

Youth Sports: General Principles for Parents

Athletes and coaches will not be able to perform at their best if parents do not have a clear understanding of the philosophies created by their youth sports organizations. The following are suggested guidelines for parents:

1. Understand the daily pressures a child faces. Youth sports should be an outlet and place for a child to have fun. Positively encourage your child and allow him or her to have a good time.
2. Remember that your child learns more from your actions than your words. Practice good sportsmanship by being respectful to players, parents, and coaches on both teams.
3. Parents should appreciate the efforts made by both teams. There is nothing wrong with applauding a good play made by the opponents.
4. Parents should support the coach, as long as the coach follows proper coaching guidelines. Parents should understand that most coaches are volunteers. It is inappropriate for a parent to coach a player who is on the field. Not only does it devalue the coach, it also confuses the player.
5. Parents should not embarrass their child by calling attention to them through loud or rude behavior.
6. Don't be a coach - be a parent. Offer encouragement and positive reinforcement. A sure way to dampen your child's enthusiasm is with constant criticism.
7. Parents should encourage discipline by having their children arrive on time for practices and games.
8. Parents should help their children realize that belonging to a team requires commitment. Regular attendance and being prepared are necessary for the team to function smoothly.
9. Parents should volunteer their services whenever possible. This shows the participants the value of being a team player.
10. Parents should respect the officials and their calls. It is okay to disagree, but inappropriate to criticize.