

10 Tips for Parents in Youth Sports

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1. Emphasize Fun over Winning

When kids are “having fun” they will be more competitive and winning will eventually become more of a priority, this is the foundation for kids in youth sports.

2. Let the Coaches Coach

Unless a coach is being abusive, they deserve to coach in peace. If there are problems, depending on age, encourage your child to speak with the coach, this is a great opportunity for your child to learn how to solve their own problems.

3. Respect the Game

Living your life vicariously through your child often times leads children to dislike the game they once enjoyed. A good approach is to demonstrate respect to coaches, officials, and players so your child understands that the game itself is always bigger than any one person.

4. Look for Improvement

Kids will keep playing if they know they are improving, so pay close attention to real improvement and be sure to compliment that effort when it occurs.

5. Boost their Confidence

Children never get tired of hearing what they do well. For every negative, follow it up with a few positives.

6. Support the Team

Typically parents watch two things; the ball and their child. Supporting your child is essential but understand that good coaches encourage team performance over individual performance.

7. Recognize Teachable Moments

Forcing your child to talk after a tough loss may not be helpful. If you are patient, they will approach you when they are ready.

8. Embrace Disappointment

The best way to prepare your child for life's challenges is to embrace disappointment and accept the outcomes that result from competitive sports.

9. Encourage Mistakes

Nobody can play well when they are afraid to make mistakes... encourage mistakes; it is one of the best ways to improve at anything.

10. Ask Meaningful Questions

Good Question:

Who played well?

Did you have fun?

Would more effort bring more success?

What did you learn when you came out?

Poor Question:

Did you play well?

How much did you play?

Why didn't you play hard?

Why did the coach take you out?