
14 Points to Being a Key Parent

1. **Tell your Child every time you watch them play, "I loved watching you play today!"** Please think about how that would make you feel! I know that would make anyone feel great!
2. **Do not soften the blow for your child after a loss:** If they lose teach them to not make excuses, to learn from the loss and move on. Many times the players move on from the loss quicker than the parents. We get better through setbacks if we face our challenges head on. It also makes us mentally tougher and resilient....two important life skills.
3. **Teach them to be a part of something greater than themselves:** Teach them this by applauding their effort and their coachability. Do not coach them to look to score, "take over" the game, show their talent or shoot more. If you teach them to be "me" players they will miss the experience of being part of a team. Teamwork teaches humility and makes life work.....all players need to learn it.
4. **Do not coach your child:** Coaching your child may confuse your child. Allow them to experience how to deal with others. Encourage your child to listen to the coach. The #1 advice I could give a parent is find a program where you agree with the philosophy of the coach and then allow them to coach. A very simple definition of each person's role puts it into perspective: Players= Play, Coaches= Coach, Parents= Support, Officials= Officiate. Make sure to play your role well and not someone else's role.
5. **Do not approach your child's coach about playing time:** Encourage your child to speak with their coach. A coach should be honest with their players about where they stand and what they need to do to improve. Your job is not to approach the coach about playing time. Your child needs to learn to advocate for themselves and learn how to communicate with others. Remember that a player being a valuable member of the team is important...it is not all about playing time. Also, they may be a less experienced player and may need to develop. Many players do not come into their own until their senior year.
6. **Do not compare your child to others, but encourage them to be the best that they can be!** If a parent is constantly trying to have their child be better than someone else, the child will always be second best....but if you encourage your child to be the best they can be and compete to be that every day, they will get better and they will reach their potential!
7. **Cheer for all...AND never speak negatively about your child or another child or a coach:** We would not want anyone to speak negatively about our child, so do not speak of someone else's child negatively.
8. **Be Self Disciplined:** Sports are an emotional game. They can bring out the best in us and the worst in us if we are not careful. Keep your emotions under control. Would you want someone yelling at you from the stands? Would you want someone yelling at you at work?
9. **Let it be your child's experience:** In order to do so, we must acknowledge that we cannot control the experience of our child...that is why it is called an experience. When we experience something we will have good times and bad times, great moments and average plays, we will deal with victory and defeat....allow your child to experience these highs and lows in sport which will allow them to deal with the ups and downs of life.....If we try to control the experience our child is not being prepared for life.

- 10. Teach them to play for the love of the game (NOT A TROPHY):** Teach your child that they are playing for the love of the game, for their teammates, for the love of competition.....think about if you could teach your child to be a great competitor, a great teammate and to love what they do!.....that would be special.....in youth sports we need to get away from the fact that everyone gets a trophy.....if we do, we are teaching them to play for the reward rather than understanding that the reward is playing the game itself!
- 11. Focus on the process:** Sports like life are a process.....and we need to attack the process every day to grow and get better.....The process is hard work, knowledge, attitude, perseverance, teamwork, coachability, dealing with success and failure..... and winning is the byproduct....in sports and in life.
- 12. Enjoy the journey of your child:** Any journey we take is bound to have great moments, some bad moments, and some moments that we laugh at.....enjoy the journey with your child and do not agonize over every single play, decision by the coach, a good game/ bad game by the team or your child. In 25 years you will wish you were watching your child play...so enjoy the journey!
- 13. Be a parent, not a fan:** Your child will make mistakes, your child is not always perfect.....teach them when needed and make sure to compliment when needed.
- 14. Do not make excuses:** "The Teacher or coach does not like me" is a familiar excuse...in the end, coaches/ teachers like children that work hard, are coachable, have a great attitude, show perseverance, are a good team, know how to deal with success and failure.....teach your child to show the coach these attributes.