

The Baker's Dozen

Hints and Helps For the Parent of an Athlete

1. Support your child and attend as many contests as possible. Make sure that your child knows that win-or-lose, scared or heroic-you love them, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic capability, their competitive attitude, their sportsmanship and their actual skill level. Avoid putting pressure on your child to start, score, or be the star of the team.
3. Keep in mind that children tend to exaggerate both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reactions to the tales of woe or heroics they bring home. Don't cut your youngster down if you feel they are exaggerating-just take a look at the situation and gradually try to develop an even keel. Above all, don't over-react and rush off to the coach if you feel an injustice has been done. Investigate, but anticipate that the problem is not as it might appear.
4. Be helpful, but don't "coach" your child. Your "style" or "philosophy" may be the opposite of what the coach is trying to instill in the team.
5. Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure; you struck out too, you lost as well as you won. You were frightened, you backed down at times, you were not always heroic. Don't pressure them because of your pride.
6. Support your coach. Avoid speaking negatively about the coach in front of your child and in public. NOTHING good ever comes from this. The bottom line is the coach decides what style of play is best for the team and also decides who plays. You don't have to agree with everything the coach does, but you should respect it.
7. Serve as good role models for the students, athletes, and other fans by showing good sportsmanship and respect for the officials, coaches, athletes, fans, and administrators. No one likes a community with the reputation of being rude and unruly in their facility, nor do they want to travel to that type of environment.
8. Express concerns and questions in a courteous and civil manner in the proper setting. NEVER approach a coach after a game. Wait until the heat of the moment has passed and cooler heads can prevail. Set up a meeting with the coach either through him/her or the AD.
9. It is critical that the chain-of-command be followed.
10. Teach your child to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be there trying to do their best, improve their skills, to take the physical bumps and come back for more.

Don't say that "winning doesn't count" because it does. Instead, help them develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.

11. Understand that the goals of the team and athletic program are more important than the hopes and dreams you have for your child.
12. Avoid constant and chronic complaining. Sometimes situations don't seem fair. Remember, life isn't always fair.
13. Understand the ultimate purpose of athletics. It exists as an integral part of the total educational mission of the school, and participation in athletics is a privilege and not a right.