


Behavior is a language.

While parents play important part in creating high quality sport experience, overinvolved parents are the number one reason why children and youth say sport is no longer enjoyable or fun. While typically meaning well, many parents can overstep their role as parents, particularly when emotions run high.

Most parents largely want their children to learn about sport and have fun. They also want their children to do well and to be viewed positively by others – often resulting in a mismatch between parent goals and parent verbal behaviors.

What do overinvolved parenting behaviors look like to youth athletes?

- Putting a of pressure on winning or getting best times
- Yelling angrily from the sidelines/bleachers
- Contradicting the coach at the sport venue or behind their back
- Other parents yelling or saying rude/mean things
- Giving too many instructions/trying to coach

SCIENCE FACT:

What parents say and how they say it can have a big impact on the youth athlete sport experience. What parents say also impact other athletes, other parents, meet officials, and coaches. (Dorsch et al., 2022)

Critical Questions:

To kickstart the conversation about supportive sport parenting, ask your child:

What kind of sport parent would you like me to be? Would you like me to cheer you on? Or to video your performances? Talk to you during the car rides to the meet?

In sport parenting, much like parenting in general, our behaviors are a language. Ask yourself:

- Are my behaviors (verbal, physical, facial expressions) saying the same thing?
- How do my behaviors change when I am nervous?
- How do my behaviors change when I am excited?
- Are any of my behaviors such that could be interpreted as overinvolvement?