

A Message to Parents

Dear Parents,

Make sure your children know that, win or lose, scared or heroic, you still love them, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. The goal should be to improve themselves. This will allow them to do their best; to avoid developing a fear of failure based on the spectra of disapproval and family disappointed if they do mess up.

Be the person in their life that they can look for constant positive reinforcement. Learn to hide your feelings if they disappoint you on the sporting field.

Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic capability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship, and actual skill level.

Be helpful, but don't "coach" them on the way to practice... on the way back home from training or a game... at breakfast... and so on. Sure it's tough not to coach, but it is a lot tougher for a child to be inundated with advice, pep talks, and often instruction from a parent than a professional coach. Many times the child gets conflicting advice. If you do not have confidence in the professional coach, then get your child out of the program!

Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying", to be working to improve their skills and attitudes... to take physical bumps and come back for more. Don't say "winning doesn't count" because it does. Instead, help them develop the feel for competition, for trying hard, for having fun.

Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure; you fumbled too; you lost as well as won. You were frightened; you backed off at times; you were not always heroic. Don't pressure them because of your pride. Sure, they are an extension of you, but let them make their own voyage of discovery into the world of sport. Help to calm the water when things get stormy, but let them handle their navigational problems. Don't assume they feel the way you did, want the same things you want, or have the same attitudes you have. You gave them life, now let them learn how to handle it, enjoy it.

Let your children need you on their terms

- Author unknown