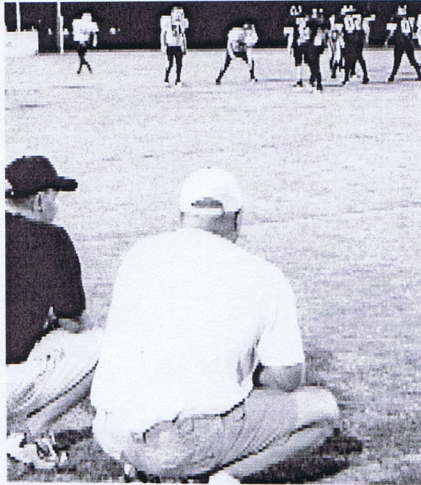




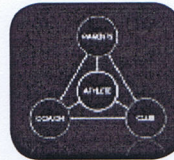
SUCCESSFUL SPORTS PARENTING

STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS



A parent's behavior on and off the field of play can determine whether a child has a positive experience participating in sport. Helping parents to be better role models, volunteers, and supporters is the goal of the Successful Sport Parenting CD-ROM, presented by USA Swimming and the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association.

Through improved the partnerships coach can be enhanced, sports environments for long participation and



education and communication, between the parent, club and culminating in nurturing children, while fostering life a healthy life style.

No matter which sport is surveyed, the general consensus is that the majority of parents are good athletic parents, promoting the values of the club and sport. However, some parents take all of the fun out of sport by the way they behave while watching their children.

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We have all seen the parent who:

- Puts too much emphasis on winning rather than the fun of competition
- Yells abuse at players, officials or the coach
- Tries to coach and/or referee from the sideline
- Forces their child into a sport they don't want to play
- Constantly focuses on the negative, undermining the coach and players
- Criticizes their child's mistakes during the game
- Embarrasses their child on and off the field, making a scene leaving everyone uncomfortable

USA Swimming and the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association represent two national governing bodies with extensive national and international athletic success, while supporting large athletic development programs from the grassroots to the Olympics. With the support of additional sport governing bodies, Successful Sport Parenting is designed to help all sport organizations promote good parent behavior so that parents can learn to be a positive influence on their child's sporting experience.

The information in this CD-ROM can be copied and used by clubs to help guide parents, coaches and clubs to promote the highest values of sport.

Dr. Alan Goldberg (Competitive Advantage) "If you [parent] do your job correctly and play YOUR position well, then your child will learn

faster, perform better, really have fun and have his self-esteem enhanced as a result. Her sport experience will serve as a positive model for her to follow as she approaches other challenges and obstacles throughout life."

Sport & Children

Why Children Participate...

• Enjoy / Fun	28%
• Fitness	15%
• Be with Friends	13%
• Compete	13%
• Improve	8%
• Meet New People	8%

Why Children Drop Out...

• Takes too much time	18%
• Coach was negative	15%
• Enjoy other activities more	15%
• Lack of fun	8%
• It was boring	9%
• Parents' emphasis on winning	6%



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What Kids May Gain...

Physical Benefits:

- Improve fitness, strength, flexibility, and coordination
- Improve general health
- Weight management
- Develop a wide range of motor skills
- Establish healthy behaviors that young people will carry throughout their lives

Social Benefits:

- Develop communication and interpersonal skills
- Develop leadership and co-operation skills
- Create lasting friendships
- Increase interest in accepting responsibilities
- Learn to deal with winning and losing
- Provide a vehicle for responsible risk-taking

Personal Benefits:

- Enjoyment factor – it's fun!!
- Improve self-esteem and confidence
- Improve ability to concentrate: potentially facilitating better academic performance
- Learn self-discipline, commitment and responsibility
- Learn organizational skills and how to share
- Learn how to deal with pressure and stress
- Encourage health related behaviors i.e. better eating habits, less likely to smoke

What Parents May Gain ...

- Play a larger role in children's lives by sharing of their experiences.
- Appreciate that children are having fun, being active and healthy
- Healthy children may equal a reduction in medical costs
- Security in knowing where your children are, that they are being supervised and having fun
- Children who are involved in sport tend to stay in school longer and get better grades
- Assist in developing behaviors that will encourage life long health and well-being

Parent Roles & Responsibilities

Parent "Do's" ...

- Provide love and support regardless of the sport outcome.
- Make your child responsible for his/her sport preparation (e.g., equipment ready, practice time, etc.)
- Have realistic expectations and keep success in perspective
- Expose child to many different sports and activities
- Hold your child accountable for poor behaviors during sporting events
- Provide an appropriate push when your child is reluctant or unmotivated
- Emphasize the importance of hard work.
- Provide transportation, financial, & logistical support
- Recognize and encourage your child when he or she does something right
- Show interest, enthusiasm, and support for your child and team
- Be in control of your emotions
- Thank the coaches, officials, and other volunteers who conducted the event
- Remain in the spectator area during competitions
- Help make sport fun

Parent "Don'ts"...

- Criticize my child for his or her sport performance
- Critique your child immediately following the sporting event or during the car ride home
- Allow sport to dominate your child's life
- Exert pressure to win
- Treat your child differently dependent upon whether he or she won or lost
- Put your interests ahead of your child's in sport
- Getting too "caught up" in sport and making it over-important
- Belittle the opponent's talent or preparation
- Make all the decisions for your child
- Advise the coach on how to do the job
- Make insulting comments to athletes, parents, officials, or coaches of other teams=
- Drink alcohol at sports events or come to one having drunk too much

What Kids Want...

This is what kids have told us they want from their parents:

- Support and encouragement
- To let them know you are proud of them
- Watch them play
- Praise for their efforts
- Understand their sport and show an interest in being involved
- Have realistic expectations of their abilities

What kids don't want from their parents:

- To yell at them during or after the game
- Swearing
- Abuse of the referee or coach
- Being pushy and pressuring
- Being critical

What kids want from sport:

- Have fun
- Learn and improve
- Be with their friends

Other Resources:

- "Parents: Keeping the Fun in Sport"
- "How to be a Winning Parent: A Parent's and Coach's Guide for 'Winning' in the Youth Sports Game"

"Parenting My Champion: Getting Started"
(From US Tennis Association, used with permission)



SUCCESSFUL SPORTS PARENTING

STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

Your Role on Your Team...

Why is it always me?

- | | |
|-----------------|--------|
| • Leaders | 2% |
| • Doers | 5-10% |
| • Do Somethings | 15-20% |
| • Belongers | 68-78% |

Other Resources:

- "How Can You Help Your Child's Team"

PARENT EDUCATION

Education...

The parent tips presented here are just that, brief ideas to help parents better understand their athletes and how parents could act around their children, both on game day and away from the club.

Game Day Tips for Parents...

Before the Game:

- Tell your child you love them regardless of outcome.
- You don't need to tell your child that winning doesn't matter because they know it has some meaning. Instead, help them to develop a healthy competitive attitude for trying hard and having fun.
- Tell your child to "go for it, give it your best shot and have fun".

During the game:

- Don't yell instructions at your child during the game. The coach has given them instructions and their teammates are also calling out to them; too much input is confusing.
- Cheer and acknowledge good play by both teams.
- Never criticize a mistake, only make motivational comments.
- Respect the decisions made by the officials. Your child will learn to respect authority by seeing you do the same.

After the game:

- Thank the officials and the coach
- Thank the other team for a good game
- Congratulate your child and their teammates on their efforts
- Compliment individual players on good plays they made during the game.
- Focus on the way your child played rather than winning or losing.
- If your child is upset with losing, help them not to focus on the outcome.

During the car ride home:

- Point out a good play your child made during the game.
- Avoid criticizing or correcting mistakes
- Ask questions like:
- Did you have fun?
- Did you give it your best effort?
- What did you learn from the game?
- What was the best play you made and how did it feel?
- Remember it is more important to be a good person than to be a good anything else.

Other Resources:

"Parenting my Champion: Developing Talent: Recommended Guidelines for Successful Sport Parenting"

Parents are encouraged to review all the materials presented in the "Parents" section of the CD, as well as those areas devoted specifically to the club and coach. Within the Parent's Section of the CD there are categories focused on Growth and Development, Physical Well-being, Competition and Training, and Balance and Support. Each one contains a wealth of detailed information, as well as examples from a variety of sports and clubs.

PARENT ETIQUETTE

On Etiquette...

The negative behavior of a small minority of parents has resulted in the adoption of "Parent Code of Conduct" by a wide variety of sport governing bodies. Both USA Swimming and the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association have athlete, coach, official, and volunteer codes of conduct contained within their rules and regulations governing their respective sports. A sampling of parental codes of conduct is presented here, as well as in PDF format. In addition, a brief, bullet point summary of how parents should deal with coaches and officials is presented.

Parent Etiquette in Sport...

Remember the Golden Rule — treat opposing players, coaches and officials the way you'd like to be treated.

Dealing with Coaches:

- Parents should avoid asking a coach to clarify a decision during the course of a game. Support the coach in public, in front of other parents and fans.
- If a parent wishes to seek clarification or have a discussion with a coach after the game, then the following guidelines should be applied:
 - Allow high emotions to subside before engaging in any discussion.
 - Listen.
 - Avoid interrupting.
 - Clarify the issue.
 - Obtain closure.
 - Leave the door open for future discussion.
- Parents should leave the coaching to the coaches. Players should be able to hear the coach's instructions, from coaches only, during play, half time and practice sessions.
- Parents should find opportunities to recognise the effort their child's coach puts into developing their children and the sport.
- Avoid speaking negatively about the coach, especially in front of your child.



SUCCESSFUL SPORTS PARENTING

Dealing with officials

- Parents should not question the decision of an official during the course of a game. If a parent needs to seek clarification they should approach the team coach or manager and apply similar guidelines to those above.
- It is never appropriate to question or abuse officials during or after a game.
 - Remember that officials are doing the best they can.
 - In most instances, officials have received training and have a better understanding of the rules.
 - Officials make mistakes, as do players. Even officials aren't perfect.
 - Officials may have a different view of the game to those of spectators and so may see something that you cannot, or vice versa.
 - Most officials are volunteers who give up their time to do the job. In fact, many officials are out there because nobody else will offer to do it.
- Your child may be asked to officiate in the future. How would you feel if they were abused for making a mistake? Officials deserve your respect and support.
- Remember, without officials there would be no game. Abusing officials will not change the outcome of the game but it will lead to fewer and less qualified officials.

Parents are role models for their children – your children will reflect your attitude towards coaches and officials. Have you ever offered to officiate or coach?

Other Resources:

"USSA Code of Conduct" 10 Commandments for Sport Parents

- I. Thou shall not impose thy ambitions on thy child.
- II. Thou shall be supportive no matter what.
- III. Thou shall not coach thy child.
- IV. Thou shall only have positive things to say at a competition.
- V. Thou shall acknowledge thy child's fears.
- VI. Thou shall not criticize the officials.
- VII. Thou shall honor thy child's coach.
- VIII. Thou shall be loyal and supportive of thy team.
- IX. Thy child shall have goals besides winning.
- X. Thou shall not expect thy child to become an Olympian.