

PARENTING



BOUNCE BACK: Boyd Littlejohn (front) and his friends at My First Gym. Picture: Jamie Hanson

Coaches can help teach kids lifelong workplace skills

MY ELDEST boy plays football and his coach is old-school. He applies strict rules to their behaviour with any transgression at training resulting in 10 minutes on the sideline at game time. Three transgressions results in a one-game suspension.

At a recent training session my son had an altercation with one of his teammates and as a result, spent the first 10 minutes of the following game on the bench.

While this was disappointing for him, it did create a wonderful opportunity for us to talk about the necessary ingredients for a great team.

Given that most of our children's careers will be spent in team-based environments, learning these lessons on the sporting field when they are young, will likely lead to real advantages when they reach the workplace.

Three workplace skills kids naturally learn in team sport are respecting authority, reliability and taking on feedback.

In a team sport, the coach is akin to a boss. Performing well in a team will often require putting trust in their leadership and accepting that you will be asked to sacrifice self-interest for the needs of the group.

An individual's success at work will also be dependent on their reliability. It is not uncommon throughout a season for kids to feel jaded and want to quit.

You can use these occasions to help your child realise that other people depend on them and develop perseverance.

Finally, in a good workplace giving and receiving



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constructive feedback happens all the time. Most people find receiving criticism confronting but kids are often more open to it on a sporting field.

A simple rule that I use with my kids is to get them to ask their coach at the end of each game, "what's one thing I did well and one thing I can do better?"

This is an easy way to teach them to seek feedback and receive constructive criticism. Both will help them grow and succeed at work.

There is no doubt that playing team sport is great for a child's health, wellbeing and social skills. The benefits of playing a team sport however go well beyond this and are also hugely beneficial in teaching our kids the skills necessary to succeed in the workplace.

If these lessons are learnt early and ingrained deeply they will help your kids prosper in almost any team environment.

Jono Nicholas is a father of three and chief executive of frontline youth and parent service ReachOut, which is accessed by more than 1.58 million Australians annually. reachout.com

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GYMS ARE BATTLING CHILDHOOD OBESITY

CHRIS HONNERY

KIDS' gyms are booming in Queensland in an effort to combat the growing rate of childhood obesity which threatens the nation.

Brisbane's own My First Gym, which caters for children from seven months to 13 years, has rapidly grown in the past nine months, from its flagship store in Hawthorne to operating four gyms around the southeast from next weekend.

The gym's owners also said the opening of the North Lakes club this weekend and their Robina site on May 12 is just the beginning, with 150 other locations planned in the next five years.

Chief executive officer Dan Newton said it was set to become a household name for Australian families.

"With the rise in dual-income Australian households, parents are more time-poor than ever, and our kids are

more inactive and obese than ever," he said.

"The correlation is extremely scary, and we knew that something had to be done about it.

"We couldn't be more proud of what we've achieved in the past nine months.

"My First Gym is set to become a household name for Australian families."

From "crawling koalas" to "athletic alligators", the family-owned gym features classes for kids of any age to help develop basic motor skills, movement and functionality.

Qualified fitness instructors also provide classes for gymnastics, yoga, martial arts and "ninja warrior".

Mr Newton, who is a father of three, said it allowed children to grow to love being healthy and active.

"As a parent, I needed somewhere for my kids to have the opportunity to try a variety of different sports and ac-

tivities under one roof," he said.

"A place that was going to ignite their passion for being healthy and active.

"Research shows that the first five years are critical for a child's development. What they learn and experience in these five years has an enormous impact on the sort of people they become."

My First Gym has also developed its own fitness tracker, MyMovementBuddy, which allows kids to gain and monitor movement points throughout the day.

"The MyMovementBuddy gives the kids ownership of their movement," Mr Newton said.

"They can see real-time scores updating as a result of their movement in class, at school or during weekend activities.

"It's motivating and exciting, and teaches them important lessons in setting and achieving goals."

WHAT'S ON

FAIR

Brisbane Toy and Hobby Fair: Check out the stalls selling die-cast model cars, trading cards, action figures, books and vintage and new toys. Today at the Brisbane City Indoor Sports, Coorparoo. ashow.com.au

FESTIVALS

Hills Festival. The festival is a month-long series of events in-

cluding a Mother's Day picnic in the park next Sunday, and the Hills Carnivale on Saturday, May 26, both at George Willmore Park. The carnivale will have rides, stilt walkers, and musicians roving through the park as well as workshops, market stalls and fireworks. hillsfestival.com.au

Buddha Birth Day Festival: The largest annual Buddhist Birth Day Festival in the world is on at South Bank Parklands today. There is a range of displays, performances, cultural

customs and activities, and vegetarian food. buddhabirthdayfestival.com.au

Stones Corner Festival: It's a fun street party on the corner of Logan and Old Cleveland roads today with live bands, market stalls, food, a jumping castle and a petting zoo for the kids. stonescornerfestival.com.au

MUSEUMS

Egyptian Mummies - Exploring Ancient Lives: This exhibition includes six mummies who lived and died in Egypt between

900BC and AD180. Queensland Museum, South Brisbane until August 28. qm.qld.gov.au

Insectarium: See an exhibition of hand-done, highly-detailed illustrations, drawn directly from the microscope, plus photographs offering a new look at the insect world. Museum of Tropical Queensland, Townsville, until May 27. qm.qld.gov.au

Perception Deception: A collection of hands-on exhibits and interactive multimedia that will

have young museum goers wondering if what they see, hear and feel is real. Queensland Museum until July 15. qm.qld.gov.au

THEATRE

The Witches: Roald Dahl's adventure comes to life at the Brisbane Arts Theatre, Petrie Tce, until May 12. artstheatre.com.au

Aladdin The Musical: Lyric Theatre, Queensland Performing Arts Centre. From the producer of *The Lion King* and *Mary*

Poppins, this is the classic Disney story. Tuesdays to Sundays until June 3. qpac.com.au

PARKS

Redcliffe Teddy Bears Picnic: Grab a picnic rug and get your children to bring their favourite teddy bear to Jamieson Park, Scarborough, on Wednesday, May 9, for some fun stage shows, face painting and kids' activities as well as a teddy bear parade. moretonbay.qld.gov.au