



## Managing the Inevitable Frustration Of Sports Parenting

- **Stay under control.** Prevent the natural aggression of sport from turning savage. Blanket your aggression with care, compassion, and consideration.
- **Be competitive, but not contentious.** Express your spirit within the framework of mutually agreed upon guidelines. Avoid becoming quarrelsome or divisive.
- **Use your sports parenting experiences to learn more about yourself.** Take notice and your ability to show restraint will be revealed. Parents tend to reveal their level of emotional maturity in highly charged competitive situations, specially when their children's well-being is being threatened.
- **Identify your hot buttons.** Be aware of those situations that provoke anxiety and intemperate responses. Discover why these situations have become sources of frustration for you.
- **Examine your personal history with sports and determine how it is impacting your relationships with your family members.** Assess your values, attitudes and skills to determine the changes you feel you need to make in order to be able to show restraint while your children are competing.
- **In reacting to your children's sports performances avoid allowing your own feelings about sports to influence how you respond to them.** Try to view these situations as your children are perceiving them and then respond accordingly.
- **When your children have not performed well on the playing field refrain from giving advice, but be prepared to share your observations with them if they seek your counsel.**
- **When your children do not get a starting assignment do nothing, unless they express their disappointment to you, at which time discuss their options with them.** At that point coach your on how to best approach their coach to address playing time issues.
- **When the coach angrily corrects your children from the sidelines refrain from interfering.** However, create an opening for your children to work through their feelings with you at a time that is not emotionally charged. At that point you can help them consider how they should respond to verbal attacks from the coach.
- **When your children's teams wins, remain in the stands while vigorously applauding the team's achievements.** Do not steal your children's moments in the spotlight. Simply enjoy the moment.
- **In the heat of competition it is natural to have intense feelings, therefore it is important to anticipate how the expression of your emotions may be impacting your children, their teammates, the coach, the officials and the other parents.**
- **While it is natural to have hostile feelings toward those athletes, coaches, game officials and spectators who are causing bad things to happen to your children's teams, refrain from publicly expressing them.**
- **While it is disappointing when an official "blows a call" try not to let your disappointment show.** You need to be a model of restraint for your children, for it is important for them to learn how to handle the inevitable setbacks and experiences of injustice that go with sports and life beyond the playing field.
- **Help your children learn to remain tuned into the games they are playing.** Allow them to enjoy their games without interference from you, no matter how frustrating these competitive situation often become.

- **Create a sanctuary for producing enchanting moments in sports.** Potentially uplifting experiences in sports can be interrupted by emotional outbursts directed at athletes, coaches, officials, or parents. You must allow your children to become deeply involved in what they are doing so that they can get the most out of their sports experiences.
- **Repress your impulses to showcase your sports expertise.** Remember that when you display unsolicited "superior sports wisdom" you run the risk of driving a wedge between you, your children, their coaches, teammates and even your partner.
- **Do not allow your lack of emotional restraint to ruin the sports experiences of others.** Be considerate of all those around you, your children, their teammates, the coach, the game officials, your fellow parents and spectators.
- **Ignore questionable calls by officials, recognizing these incidents as inevitable features of sport.** Get on with enjoying the many opportunities that sports offers you and your family. By showing restraint you will be better able to enjoy the competition and avoid interfering with the flow of your children's games.
- **Be aware of how your responses to poor officiating can impact your children and their teams.** You do not want your conduct to have a negative impact on the outcome of the competition.
- **Help your sports mates realize the down side of modeling their conduct after contentious high profile professional sports.** Parents, athletes and coaches need to remind themselves that while the games appear to be the same the outcomes being sought in school and youth sports go far beyond winning. Therefore, the importance of showing restraint needs to be emphasized.
- **Commit to collaboratively establishing guidelines with the athletes, coaches and parents in your team community that discourage emotional outbursts that interrupt the flow of competition.** It is much easier to resist emotional outburst when others also agree to show restraint.

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