

Benefits of sports at an early age

By Patti Neighmond, NPR

Amy Roegler and her husband, Octavio Herrera, live with their young kids, Jake and Alyssa, in Los Angeles. When it comes to pro baseball, they're all Dodgers fans. And Jake loved balls even as a baby, Octavio says.

"Meanwhile his sister, 8-year-old Alyssa, has a passion for gymnastics. She, too, was a natural, her parents say – swinging on the monkey bars at age 2 and practicing splits on a balance beam today.

The parents know that the physical exercise their kids are getting is good for their health. But that's not their only motivation for encouraging the children to participate in organized athletics.

The majority of parents in NPR's recent poll on the role of sports and health in America seem to agree. The poll, done in conjunction with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, finds that the majority of adults say they played sports when they were younger.

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