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Strength in CrossFit Kids

Strength is another general physical skill that results in "measurable changes" in the body that are brought about by training. Strength can be defined as "the ability of a muscular unit or combo of muscular units to apply force" (Glassman). Strength does not take into account the speed at which a task is performed. It is "a measure of the ability of an individual to move a weight irrespective of the time it takes to move it" (Rippetoe/Kilgore). Gains in strength indicate the body has increased its ability to apply force.

CrossFit Kids participate in training that provides a means to foster these adaptations. The lift movements such as shoulder presses, dead lifts and thrusters frequently make their way into workouts. Medicine balls and D-balls are thrown and pushed in exercises such as wall ball, slam ball and throws for height and distance. Benchmark workouts like "Lil' Diane" utilize a couplet of dead lifts and handstand pushups in which increasing weights and decreasing times are indicators of gains in strength. These movements build strength by exposing the body to stressors that enhance its capacity to handle such loads. Mindful of the need to maintain attention and focus with children, we incorporate fun, game-like elements while maintaining the stimulus. Additionally, the need to make careful use of progressive loading according to skill and capacity when working with children is of primary concern.

The importance of strength training cannot be overestimated, as it is foundational to the

development of all the biomotor skills. Strength training not only increases the ability to apply force, a pivotal aspect of power, it improves endurance by prolonging the amount of time it takes for muscles to fatigue. These neuromuscular changes affect every aspect of life from the way one looks and feels to fitness training and involvement in specialized sports. (Rippetoe/Kilgore) For the young athlete focused on strength gains, optimal Sports Conditioning can be best accomplished through a carefully crafted CrossFit program.
