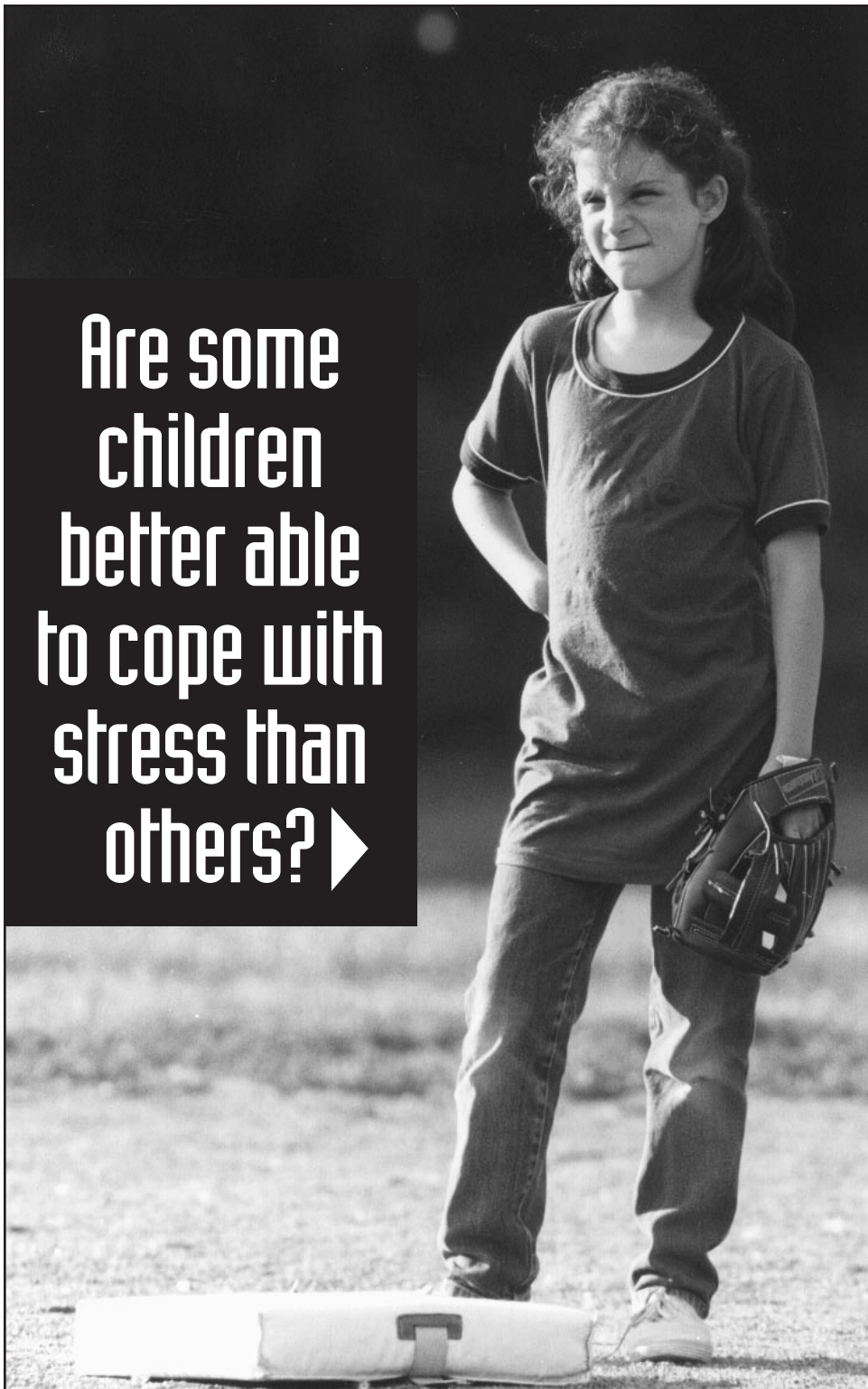


**Are some
children
better able
to cope with
stress than
others? ▶**



No two children are exactly alike in the way they cope with stress, and some are able to cope better than others. Experts now believe that several factors influence a child's ability to cope with stress with a child's personality, intelligence, and self-esteem all playing a role.

In an article in *Coaching Children in Sport* entitled "Causes of Children's Anxiety in Sport," Stephen Rowley writes that factors such as the gender of the child, the child's intelligence, and the support from parents and coaches may influence a child's ability to cope with stressful situations. He made the following points:

- Unlike the pattern after adolescence, before puberty boys are more prone to competitive anxiety than girls. The reason for this difference may be that parents are less supportive of boys who can't cope with stress, or the importance of sport may be greater for boys.
- There is some evidence to suggest that children who are clever in school may be better able to cope with stress. It may be that these children have higher self-esteem or better problem-solving skills than their peers.
- The presence of close, supportive relationships with family, friends, or the coach plays an important part in protecting a child from stress. If children feel they can talk about their worries and anxieties, the symptoms of stress decrease significantly.⁵

Recognizing the influence that adults have on children and how stressful they perceive a sport competition to be is critical to understanding some of the many sources of competitive stress. In *Sport for Children and Youths*, Dr. Tara Scanlan writes, "Sport is a public affair. In contrast to the achievement in the classroom where passing or failing a math test can be an unobserved private experience, a hit or a strike is witnessed by teammates, opponents, coaches, parents, and spectators."⁶

Young children who feel pressure from parents and coaches to perform well or to win a competition will experience greater precompetition stress.

*"To win the game and lose the child
is totally an unworthy sacrifice."*

Dr. Terry Orlick, Dr. Cal Botterill
Every Kid Can Win