



8 Simple Guidelines for Sports Parents

The topic this month is based on a question I am often asked by parents of athletes. They want to know how to interact with their child athlete.

Here are 8 simple tips for sports parents:

1. Sports should be just a game. Treat sports as a game-it's not a business. With all the money in professional sports today, it hard for parents to understand that it's just a game to young athletes.
2. Your agenda is not your child's. Young athletes play sports for many reasons. They like the competition, social aspect, being part of a group, and enjoying the challenge. You might have a different agenda than your child.
3. Emphasize process not results. We live in a society that focuses on results and winning, but these come from working the process. Teach your child to focus on the process and the challenge of one play at a time.
4. Model composure & poise. When on the sidelines, your child may pick up on your behavior as well as the coach's behavior. You become a role model in how you react to a close game or a bad call.
5. Refrain from game-time coaching. During games, it time to just let them play. This is the time that athletes have to trust all the training they have done and just play. "Just do it" as the saying goes. Too much coaching can lead to mistakes and cautious play.
6. Detach self-esteem from achievement. To many athletes I work with attach their self-worth to their level of performance. Help your athlete understand that they are a person FIRST who happens to play sport instead an athlete who happens to be a person. Success in sport should not be the determinate of self-esteem.
7. Ask the right questions. Asking the right questions after competition and games will tell you child what you think is important in sports. If you ask: "Did you win?" your child will thinking winning is important. If you ask: "Did you have fun?" she will assume having fun is important.
8. Pledge: P.A.Y.S. Parent's Code of Ethics. PAYS (Parents Association for Youth Sports) provides a parental handbook and code of ethics that adults must sign before each season. This is a great tool to guide parents in their interaction with young athletes.

Hear are some great resources on sports parenting:

National Alliance For Youth Sports (NAYS)

(800) 729-2057

www.NAYS.org

PAYS (Parents Association for Youth Sports) provides a parental handbook and code of ethics that adults must sign before each season.

Positive Coaching Alliance

650.725.0024

www.positivecoach.org

Coaches can attend conferences and workshops on how to become a more positive influence on kids.

Center for Sports Parenting

www.sportsparenting.org

Get expert advice about dealing with the challenges of youth sports, including adult misbehavior at events and the ways adults can be made to act properly.