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## Perspectives for a Successful CrossFit Kids Affiliate

Becca Borawski looks at the CrossFit Kids program from the perspectives of the participant and the parent.

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By Becca Borawski CrossFit LA

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Carlos Tapia-Grullon

Unlike an adult program, one thing you need to consider when building your CrossFit Kids program is your actual potential client. It's easy to assume your potential clients are the children. The people you are actually enrolling, however, are the parents.

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### Kids' Concerns vs. Parents' Concerns

I see most children's programs as being somewhere on a sliding scale: on one side you have the group classes that are essentially babysitting combined with some basic gymnastics, and on the other you have the highly structured martial-arts programs requiring years of commitment. You want your CrossFit Kids program to be closer to the martial-arts schools than babysitting.

You want to create a program where children get fit, learn good movement patterns and have fun. You want to establish good nutrition habits and build the lifestyle of fitness from an early age. To create a successful program, you need to be able to approach these goals from two different standpoints—the concerns of the children and the concerns of the parents.

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**Look at your CrossFit Kids program through the critical eye of a parent.**

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Parents have concerns beyond those of their children. A child may not notice if you have a nutrition element in your program, but it is my experience most parents find this very important. Parents will appreciate your support of their child's academic and sports goals, whereas a child could easily have fun in class without that emphasis. When creating your program and speaking to parents, it's important to think about this bigger picture.



Carlos Tapia-Grullon

***Children may not care if you don't have a nutrition component to your classes, but their parents probably will.***

Look at your CrossFit Kids program through the critical eye of a parent with the concerns listed above. How do you answer those questions for the parents? Through your marketing, website and curriculum, you can create a school that addresses parents' needs while providing a fun learning environment for the children.

Child's Concerns	Parent's Concerns	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Having fun</li><li>• Making friends</li><li>• Learning new things</li><li>• Being good at something</li><li>• Winning prizes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boosting confidence</li><li>• Succeeding in sports</li><li>• Building good behavior</li><li>• Opportunities for success</li><li>• Supporting academics</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lifelong fitness</li><li>• Nutrition</li><li>• Safety</li><li>• Clean environment</li><li>• Schedule</li></ul>

If your focus is just on the children, they may have fun, but their parents will not appreciate the potential value of the program, and it's likely their membership will be shortlived. They will move on to the next new thing. If, using CrossFit Kids as a tool, you make a parent's job easier and make the child feel like a superstar, you will have a family of clients for life.

### Life Skills vs. General Physical Skills

As adults who train in and coach CrossFit, we understand sometimes CrossFit can be the vehicle through which larger life lessons are learned. We have all had moments where commitment, integrity, consistency or some other aspect of our way of being was called to the forefront due to our pursuit of our CrossFit goals. As coaches, we have worked clients through situations where life got in the way of the WOD, whether it was the client not showing up to the gym or the manner in which he or she did show up. With a children's program, this scenario of CrossFit lesson as life lesson is magnified a thousand fold.

Recall the sliding scale between babysitting programs and martial-arts schools. There are many fitness or sports programs that address some aspect of the general physical skills. Where you can differentiate yourself and truly stand

General Physical Skills	Life Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cardiovascular endurance</li><li>• Stamina</li><li>• Strength</li><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Power</li><li>• Speed</li><li>• Coordination</li><li>• Accuracy</li><li>• Agility</li><li>• Balance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confidence</li><li>• Self-discipline</li><li>• Goal setting</li><li>• Focus</li><li>• Manners</li><li>• Teamwork</li><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Sportsmanship</li><li>• Academic achievement</li><li>• Communication</li></ul>

out as a school, not merely an activity, is by addressing the list of life skills.

One of the stumbling blocks you will encounter as you attempt to grow your CrossFit Kids program is push-back from parents and coaches. Parents worry children will be overscheduled or will stop liking CrossFit. Coaches worry you are trying to steal their athletes.



*Emphasizing life skills as well as CrossFit skills is a way to keep parents and athletes engaged.*

If your CrossFit Kids program includes a focus on life skills vs. being solely about fitness, then you are not a threat but instead a source of support. If on top of the 10 general physical skills you are also teaching leadership, discipline, focus, confidence and listening skills, you are providing the tools for that child to achieve success in academics and sports. Such a contribution will be appreciated by parents and coaches alike.

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If you were the cause of better grades and improved behavior, that parent will renew the child. If you help a coach create a winning team, he will become your fan.

Look at your program and consider the following questions: What are the concerns parents have when given the choice to enroll their child? What are the concerns a football or basketball coach has when you approach him or her to train a team? How can you acknowledge these concerns and present yourself as a solution?

Recently, a parent came to me after class. She told me she wished we had kids' classes every day of the week. Since starting at CrossFit LA, her daughter is happier and better behaved. As a result, mom is a happier person too. Her daughter is also fitter and stronger, but what causes her to believe CrossFit Kids LA is the best thing she ever found are the things brought about by the emphasis on life skills.

"My daughter is a different child on the days she does CrossFit," she told me.



Karen Leah Photography

### About the Author:

*Becca Borawski is CrossFit LA's program director and the founder of their CrossFit Kids program. She has an MFA in cinema-television production from USC, is a freelance writer, and, with her business partners, produces amateur MMA shows in Southern California. The most fun she has all week is teaching her Kids classes. Check out her website at [Nerdjockprincess.com](http://Nerdjockprincess.com).*