
PARENTAL SUPPORT – THE KEY TO PEAK PERFORMANCE

The role that parents play in the life of a soccer player has a tremendous impact on their experience.

Let the coaches coach:

Leave the coaching to the coaches. This includes motivating, psyching your child for practice, after game critiquing, setting goals, requiring additional training etc. You have entrusted the care of your player to the coaches and they need to be free to do their job. If the player has too many coaches, it is confusing for him and his performance usually declines.

Support the program:

Get involved. Volunteer. Help with fundraisers, car-pool; anything to support the program.

Be your child's best fan:

Support your child unconditionally. Do not withdraw your love when your child performs poorly. Your child should never have to perform to win your love.

Support and root for all the players on the team:

Foster teamwork. Your child's teammates are not the enemy. When they are playing better than your child, your child now has a wonderful opportunity to learn.

Do not bribe or offer incentives:

Your job is not to motivate. Leave this to the coaching staff. Bribes will distract your child from properly concentrating in practice and in games.

Encourage your child to talk with the coaches:

If your child is having difficulties in practice or in games, or can't make a practice, etc., encourage them to speak directly to the coaches. This responsibility is part of becoming a big-time player. By handling off the field tasks, your child is claiming ownership of all aspects of the game –preparation for, as well as, playing the game.

Understand and display appropriate game behavior:

Remember, your child's self esteem and game performance is at stake. Be supportive and cheer. To perform to the best of his or her ability a player needs to focus on the parts of the game that they can control (his fitness, positioning, decision making, skill, aggressiveness, what the game is presenting them). If he starts focusing on what he can't control (the condition of the field, the referee,

the weather, the opponent, even the outcome of the game at times), he will not play up to his potential. If he hears a lot of people telling him what to do, or yelling at the referee, it diverts his attention away from the task at hand.

Monitor your child's stress level at home:

Keep an eye on the player to make sure that they are handling stress effectively from the various activities in his life.

Monitor eating and sleeping habits:

Be sure your child is eating the proper foods and getting adequate rest.

Help your child keep his priorities straight:

Help your child maintain a focus on schoolwork, relationships and the other things in life beside soccer. Also, if your child has made a commitment to soccer, help him fulfill his obligations to the team.

Reality test:

If your child has come off the field when his team has lost, but he has played his best, help him to see this as a "WIN". Remind him to focus on the "PROCESS" and not "RESULTS". His fun and satisfaction should be derived from "STRIVING TO WIN". Conversely, he should be as satisfied from success that occurs despite inadequate preparation and performance.

Keep soccer in proper perspective:

Soccer should not be larger than life for you. If your child's performance produces strong emotions in you, suppress them. Remember your relationship will continue with your children long after their competitive soccer days are over. Keep your goals and needs separate from your child's soccer experience.

Have FUN:

That is what we will be trying to do. We will try and challenge your child to reach past their "COMFORT LEVEL" and improve themselves as a player, and thus a person. We will attempt to do this in environments that are fun , yet challenging. We look forward to this process. We hope you do to.

TIPS for Parents – How to be a winning parent

Youth soccer parents are often chastised by their over involvement in the children's game. But they're given few guidelines on how to help their youngsters develop a healthy attitude toward sports.

Dr. Alan Goldberg, a sports psychologist, has developed a "Parent and Coach's Guide for Winning in the Youth Sports Games".

Among his tips....

- Teach your child to never view the opponent as the "bad guy". Instead talk to and make friends with the parents of the opponent. Root for great performance and good play by both sides- not just for the winner.
- Encourage your child to compete against himself. The ultimate goal of sports is to challenge oneself and continually improve- but judging improvement by winning and losing is unfair and inaccurate measure. If a child plays his best and loses, help him feel like a winner- and when he or his team performs below potential and wins, do not gloat.
- Be supportive but do not coach. Provide encouragement, empathy and transportation; help with fundraisers- but leave the coaching and instruction to the coach.
- Help make the sport fun for your child. If your child does not enjoy what she is doing, investigate, why. Is it the coaching? The pressure? Is it you? Keep in mind that in a competitive program, there should still be room for FUN.
- Remember whose goal the game is. If your child is playing soccer to please you, he is in it for the wrong reason. Avoid pressuring him with your expectations, or using guilt or bribery to keep him involved.
- Your child is not her performance- love her unconditionally! Do not equate her self-worth with her game totals. If your daughter lets in a goal or misses an easy shot, do not respond with disgust, anger or withdrawal of love.
- Remember the importance of self-esteem. Athletes of all levels perform in direct relationship to how they feel about themselves. Do not assault your child's self esteem by degrading, embarrassing or humiliating them.
- Give the gift of failure. The most successful athletes are willing to take more risks than others (and therefore fail more frequently); they also use their failure as a positive source of motivation and improvement. Teach your child to view setbacks and mistakes positively, and you'll give him the key to a lifetime of success.
- Challenge, don't threaten. Using fear as a motivator takes the fun out of performance, and seldom produces long-term results. A challenge, on the other hand, sends the powerful message, I think you can do it!

- Stress process (skill acquisition, master, FUN), not outcome. Help your child get her focus off how important the contest is and onto the process at hand. Supportive parents stress the game itself, not the final score.
- Avoid comparisons and respect developmental differences.
- Comparisons are useless, inaccurate and destructive because each child matures differently. Worrying about how another athlete is doing interferes with a child's attempt to stay within herself.
- Teach your child to have PERSPECTIVE on soccer. Help him develop realistic expectations about himself, his ability and his goals – without robbing him of his DREAMS!!!!