



How to Encourage Success in a Young Athlete

Most parents who watch their kids in athletic events have seen an inappropriate action involving a coach, player or another parent. To some sports are all about winning, and the value of building teamwork and increasing physical fitness can be lost in the drive to come out on top. To overcome this pressure, it's important for parents to work together with coaches, athletes and other parents to create a positive athletic environment. The following tips can help:

- Place your child in the best and safest environment—with proper training and equipment—for them to enjoy and succeed in athletics.
- From the first day of practice, work with the coaches and other parents to define and communicate clear goals, values and procedures for everyone involved.
- Understand that some coaches in youth sports are volunteers who are not professionally trained. A travel team and high school coaches are more likely to be professionally trained and certified.
- Temper expectations of what you want for your child with the goals of the team and coaches. Remember that other parents and kids have their own expectations—which have to be considered equally to yours.
- Set realistic goals for your child, the team and the coaches
- Emphasize improved performance is key, not just winning
- Resist the temptation to recreate or reinvent your own athletic past through your child. Stay focused on your child's unique abilities, interests and goals.
- Remember to control your emotions at games and events. Maintain a positive attitude, and don't yell at other players, coaches, or officials.
- Be a role model. Show respect and your child will follow your example.
- Communicate openly. If you disagree with a coach's approach or the behavior of other parents, discuss it with them respectfully at an appropriate time and place.

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