

[An Interview with Dr. Jay Granat](#)
[author of Zone Tennis, Who Will Win The Big Game?,](#)
[and Get Into the Zone In Just One Minute.](#)

Ernest: Jay, please tell us a little about your experience in counseling and therapy for children?

JG: I have counseled parents, children, and families for more than twenty-four years. I frequently address parenting issues in my weekly newspaper column which runs in four newspapers in New Jersey. Recently, I have developed a CD program called Bedtime Stories For Young Athletes.

Ernest: What are the main psychological benefits of sports for a child?

JG: Sports allow children to stay fit, to interact with other kids, to learn teamwork, and to better understand the value of working hard to master skills. Learning sports at a young age can help kids to avoid becoming obese which is a major health problem in America. In addition, sports are very helpful in managing the stress of life in the year 2010.

Ernest: What kind of sports do you recommend for children who have issues like anger and irritation?

JG: Kids with anger issues can benefit from being involved with sports. Some of these children do very well learning the martial arts or boxing. The discipline and focus required in karate, judo, akido, and boxing can be good activities for children with anger issues. Team sports like football, hockey, and soccer can also be good venues for children who have difficulty controlling their temper since loyalty to the team and to coaches and penalties for fouls can help them to learn to manage their feelings and to behave appropriately on and off the field.

Ernest: How useful you find it for children to play sports regularly in order to learn accepting loss or setback in life?

JG: There are setback and disappointments in life. So it is useful for kids to learn how to handle these peaks and valleys in sports and in life.

Ernest: Does it happen that losing in sports induces depression or frustration in children of a kind that is retained in their memories for long?

JG: Some young athletes can become quite upset after losing or after a bad performance. They need to learn how to learn from losses and how to let go of their frustration. Learning and enjoying need to be emphasized as much as winning is stressed by many coaches and by many parents.

Ernest: What are the symptoms in a child's behavior and/or mood that indicate the need for professional therapy?

JG: Children who become overly depressed, sad or frustrated may need counseling or therapy to learn how to manage these feelings.

Ernest: Do boys and girls generally differ somehow in the kind of psychological or behavioral issues for which sports can be used as a therapy?

JG: I don't see much of a difference between boys and girls and how they handle sports and competition. They all get angry, frustrated, and sad from time to time.

Ernest: Can the lives of special, or disabled, children be lit with hope and fun with sports?

JG: The Special Olympics is a wonderful venue for children with significant disabilities. Many communities have programs for children with learning issues, emotional issues, and physical disabilities.

Ernest: Thank you Jay for your time and sharing your expertise with readers!

- Jay P. Granat, Ph.D., Founder www.StayInTheZone.com and www.topsportsdoctors.com.