinsic motivation. When looking at linear relationships, parental involvement through parental performance goals showed positive relationships, which influenced the child to enjoy his/her participation in youth sports (Bremer, 2012). Bremmer's (2012) study is unique as it identifies the differences between mothers' and fathers' high performance goals and how the parents' goals impact their child's outcomes. By identifying differences between mothers and fathers and their parental influences on their children through participation in organized sports, Bremmer (2012) adds a unique and valuable perspective on how gender differences of parents may play a role in this area of study. However, these studies only analyze one aspect of youth development (enjoyment or intrinsic motivation), rather than multiple aspects of sports through which children are able to gain optimal youth development, such as PYD.

Holt, Tamminen, Black, Mandigo, and Fox (2009) found that children expressed enhanced sports enjoyment when they perceived their parents as "positively involved and satisfied with their participation in sports" (p. 38). However, evidence of reports from children have also highlighted anxiety, particularly when the child perceives their parents as being over-involved, having extremely high expectations, or placing too much pressure to perform (Gould, Tuffey, Udry, & Loehr, 1996; Leff & Hoyle, 1995). Holt and Wall (2005) conducted a similar study which looked at parents who were not extensively involved in the players' sporting involvement and focused on parental influences on early adolescents' experiences in sports. The two key

parental behaviors these authors focused on were parental support and parental control. The authors analyzed types of parental support by considering comments that conveyed attachment, nurturance, cohesion, acceptance, love, encouragement, and physical affection. In order to analyze types of parental control, they also considered comments that reflected punishment, supervision, discipline, and monitoring (Holt & Wall, 2005). This study focused on the verbal reactions of parents in competitive youth soccer. Data was collected using interviews, over 120 hours of direct observations of 10-14-year-old youth soccer games, and diaries. The parents were categorized into six themes: encouragement, instruction, negative comments, derogatory comments, performance contingent feedback, and striking a balance. The parents' comments were found to be related to the games' circumstances. Holt and Wall (2005) suggest that these findings provide a speculation that verbal reactions may constitute parental involvement (i.e. supportive comments or controlling comments) in organized sports and may associate with children's experiences in sports. They suspect, "The parents who engage in more supportive behaviors during competitive youth sports events may help to produce more positive experiences for their children" (Holt & Wall, 2005, p. 29). However, further research is required to examine the relationship between parents' behaviors and their children's outcomes associated with PYD.

In sum, based on the above noted-research, organized sports can be a context through which youth are able to foster PYD. In addition, increased parental involvement in general (and in organized sports specifically) is likely good for youth development and children's experiences, provided that parents are not over-involved

or negatively involved. However, there has yet to be a study that looks at parental involvement in organized sports and children's overall development, such as PYD.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Data and Sample

This project is a secondary analysis of data collected by the 4-H Longitudinal Study of Positive Youth Development (4-H Study). The 4-H Study surveyed over 7,000 students who were followed from Grades 5 to 12 during 2002 to 2010 and over 3,000 parents of these children. Participants were surveyed from 13 states, located in a total of 40 cities, thus providing regional, racial/ethnic, rural/urban, and religious variation. The 4-H Study was developed to analyze the several ways in which involvement in out-of-school activities predicts positive development and decreased risk during adolescence (Lerner et al., 2008). This research was funded by the National 4-H Council to understand developmental assets that exist or potentially exist in youth programs, especially 4-H programs (Lerner et al., 2008). Participants in the 4-H Study were 4-H participants as well as a matched group of non 4-H participants. Non 4-H participants were either uninvolved in youth programs or involved in other out-of-school activities such as, sports, arts, religious groups, and school clubs. Participants made their own decisions on whether they got involved in out-of-school activities; researchers did not assign them to programs (Lerner et al., 2008). This is an important distinction as these participants chose their own levels of involvement in out-of-school activities. Additional details about the study's sample, design, and procedures can be found in Lerner et al. (2005).

At wave II a total of 1,879 youth and 1,274 of their parents participated in data collection. Participants from wave II were excluded from this current study if their parents did not report that their child participated in organized sports, therefore, 476 participants were dropped from analyses. Another 115 parents were dropped from the final analyses as they did not specify their role in their child's sports. An additional 54 youth (7.9% of the eligible sample), were dropped from the final analyses due to missing data on other variables. This resulted in a sample size of 629 youth (46.1% male; 53.9% female). Youth were 6th graders who were on average 12 years old (SD = .58). The sample consisted of primarily European American youth (72.9%) followed by Hispanic youth (10.9%), African American youth (4.7%), and youth who were multi-racial or of another race (11.5%). The average household income was $63,418 (SD = $31,406) with 31.2% of these families reporting incomes of $100,000 or more per year.

Measures

Independent variable: Level of parental involvement in sport

During the Wave II interview, parents reported on whether they participated in sports with their child. Parents who answered affirmatively were then asked to respond to an open-ended qualitative item asking them what role they played when participating with their child. These items were recoded to create a new variable indicating the level of involvement parents had with their child's sports. This was done by first recoding parents who indicated that they were uninvolved as 0 (no participation). Then, parents who indicated that they did participate and what their role was were recoded on a continuous scale to indicate their level of involvement.

Specifically, parent-reported roles were categorized into 6 levels of involvement: 1 = *parent provided transportation*; 2 = *parent provided encouragement or was a spectator/fan*; 3 = *parent provided support/help, or practiced with their child*; 4 = *parent was a volunteer/fundraiser/official*; 5 = *parent was a coach/assistant coach*; 6 = *parent was a Vice President of the sports league or on the board*. This resulted in a seven point scale ranging from 0 = *uninvolved* to 6 = *highly involved* (i.e. parent was a Vice President/board member of the league).

Dependent variable: Positive Youth Development and the Five C's

In addition to measuring overall PYD, this study examined Wave II composite variables created by the 4-H Study that assessed each of the individual five C's. Scores on these variables can also range from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating higher competence, confidence, connection, character, or caring. The five C's are conceptualized as follows:

Competence is a domain specific positive view of one's actions. Six items form the academic competence scale and six items form the social competence scale, both of which are from the Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1983). The remaining seven items form the physical competence and self-reported grades which are derived from the Search Institutes Profile of Student Life – Attitudes and Behaviors Survey (PSL-AB) (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005).

*Confidenc*e is an overall internal sense of positive self-efficacy and self-worth. Positive identity is measured in six of the items developed from PSL-AB (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005). The remaining six items are from the self-worth scale from the Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1983). These items are

counterbalanced. In order to reflect high competence and low competence, half of the items begin with positive sentences and the other half begin with negative sentences.

Connection encompasses a positive bond or relationship with people and institutions that reflect bidirectional interactions between the individual and family, peers, community, and school. Connection is measured using twenty-two items from PSL-AB. These connections are classified as measuring connection with: family (six items), peers (four items), community (five items), and school (seven items) (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005).

Character involves a sense of right and wrong, integrity, respect for cultural and societal rules, and standards for correct behaviors. Eighteen items are used from the PSL-AB study (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005). These items are classified as: personal values (five items), interpersonal skills (three items), valuing diversity (one item), and social conscience (six items).

Caring is the degree of empathy and sympathy. Five items are used to measure caring from Eisenberg Sympathy Scale (ESS) (Eisenberg et al., 1996). These items measure the degree to which a participant feels sorry for the distress of others (Lerner et al., 2005).

An overall measure of PYD was assessed using a Wave II composite variable that was created by researchers in the 4-H Study based on Lerner et al.'s (2005) model of PYD. This composite included 83 youth- and parent-reported items that assessed each of the individual five C's of PYD: competence, confidence, connection, character and caring. In the present study, a sixth-grade PYD score for each participant was computed as the mean of their scores on composite variables measuring each of the individual- five C's. Scores can range from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating

higher PYD and lower scores indicating lower PYD. With a score of 85 or more (in the top quartile), PYD is considered high (Lerner et al., 2005).

Table 1 includes scales and descriptive information for the overall PYD measure and each of the five C's. Additional details about these measures, their reliability/validity, and how they were constructed are provided in Lerner et al. (2005).

Table 1 Measurement model of the five C's and Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development
Competence
Academic competence (Harter, 1983)
School engagement (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005)
Self-reported grades (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005)
Social competence (Harter, 1983)
Confidence
Positive identity (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005)
Self-worth (Harter, 1983)
Connection
Family (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005)
School or school engagement (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005)
Community (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005)
Peer support (Armsden & Greenberger, 1987)
Character
Personal values (Benson et al., 1998)
Values diversity (Benson et al., 1998)
Social conscience (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005)
Interpersonal values and skills (Benson et al., 1998; Theokas et al., 2005)
Caring
Sympathy: pain, rejection, unfortunate, loneliness, disadvantage (Einsenburg et al.,1996)

Note: PYD consists of the five C's: competence, confidence, connection, character and caring. This is model was adapted from Lerner et al.'s (2005) model.

Control Variables

In the current study youth sex was recoded as 0 = *male* and 1 = *female*. Youth's age was coded as a continuous variable indicating age in years and months. Youth's race was coded using dummy variables indicating whether youth were Hispanic, African American, or some "other" race (European Americans were the excluded category in the analyses). Mothers' education was coded as a continuous

variable indicating the number of years of schooling mothers had completed. This variable ranged from 8 = *8 years or less* (i.e., no more than an eighth grade education) to 20 = *20 years* (i.e., Doctorate). Analyses also controlled for family income (ranging from less than $10,000 to $100,000 or higher), marital status (coded as a dummy variable in which *single* = 0 and *married* = 1) and the number of children in a household (ranging from 1 to 7 or more).

Analyses

In order to test the hypotheses, two sets of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models were run testing the associations between parents' levels of involvement in sports and PYD, and parents' levels of involvement in sports and each of the five C's. The first set of OLS models examined the linear association between parents' levels of involvement and the outcomes. The second set of models tested the curvilinear associations between parents' levels of involvement in sports and PYD, and parents' levels of involvement in sports and each of the five C's. Initially, the current study included all covariates listed in Table 2.

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Analyses of the data from wave II were done to determine whether parental involvement levels in organized sports is associated with children's overall PYD and each of the five C's. Firstly, descriptive statistics are discussed, along with the regression analyses design and findings, followed by the discussion section.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analyses were conducted to determine the mean level of overall PYD (mean = 74.1, SD = 12.1) in grade 6 participants, and the means of each of the five C's: competence (mean = 73.2, SD = 13.2), confidence (mean = 75.3, SD = 16.5), connection (mean = 75.9, SD = 13.3), character (mean = 73.0, SD = 16.9), and caring (mean = 72.4, SD = 17.6). Parents who reported that they participated with their child in sport also reported their role in their child's organized sports: 395 (62.8%) reported as uninvolved parents; 16 (2.5%) reported that they only drove their child to and from games/practices; 80 (12.7%) reported that they provided encouragement or were spectators/fans; 50 (7.9%) reported that they were supporters/helpers or that they practiced with their child; 17 (2.7%) reported they were volunteers/ fundraisers/officials; 69 (11%) reported they were coaches/assistant coaches; and 2 (.3%) parents reported they served as Vice President or were on the league's board. A

large majority of the parents in this current study are categorized as uninvolved, followed by the second largest percentage of parents who are encouraging or supporters and fans to their children in organized sports.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics by analytic sample (n = 629)

	M (*SD*)/ %	*Range*
Outcome		
PYD	74.1 (12.1)	(41-98)
Competence	73.2 (13.2)	(37-100)
Character	73.0 (16.9)	(14-100)
Caring	72.4 (17.6)	(21-94)
Connection	75.9 (13.3)	(32-100)
Confidence	75.3 (16.5)	(17-100)
Primary Predictors		
Parent participate with their child in sport	36.9 (.48)	(0-1)
Parent's role in sport		(0-7)
Uninvolved	62.8	
Drive only	2.5	
Encourage/spectator/fan	12.7	
Supporter/helper/practice with them	7.9	
Volunteer/fundraiser/official	2.7	
Coach/assistant coach	11	
Vice President/on the board	0.3	
Covariates		
Child Gender		
Male	53.9	
Female	46.1	
Child Race		
Black	4.65	
Hispanic	10.9	
White	72.9	
Other	11.5	
Child age (years)	12.0 (.57)	(5-14 years)
Mother's years of education	14.4 (2.36)	(8-12 years)
Eighth grade or less	1.7	
Some high school	3.3	
High school diploma	21.3	
2-year college degree	36.6	
4-year college degree	21.6	
M.A. or M.S. Degree	9.9	
Doctorate	3.0	
Parent marital status		
Married	78.8 (.40)	
No. of children in household	2.51	(1-7)
Household Income	$63,419	($10,000-100,000)

Descriptive analyses also showed that 78.7% of the parents reported that they were married vs. 21.1% who reported that they were not married. Parents' household income levels varied as follows: 6.2% reported $10,000 or less; 7.8% reported $20,000; 7.2% reported $30,000; 9.4% reported $40,000; 7.9% reported $50,000; 8.1% reported $60,000; 13.5% reported $72,500; 31.2% reported $100,000 or more. Parents also reported on the number of children in the household. This ranged from 1 = one child to 7 = seven or more children (mean = 2.51, SD = 1.1) A large majority of the participants in this study were married, middle to upper class, and reported having two to three children in a household. These statistics highlight the specific population of families that participated in organized sports, such as families who can afford to fund their children in organized sports programs, and families with married parents who may have the ability to share responsibilities in providing children with transportation to attend organized sports events. Additional descriptive statistics can be found in Table 2.

Regression analyses

A series of ordinal least regression analyses were then used to examine the associations between parent involvement in sports and the outcome variables. The first set of analyses examined the linear association between parents' involvement and the outcomes. The second set of analyses added a squared term to examine whether there were curvilinear associations. After running all of the analyses, the current study found that youth's race, youth's age, and parental marital status were insignificant throughout each of the results, and, therefore were dropped from the final analyses for the sake of parsimony.

As shown in Tables 3 and 4, the majority of the regression analyses failed to find significant associations between level of parent involvement in sports and the PYD outcomes (thus failing to reject the null hypothesis that there is no association between parent involvement and the outcomes). However, two significant findings did emerge. First, as shown in Table 3, Model 4, there was evidence of a significant linear association between the level of parental involvement and children's scores on connection, such that higher levels of parental involvement in sports were associated with higher connection ($\beta = .63$, $p < .05$). Second, shown in Table 4, Model 1, there was evidence of a significant curvilinear association between the level of parental involvement and children's scores on confidence, such that both lower and higher levels of parental involvement in sports were associated with lower confidence, whereas moderate involvement was associated with higher confidence ($\beta = -.75$, $p < .05$).

As shown in Table 3, parent household income and youth's gender were significantly associated with PYD. There was evidence that being female and coming from a higher income household were all associated with higher PYD in all models. Youth who have more educated mothers had higher competence scores; and youth who came from families with more children in the household had lower confidence and caring scores.

Table 3 OLS regression models testing associations between parent role and the five Cs of PYD (n=629)

	CONFIDENCE		***CARING***		***COMPETENCE***		***CONNECTION***		***CHARACTER***		***PYD***	
	β(SD)		***β(SD)***		***β(SD)***		***β(SD)***		***β(SD)***		***β(SD)***	
Covariates												
Mothers education level	.34 (.37)		-.11(.79)		1.11 (.00)	***	-.06 (.82)		.36 (.33)		.35 (.18)	
Parent Income	.00 (.00)	***	.00 (.04)	*	.00 (.00)	***	.00 (.00)	***	.00 (.00)	***	.00 (.00)	***
Number of children	-1.63 (.03)	*	-1.65 (.04)	*	-.523 (.35)		.00 (.99)		-.36 (.61)		-.73 (.14)	
Child gender	1.64 (.30)		10.6 (.00)	***	1.99 (.08)		5.62 (.00)	***	13.27 (.00)	***	6.82 (.00)	***
Predictor Variables												
Parent level of Involvement	.18 (.68)		.38 (.43)		.26 (.44)		.63(.05)	*	.66 (.11)		.38 (.20)	
R^2	0.05		0.11		0.09		0.08		0.18		0.37	
F(df)	4.76(5)	***	9.91(5)	***	9.99(5)	***	9.09(5)	***	21.33(5)	***	15.16(5)	***

Note: +p≤.10; *p≤.05; **p≤.01; ***p≤.001.

Table 4 Curvilinear regression models testing associations between parent role and the five Cs of PYD (*n*= 629)

	CONFIDENCE		***CARING***		***COMPETENCE***		***CONNECTION***		***CHARACTER***		***PYD***	
	β(SD)		***β(SD)***		***β(SD)***		***β(SD)***		***β(SD)***		***β(SD)***	
Covariates												
Mothers education level	.29 (.45)		-.12 (.77)		1.09 (.00)	***	-.08 (.77)		.37 (.32)		.33 (.21)	
Parent Income	.00 (.00)	***	.00 (.04)	*	.00 (.00)	***	.00 (.00)	***	.00 (.00)	***	.00 (.00)	***
Number of children	-1.54 (.04)	*	-1.64 (.05)	*	-.52 (.35)		.03 (.96)		-.38 (.59)		-.70 (.17)	
Child gender	2.09 (.19)		10.65 (.00)	***	2.09 (.08)		5.79 (.00)	***	13.19 (.00)	***	6.97 (.00)	***
Predictor Variables												
Parent Involvement levels	3.56 (.02)	*	1.05 (.53)		.82 (.48)		2.07 (.06)		-.13 (.93)		1.6 (.10)	+
Parent involvement levels ²	-.75 (.02)	**	-.15 (.67)		-.13 (.62)		-.32 (.19)		-.18 (.55)		-.29 (.19)	
R^2	0.26		0.11		0.09		0.08		0.19		0.14	
F(df)	4.91 (6)	***	8.27 (6)	***	8.36 (6)	***	7.89 (6)	***	17.80 (6)	***	12.94(6)	***

Note: +$p \leq .10$; *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$; ***$p \leq .001$.

Discussion

The current study presents information from the second wave of data of the 4-H Study of PYD. The purpose of this study was to examine parents' levels of involvement in organized sports and overall PYD outcomes and each of the five C's. The first hypothesis claims that there would be a positive linear association between parents' involvement in organized sports and overall PYD and the five C's. Previous studies have found that higher general parental involvement (vs. involvement in sports) is linked to PYD and participation in organized sports is linked to PYD, however, there has yet to be a study to analyze parental involvement in sports and how this impacts general youth development. The second hypothesis was that there would be a curvilinear relationship between parents' levels of involvement and PYD and the five C's. This is based from the literature from Hellstedt (1987, 2000), who found that parents that are moderately involved in organized sports provide a healthy, supportive environment for their child athlete, optimizing the child's performance, enjoyment, and personal development.

There were two significant findings from this study. First, results showed that higher levels of parental involvement in organized sports was associated with an increase in their child's connection levels to parents, peers, coaches, teachers, and the community. Parents play a key role in introducing their child into the organized sports environment. Cote (1999) suggests that sports provide youth with an avenue for the development of social skills such as: cooperation, self-control, empathy, assertion and responsibility. This finding is similar to Wuerth et al. (2004) study, as these authors expressed the importance of the parent's role in socializing their children into the sports environment. Parents are typically the primary socializing agents who

encourage youth as they develop in organized sports. Parents who enroll their children in youth sports programs are promoting their children's social development and social skills. These skills can improve social relationships with parents, coaches, and teachers. Parents' who are supportive, positive and encouraging of their children's participation in youth sports, may spend more time volunteering and socializing at sports events, which can benefit interactions between children, as well as interactions between youth and adults.

Results also found a curvilinear association in which moderate parental involvement in sports was associated with higher levels of confidence. These findings are in line with a study conducted by Holt et al. (2008), who found that involved parents who are not over-involved supported their children's autonomy, which provided a structure that was appropriate for their child's development in sports, which in turn was associated with higher self-esteem among children. Support from parents was found to be essential in helping children to gain confidence in coping with the pressures that exist in competitive sports. Parents who are more involved in their children's participation in sports may hold higher expectations of their children as they are a part of their everyday practices and games. This is in line with Hellstedt's (2005) theory that over-involved parents can place excessive amounts of pressure and expectation on their child in sports leading children to feel internal conflict, doubt, or fair of failure – which in turn can decrease their self-esteem.

Most of the findings in this study were non-significant. This may be due to limitations with the sample (for example, 115 parents who did not specify their role in their child's sport had to be dropped from the current analyses, which left the study with an under-representation of involved parents). It is also possible that the cross

sectional technique used to analyze these youth and their parents prevented us from identifying significant associations between parent involvement and youth outcomes. Cross sectional analyses provide little information about how youth develop their social and personal skills in the sports environment over time and it is possible that earlier levels of parent involvement may be associated with later rather than concurrent child outcomes. Also, a cross sectional analysis is just an association, not causation, as this type of analysis does not provide information about the direction of the relationship. Thus, it is possible, for example, that higher levels of PYD elicit more involvement from parents rather than involvement promoting PYD. Further research should try to collect data from a much larger sample of parents and their youth and should utilize a longitudinal design to look across waves and analyze the impacts of parental involvement over extended periods of development.

In addition, although this current study was able to measure the level, or amount of involvement in sports, the 4-H Study does not have measures indicating the *quality* and *frequency* of that parent involvement. It may be that the quality of involvement is more important for PYD than quality alone and that had this been available to tap into this construct there may have been more significant associations between parent involvement and PYD. It may also be that frequency of involvement in organized sports is important for PYD. Conducting a qualitative study with interviews of both parents and their children may provide us with more information about their perspectives and experiences (i.e. children's perspectives of their parents' involvement level in sport and how that impacts their experiences in sport vs. parents perspectives on their level of involvement in sport and how they perceive their child's experience in sports).

Finally, it should be noted that almost three-quarters of the sample in this study reported being European American and over a third of the parents in this study reported earning a household income of over $100,000 per year. The families in this study were likely to be classified as middle to upper class. This limits the diversity in the responses from the participants in this study. More research on the associations of social class, gender, and ethnicity in children's organized sports participation may provide greater insights for future family research on organized sports such as, who is playing organized sports and what types of parents are involved and influencing children through sports. Another limitation of this study may be that the majority of the participants were categorized as uninvolved in organized sports. It is possible that these parents are actually involved in their youth's sports, but because they didn't mark that 'they participated with their child,' they were categorized as uninvolved. Our analyses maybe skewed because of the large number of uninvolved parents. To accommodate for this issue, another set of models that only look at involved parents was developed. None of the models were significant, which may have been due to the small sample size (n = 234). For full results of these analyses, see appendix C.

Despite these limitations, the present study has a number of strengths that help further the current body of research focused on youth sports. Currently, most of the studies that exist on this topic are qualitative studies of small independent teams (for example, a youth soccer team), individual sports (for example, skiing or gymnastics), or studies of elite athletes (e.g. Bloom, 1985; Cote, 1999) (as cited by Fraser-Thomas et al., 2007). The results of this study found some alternative perspectives, as the wave II sample of youth in this study are from 13 states and 40 cities, who most likely

participate in different organized sports programs. Thus, results may be more generalizable than past work.

The findings from this research provide some direction for the formation of future interventions in organized sports settings to promote PYD. Specifically, suggestions for future effective strategies for early adolescents should include parents. Parents are important, as they play key roles in structuring early adolescents' developmental experiences in organized sports. According to Holt and Sehn (2012), children are highly influenced by their parents, whereas coaches and peers become more influential during middle and later adolescence. Therefore, effective interventions targeted at late childhood/early adolescence should focus on the parents as key influences in organized sports programs, while effective interventions targeted at adolescence and late adolescence should focus on the coaches and peers as key influences in organized sports programs.

Importantly, it should be noted that parent's high levels of involvement in sport may have the potential to negatively impact children's confidence levels. Future research on parenting in organized sports and parents as coaches will shed more light on interpersonal processes that contribute to PYD. One implication arising from this study related to the parent-reported roles in sports, which were quite varied in the current sample in large part due to the open-ended nature of the question. Researchers may want to adapt validated measures of parenting styles in sports for these variables. More research will further help delineate the processes that contribute to youth outcomes which will be useful for future utilization of sports to best teach, develop and harness positive youth outcomes. There is a need to better understand and identify the ways youth develop in organized sports, specifically from the family perspective.

Conclusion

Identifying some of the parental involvement processes through which youth may develop positive outcomes in organized sports is beginning to be delineated. Research on the role of parenting in youth organized sports has expanded recently, although this area of research requires continued attention from scholars (Fredricks & Eccles, 2004). The challenge for many parents, coaches, policy makers and sports organizations is to assure that youths' sports outcomes and experiences are positive rather than negative. Youth sports participation does not assure that youth automatically acquire particular behaviors and habits. Youth sports programs need to be clearly designed to provide and teach these critical life skills, behaviors, and habits. Not only is it the program's responsibility to provide and teach these behaviors, but parents also need to play an active role in appropriate levels of involvement and influence on their child athlete's experiences in youth sports programs.

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Appendix A

PARENT QUESTIONS

Wave II: Parent Questionnaire questions used in this study (4-H Study of PYD)

Within the section: About my 6th graders activities, parents were asked to mark if the questions applies to them or their child:

1. SPORTS (for example: football, baseball, basketball, soccer, tennis, swimming, cheerleading, etc.)
    a. Applies to my 6th grader
    b. I participate with my child
    r. What role do you play?

Appendix B

DATA SHARING AGREEMENT

Tufts
UNIVERSITY

Agreement for Data Use

The purpose of this agreement is to permit the applicant to conduct the research proposed in the Application for the Use of Data. Richard M. Lerner, Director of the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development is permitting revocable access to the data set specified in the Application for the Use of Data under the terms of this agreement. The applicant promises to comply with all provisions of this agreement.

1. The Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development (IARYD) will to provide access to data to Lara Andrews (name of applicant) at the University of Delaware (name of the applicant's organization) for research purposes only, in accordance the provisions of this agreement. Only the data set specified in the Application for the Use of Data will be available to the applicant.

2. The applicant agrees to make no further copies or share the data with others. If there are other members of the applicant's research team or committee who need access to the data, they must make a separate application to IARYD.

3. The Director may discontinue or suspend any access to the data at any time; either the Director or the applicant may terminate this agreement at any time by providing written notice to the other.

4. The research proposed by the applicant in the Application for the Use of Data will be conducted under this agreement at no cost to IARYD.

5. The applicant promises that the data set will be used only for the analysis, presentation, and dissemination specified in the Research Proposal in the Data Sharing Application.

6. The applicant promises not to present or disseminate the data analysis without written permission for presentation and dissemination from the Director, Professor Richard M. Lerner.

7. When dissemination is granted, the publication, presentation, poster, or report must include the following footnote: *This research was supported in part by a grant to Richard M. Lerner, Tufts University, from the National 4-H Council.*

8. Modifications to this agreement may only be made in writing and signed by the Director, Professor Richard M. Lerner, and the applicant (or a duly authorized representative of the applicant).

9. This agreement is effective on the date that Professor Richard M. Lerner and the applicant have both affixed their signatures. The parties hereby agree to the terms and conditions of the above agreement.

Richard M. Lerner — 4/27/15

Richard M. Lerner, Director — **Date**

Appendix C

IRB EXEMPTION NOTIFICATION

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hullihen Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551
Ph: 302/831-2136
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE:	February 20, 2015
TO:	Barbara Settles
FROM:	University of Delaware IRB
STUDY TITLE:	[679400-1] Is parental participation in organized sports associated with positive youth development (PYD)?
SUBMISSION TYPE:	New Project
ACTION:	DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE:	February 20, 2015
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Exemption category # *(4)*

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office. Please remember to notify us if you make any substantial changes to the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Farnese-McFarlane at (302) 831-1119 or nicolefm@udel.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Appendix D

OLS REGRESSION MODEL WITHOUT UNINVOLVED PARENTS

Table 5 OLS regression models testing associations between parent role (without uninvolved) and PYD and the five C's(n=234)

	PYD β(SD)	***CONFIDENCE β(SD)***	***CARING β(SD)***	***COMPETENCE β(SD)***	***CONNECTION β(SD)***	***CHARACTER β(SD)***
Covariates						
Mothers education level	.63 (.17)	.29 (.64)	.48(.51)	1.12(.01) *	.20(.64)	.59(.36)
Parent Income	.00 (.02) *	.00 (.02) *	.00(.42)	.00(.00) ***	.00(.12)	.00(.19)
Number of children	-1.88 (.02) *	-3.15(.01) **	-2.03(.14)	-1.44(.11)	-.90(.27)	-1.96(.09)
Child gender	7.87 (.00) ***	4.12(.97)	12.55(.00) ***	6.22(.00) ***	6.36(.00) ***	12.07(.00) ***
Predictor Variables						
Parent role in sport (excluding uninvolved)	-.22 (.71)	-1.24(.16)	-.02(.98)	-.19(.76)	-.12(.84)	1.27(.15)
R^2	.42	.36	.38	.46	.30	.41
F(df)	7.98(5) ***	4.96(5) ***	4.90(5) ***	9.13(5) ***	7.33(5) ***	6.83(5) ***

Note: +$p \leq .10$; *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$; ***$p \leq .001$