

TOP TIP #1

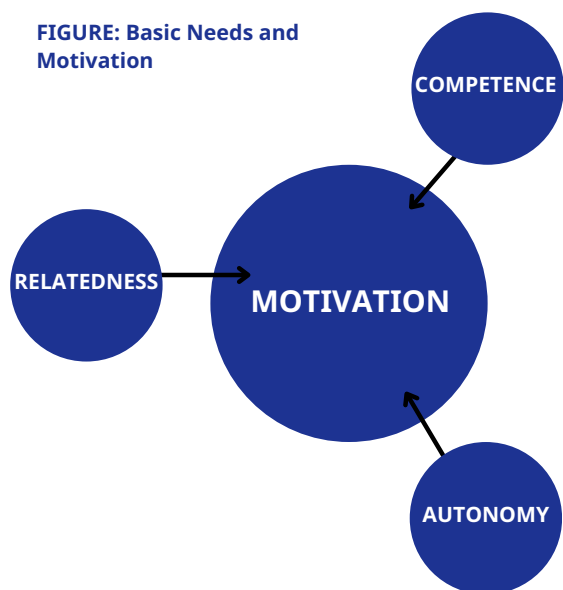
A parent's job is to teach their children not to need them anymore. The hardest part of that job is accepting success.

Parents have an important role in creating high quality sport experience. High quality sport experiences are those that foster the development of healthy and happy children and youth – not just as athletes, but also as people.

Consistent with the developmental stages for children and youth, parents are instrumental in facilitating young athlete's three basic needs: a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are optimally supported, the athlete is more likely to be more motivated to participate in various activities, including school and sport.

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS:

FIGURE: Basic Needs and Motivation



Autonomy: *"I Choose!"*

When an athlete feels they have a choice, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that will help them achieve their goals.

Competence: *"I can!"*

When an athlete feels they have the skills to be successful in their sport, they are more likely to take actions that help achieve their goals.

Relatedness: *"I belong!"*

When an athlete feels like they belong, they are more likely to put intensity and effort into sport.

(Ryan & Deci, 2017)

What Does Basic Needs Support Look Like?

Parents can support **autonomy** by attempting to understand and acknowledge the athlete's wishes, preferences, and points of view. Parents can also support autonomy by providing a rationale for a behavior and by offering choice in how to behave. Parents can support **competence** by encouraging the athlete to be initiative in their actions (go for it). Parents can also support competence by recognizing their role in giving (and not giving) feedback on sport performances, and creating a sense of structure on how to prepare for practice and competition. Parents can support **relatedness** by showing interest in the athlete's sport-related activities and show empathy when faced with disappointment. Parents should also ensure the athlete knows their love is unconditional and not tied to performance accomplishments.



SCIENCE FACT:

Review of existing research has found that parents contribute more strongly to athlete autonomy than competence and relatedness. Facilitating feelings of “I choose” in children and youth is an important part of sport parenting.

(Chu, 2019).

Critical Questions:

When considering your role as a sport parent, ask yourself:

- In what ways do my words and actions convey autonomy support?
- In what ways do my words and actions convey competence support?
- In what ways do my words and actions convey relatedness support?



**SAFE
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