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Conference Schedule

Oct 17th, 2:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Retiring at 10 years of age: A discussion of the major trends in organized youth sports today and their association to relative-age-related dropout

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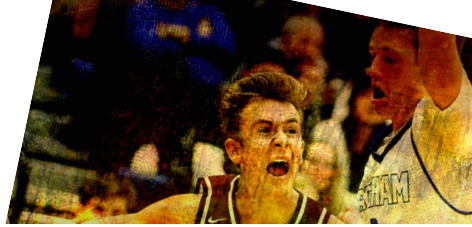
Retiring at 10 years of age: Discussion of the major trends in organized youth sports today and their association to RAE-related dropout

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redefine THE POSSIBLE.





Why an early selection can make you look stupid

Published on April 1, 2018

Thorlakur Arnason Follow
Head of Youth Development ...

91 16

The biggest question in every football academy in the world is about the potential of a young player. There is something so romantic about predicting or fantasizing about a player we see at a young age. All youth coaches and scouts know this feeling. This is of course because of our emotional attachment to the player. Sometimes we the specialists are right and sometimes we are wrong. In reality it is not always the potential that gets you through life. Opportunities are one of the biggest reasons why some players make it in



Making it easier for kids to play multiple sports is hard — but it can be done



Parents, coaches must work together if they want to change the over-programmed, one-sport model

Jamie Strashin · CBC Sports · June 28



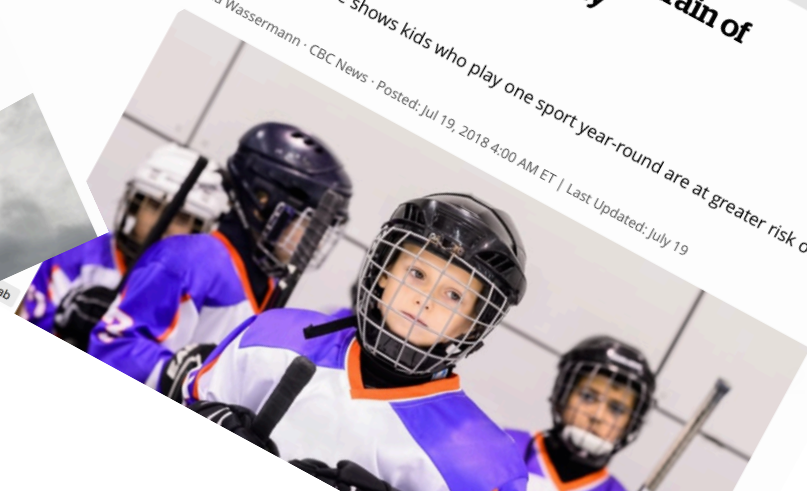
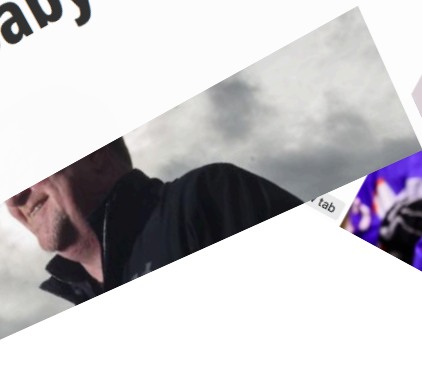
Early Specialization Official for Young Soccer Players?

Share on Facebook

Fear, greed, broken dreams: why sports specialization is eroding youth sports

J.J. ADAMS Updated: April 1, 2018

18-month-old baby signs contract with VVV-Venlo



...evidence shows kids who play one sport year-round are at greater risk of ...
...kids feeling the strain of ...
...tion, experts say



...na Wassermann · CBC News · Posted: Jul 19, 2018 4:00 AM ET | Last Updated: July 19



...kids feeling the strain of ...
...tion, experts say

ada Politics India

Four questions. Twelve Minutes.



1. What is early specialization?
2. What do we know about early start age in sport?
3. What about RAE?
4. What now?

1. What is Early Specialization?



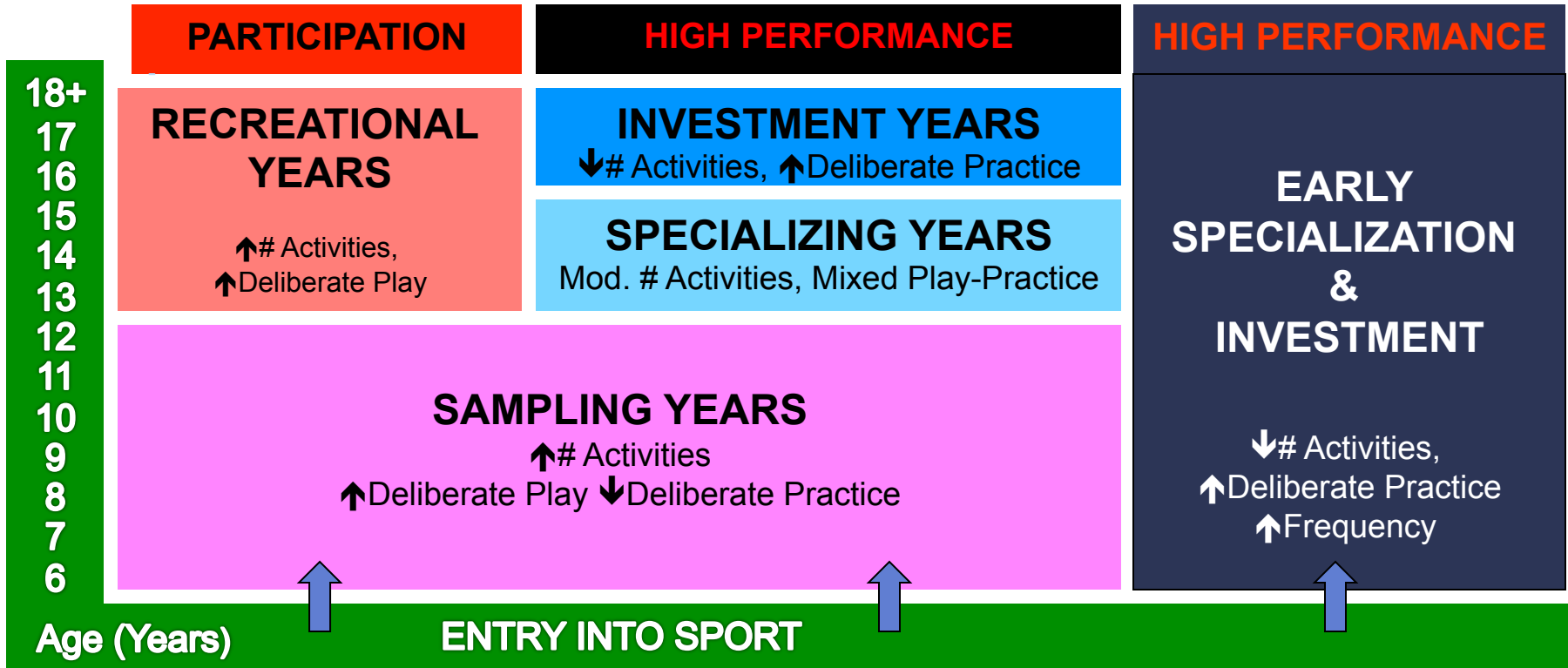
Concerns...



- **Physical** - Higher rates / risk of injury
(Feeley et al., 2016; LaPrade et al., 2016; Law et al., 2007; Ruedi et al., 2014)
- **Psychosocial** – decreased enjoyment, emotional exhaustion, burnout, dropout
(Fraser Thomas et al., 2008; Gould, et al., 1996; Strachan et al., 2009)



Definition: Developmental Model of Sport Participation ◀ ▶



Definition (Baker et al., 2009)



Classified as early:

- start age in sport
- involvement in one sport
- engagement in high intensity training
- participation in competitive sport



Definition – AOSSM (Laprade et al., 2016)



Early specialization, or early single-sport specialization:

1. Participation in intensive training and/or competition in organized sports greater than 8 months per year (essentially year round).
2. Participation in 1 sport to the exclusion of participation in other sports (limited free play overall).
3. Involving pre-pubertal children (7th grade or 12 years).

Early specialization: Where are we now?



- No consistent operationalized definition of early specialization.
- Growing number of studies showing minimal/no differences between early specialists and diversifiers (e.g. Patel & Javanthi, 2018; McFadden et al., 2016; Mosher et al., submitted).
- Existing definitions categorize a high number as early specialists (i.e., no comparison group)
- Focus on dichotomizing early specialists from early diversifiers, but sport journeys may be more nuanced.



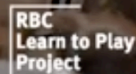
Baseball, basketball, hockey, soccer: Multi-sport participation is best for kids

Watch later Share



#changeitup #multisport

KIDS WHO PLAY MORE THAN ONE SPORT
GET MORE OUT OF SPORTS



MORE VIDEOS

2. What do we know about early start age in organized sport?



Definition (Baker et al., 2009)

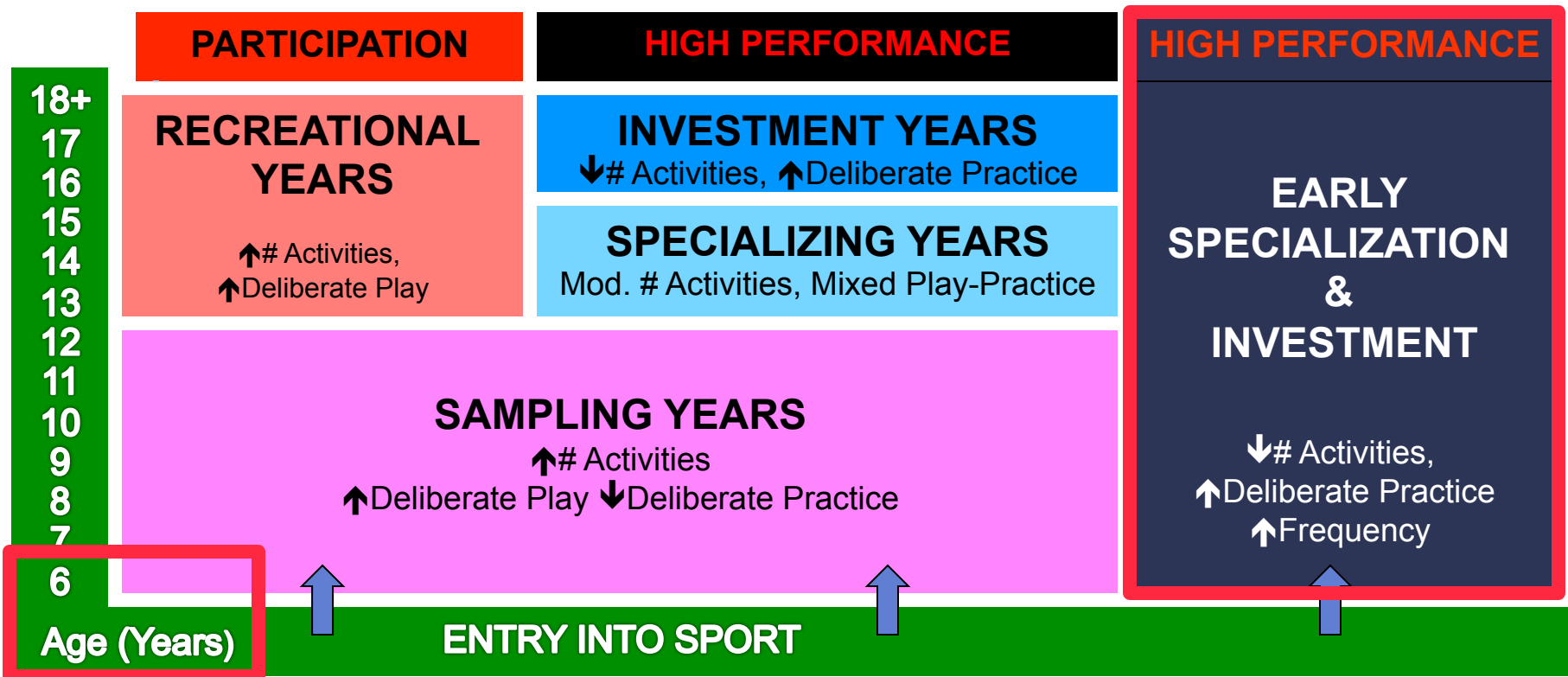


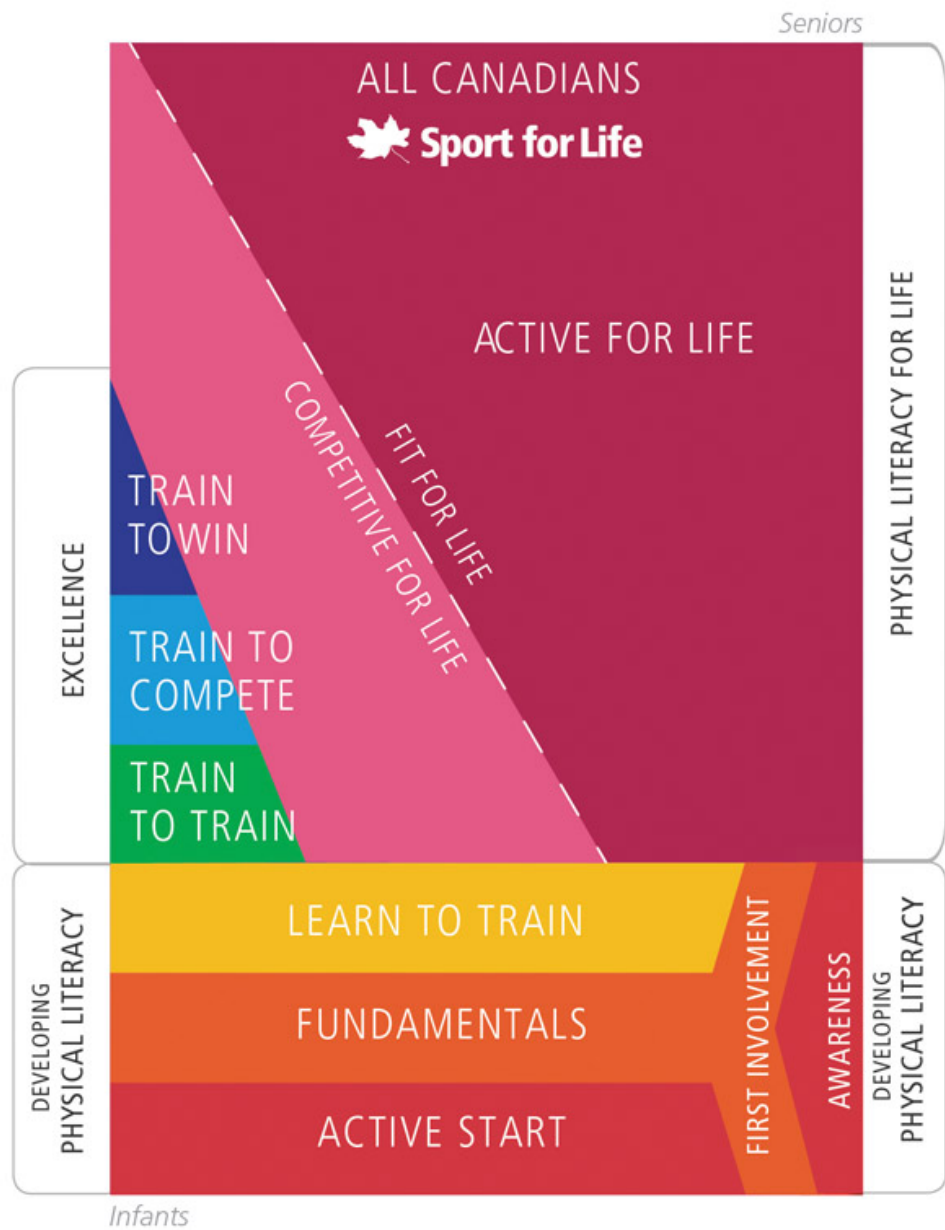
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Early Start Age in Organized Sport





Long Term Athlete Development Model
 (LTAD; Canadian Sport for Life, 2018)

Early Start Age in Organized Sport



- Sport development frameworks (e.g., DMSP, LTAD) suggest organized sport involvement beginning approximately 6 years of age.
- Yet, 46% of children 3-4 years of age in Canada are enrolled in organized lessons, teams, or leagues (ParticipACTION, 2018).

Why Start Early?



Parent culture: Social expectations of ‘good parenting’

- Pressure to offer young children (0-6 years) quality early learning or enrichment opportunities for future success
- Fear of being judged for ‘bad parenting’ (e.g. social media)
- Safety concerns (e.g., media)

(Coakley, 2006; Evans & Davies, 2010; Pynn et al., 2018; Stirrup et al., 2015; Vincent & Ball, 2006)

Few opportunities by mid-childhood, with limited skills

- Contrary to DMSP and LTAD which suggest fluidity between trajectories (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008)

Why Start Early?



Maybe 15 to 20 years ago, kids would come home after school and go play in the park for a bit. But you can't let your child go off for 2 hours on their own and play in the park anymore. You have to supervise. So if you're going to do that, you might as well take them to a structured game.

(Childcare Provider)

(Fraser-Thomas & Safai, 2018)

Why Start Early? (Calero et al., in press)



Purpose: Examine preschooler sport programs' claims of developmental outcomes, through content of websites.

Results:

- N=114 websites met criteria
- 9.63 developmental outcomes/website
- Physical (47.3%) psychological/emotional (21.8%), social (11.9%), and intellectual (7.1%) development
- Skating 77% physical; martial arts 33% psychosocial

Conclusion: Preschooler sport programs promoting selves as avenues of healthy development for preschoolers.

Why Start Early? (Harlow et al., 2017)



Purpose: Scoping review of developmental outcomes of organized sport involvement of children 2-5 years.

Method: 9 databases, 4438 papers, N=9 met criteria

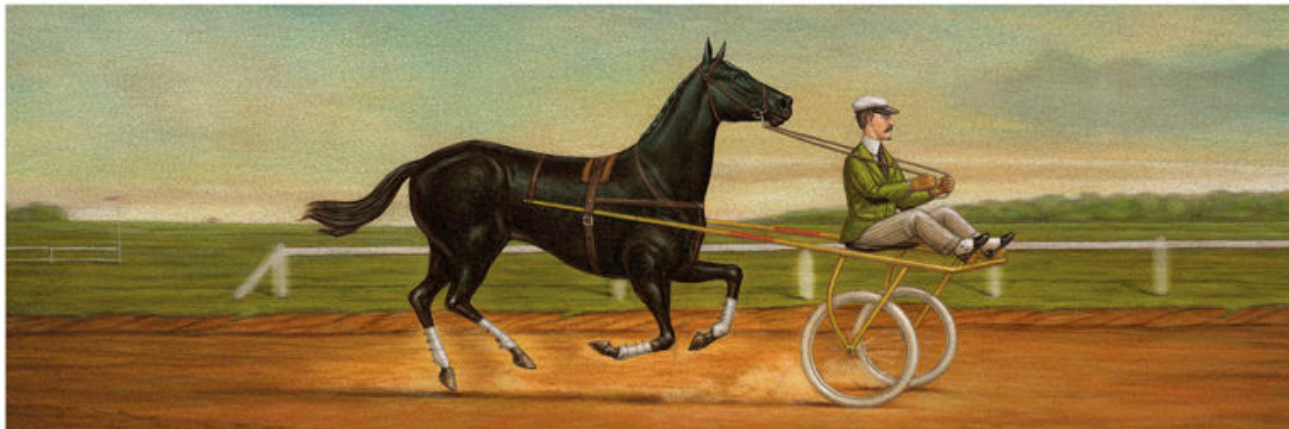
Results: Positive (e.g., enhanced social skills, pro-social behaviours, self-regulation) and negative/inconclusive outcomes.

Conclusion: Reinforces that little is known about outcomes of early sport participation (despite pervasive availability of programming, and positive parental perceptions of early enrolment).

Early start age in sport: Where are we now?



- Research (the horse) has not kept pace with current trends in sport participation (the cart).
- Children are engaging in sport programming and following trajectories driven by social trends and program availability, rather than empirical evidence or sanctioned sport models.



3. What about RAE?



Example: Preschooler Multi-Sport Program for 3-4 Year Olds

- Age: 1096 days – 1825 days
- Children in the same age groupings could be almost double each other's age.

Sensory and motor development

Healthlink BC, 2017

Most children by age 3:

- Develop more large muscle movements (gross motor skills). These generally include:
 - Running.
 - Climbing. Most children alternate feet when going up or down stairs.
 - Jumping in place.
 - Pedalling a tricycle.
 - Kicking a ball.
 - Bending over easily.

Sensory and motor development

Most children by age 5:

- Somersault and possibly skip.
- Swing and climb.
- Hop on one foot.
- Use the toilet by themselves. They may still **wet the bed**, though.

Emotional and social development

Most children by age 3:

- Experience a wide range of emotions.
- Separate easily from their parents.
- Express affection openly. They may show affection for familiar playmates spontaneously.
- Understand the concept of "mine" and "yours." They may have trouble sharing toys at times or have conflicts when playing with others.
- Can identify a person as a boy or girl. But they do not yet fully understand the distinctions between genders.
- Are interested in [toilet training](#). Many stay dry when they are awake.

Emotional and social development

Most children by age 5:

- Want to please and be liked by their friends, though they may sometimes be mean to others.
- Agree to rules most of the time.
- Show independence.
- Are more able to distinguish fantasy from reality but enjoy playing make-believe and dress-up.
- Have distinct ways of playing according to gender. Most 5-year-old boys play in rough or physically active ways. Girls of the same age are more likely to engage in social play.

Early Start Age and RAE



Early Specialization and RAE?



Early
Specialization

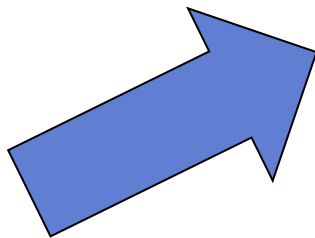


RAE

Early Specialization and RAE?



Dropout



Early
Specialization



RAE

Early Specialization and Dropout

Fraser-Thomas et al. (2008)
Journal of Applied Sport Psychology

Purpose: To examine if training patterns may contribute to dropout and prolonged engagement in high investment youth sport.



Early Specialization and Dropout

Fraser-Thomas et al. (2008)
Journal of Applied Sport Psychology

Conclusion: Dropouts showed a trend of early specialization; engaged athletes did not

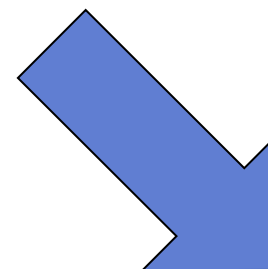
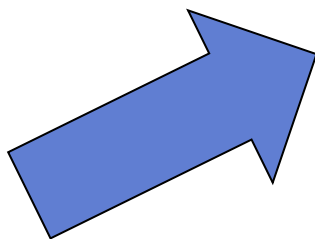
Dropouts:

- More dryland training and training camps from an earlier age (earlier deliberate practice)
- Fewer non-swimming activities from an earlier age (less sampling)
- Less play swimming (less deliberate play)

Early Specialization and RAE?



Dropout

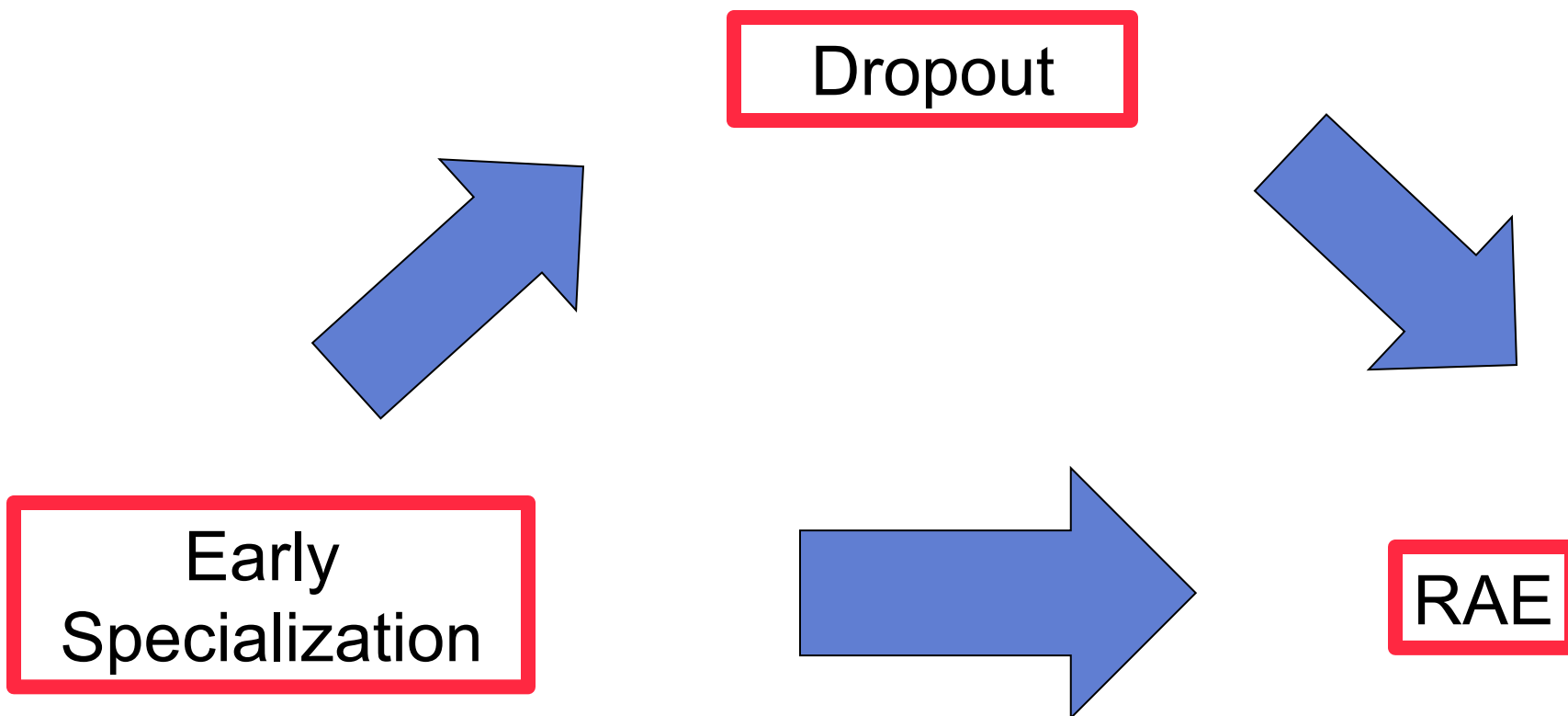


Early
Specialization

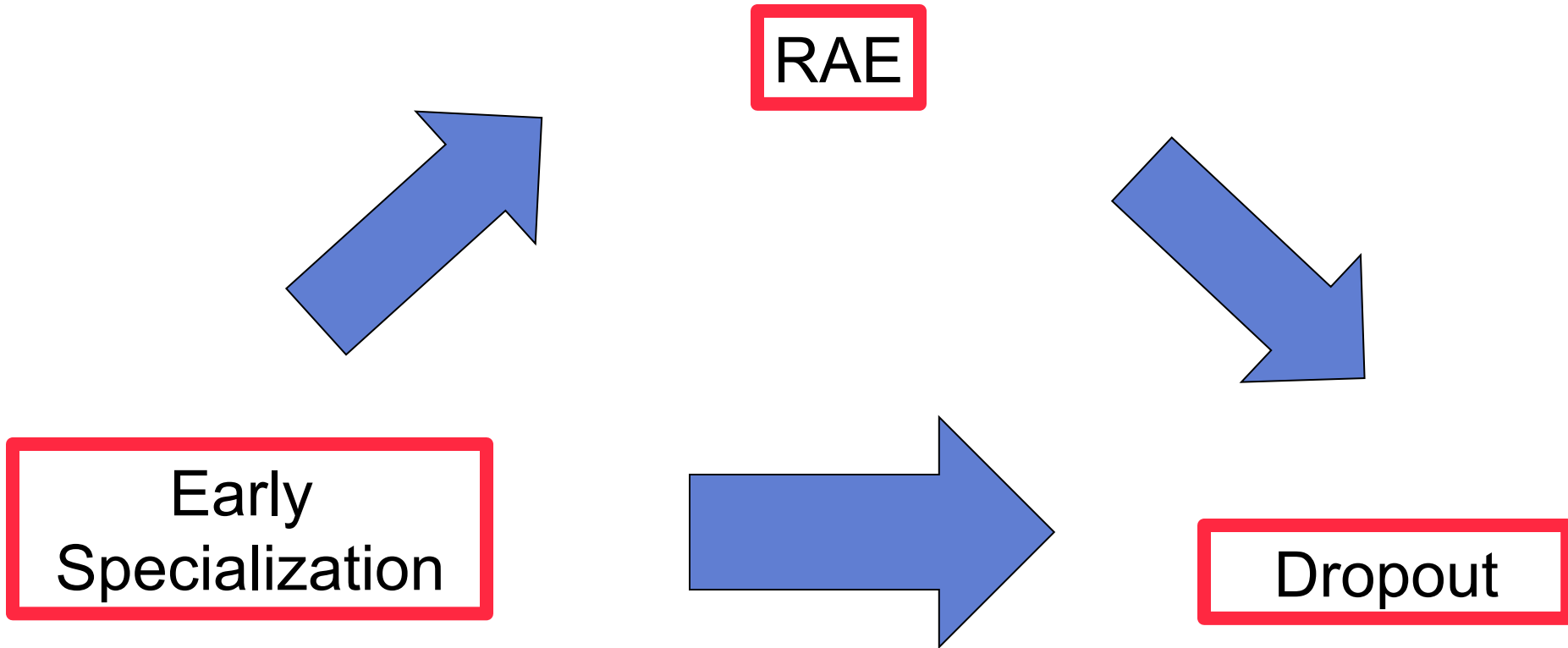


RAE

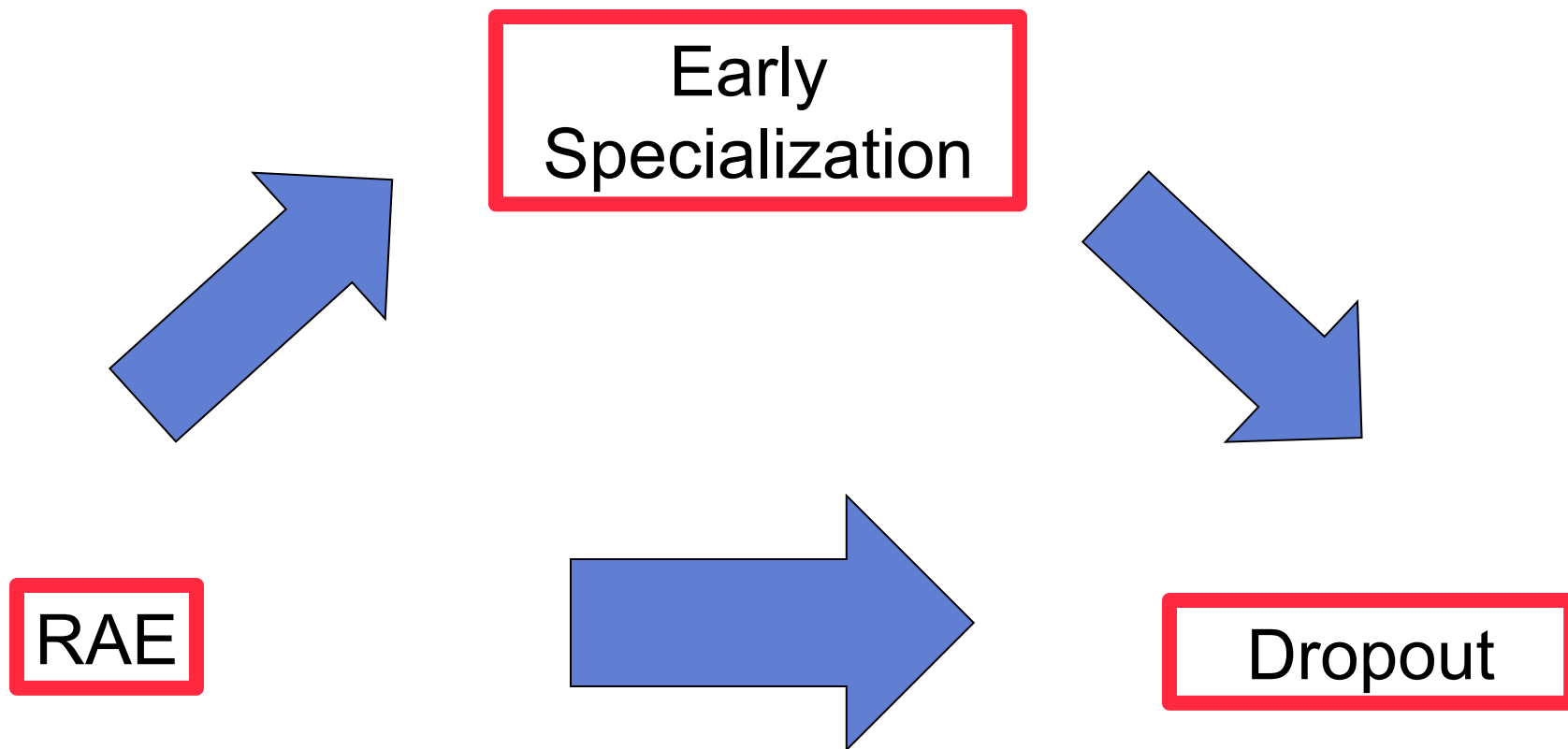
Early Specialization and RAE?



Early Specialization and RAE?



Early Specialization and RAE?



4. What Now? Future Directions



What is early specialization?

- Cannot study what we cannot measure.
- Need better understanding of diverse / nuanced sport trajectories
- Should we be dichotomizing specializers and diversifiers?
- Is early start age criteria for early specialization?

What do we know about early start age?

- Need higher quality research (e.g., longitudinal) with stronger methodological design (not parent proxy) to measure outcomes.
- Are there unintended consequences (e.g., decreased active play, enjoyment, or physical literacy) of early sport participation?
- What are the implications on proportionately larger RAEs?

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