SUCCESSFUL SPORTS PARENTING

Do's and Don'ts for Sport Parents

Do for Yourself:

- Get vicarious pleasure from your children's participation, but do not become overly ego-involved.
- Try to enjoy yourself at competitions. Your unhappiness can cause your child to feel guilty.
- Look relaxed, calm, positive and energized when watching your child compete. Your attitude influences how your child feels and performs.
- Have a life of your own outside of your child's sports participation.

Do with Other Parents:

- Make friends with other parents at events. Socializing can make the event more fun for you.
- Volunteer as much as you can. Youth sports depend upon the time and energy of involved parents.
- Police your own ranks: Work with other parents to ensure that all parents behave appropriately at practices and competitions.

Do with Coaches:

- Leave the coaching to the coaches.
- Give them any support they need to help them do their jobs better.
- Communicate with them about your child. You can learn about your child from each other.
- Inform them of relevant issues at home that might affect your child at practice.
- Inquire about the progress of your children. You have a right to know.
- Make the coaches your allies.

Do for your Children:

- Provide guidance for your children, but do not force or pressure them.
- Assist them in setting realistic goals for participation.
- Emphasize fun, skill development and other benefits of sports participation, e.g., cooperation, competition, self-discipline, commitment.
- Show interest in their participation: help them get to practice, attend competitions, ask questions.
- Provide a healthy perspective to help children understand success and failure.
- Emphasize and reward effort rather than results.
- Intervene if your child's behavior is unacceptable during practice or competitions.
- Understand that your child may need a break from sports occasionally.
- Give your child some space when need. Part of sports participation involves them figuring things out for themselves.
- Keep a sense of humor. If you are having fun and laughing, so will your child
- Provide regular encouragement.
- Be a healthy role model for your child by being positive and relaxed at competitions and by having balance in your life.
- GIVE THEM UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: SHOW THEM YOU LOVE THEM WHETHER THEY
- WIN OR LOSE!!!

Don’t for Yourself:

- Base your self-esteem and ego on the success of your child's sports participation.
- Care too much about how your child performs.
- Lose perspective about the importance of your child's sports participation.

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Don't with Other Parents:

- Make enemies of other parents.
- Talk about others in the sports community. Talk to them. It is more constructive.

Don't with Coaches:

- Interfere with their coaching during practice or competitions.
- Work at cross purposes with them. Make sure you agree philosophically and practically on why your child is playing sports and what he or she may get out of sports.

Don't with Your Children

- Expect your children to get anything more from their sports than a good time, physical fitness, mastery and love of a lifetime sport and transferable life skills.
- Ignore your child's bad behavior in practice or competitions.
- Ask the child to talk with you immediately after a competition.
- Show negative emotions while watching them perform.
- Make your child feel guilty for the time, energy and money you are spending and the sacrifices you are making.
- Think of your child's sports participation as an investment for which you expect a return.
- Live out your own dreams through your child's sports participation.
- Compare your child's progress with that of other children.
- Badger, harass, use sarcasm, threaten or use fear to motivate your child. It only demeans them and causes them to dislike you.
- Expect anything from your child except their best effort.
- EVER DO ANYTHING THAT WILL CAUSE THEM TO THINK LESS OF THEMSELVES OR OF YOU!

You can help your child become a strong competitor by...

- Emphasizing and rewarding effort rather than outcome.
- Understanding that your child may need a break from sports occasionally.
- Encouraging and guiding your child, not forcing or pressuring them to compete.
- Emphasizing the importance of learning and transferring life skills such as hard work,
- Self-discipline, teamwork, and commitment.
- Emphasizing the importance of having fun, learning new skills, and developing skills.
- Showing interest in their participation in sports, asking questions.
- Giving your child some space when needed. Allow children to figure things out for themselves.
- Keeping a sense of humor. If you are having fun, so will your child.
- Giving unconditional love and support to your child, regardless of the outcome of the day's competition.
- Enjoying yourself at competitions. Make friends with other parents, socialize, and have fun.
- Looking relaxed, calm, and positive when watching your child compete.
- Realizing that your attitude and behaviors influences your child's performance.
- Having a balanced life of your own outside sports.

Don't . .

- Think of your child's sport participation as an investment for which you want a return.
- Live out your dreams through your child.
- Do anything that will cause your child to be embarrassed.
- Feel that you need to motivate your child. This is the child's and coach's responsibility.

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- Ignore your child's behavior when it is inappropriate, deal with it constructively so that it does not happen again.
- Compare your child's performance to that of other children.
- Show negative emotions while you are watching your child at a competition.
- Expect your child to talk with you when they are upset. Give them some time.
- Base your self-esteem on the success of your child's sport participation.
- Care too much about how your child performs.
- Make enemies with other children's parents or the coach.
- Interfere, in any way, with coaching during competition or practice.
- Try to coach your child. Leave this to the coach.

Stress Relievers for Parents with Children in Sports

- Laugh. Go to a funny movie or do something silly with a friend.
- Take a 10 minute break and walk around the block.
- Light a candle and take a bubble bath in the dark.
- Do nothing. . . and don't feel guilty about it!
- Pay off your credit cards.
- Turn off the T.V.
- Read a book or magazine.
- Read a classic book as a family.
- Make time for a hobby or activity you really love.
- Meet a good friend for coffee.
- Write your child's coach a note of thanks.
- Smile at someone.
- Sit outside on a warm summer night and watch the stars come out.
- Concede that you don't have to be proven right every time.
- As a family get involved with a project that helps someone less fortunate.
- Set up a carpool schedule for your kids activities so you don't spend your life in the car.
- Set aside a day with no outside activities scheduled.
- Go to the church or synagogue of your choice.
- Schedule a meeting with your child's coach to discuss her progress and establish agreed upon goals.
- Avoid initiating or participating in the gym gossip.

About the Author:

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