

Parent / Guardian Rules by Numerous Contributors

- Make sure your child knows win or lose, scared or heroic, that you love them, that you appreciate their efforts and that you are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best, and to avoid any fear of failure based on the potential of family disapproval or disappointment if they mess up.
- Become the person in their life they can look up to for constant positive enforcement. Learn to hide your feelings if they disappoint you.
- 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" on the way to the track, diamond or court.... On the way home...at breakfast... and so on.
- Teach them to enjoy the thrills of competition, trying, working, improving their skills and attitudes... taking physical bumps and coming back for more. Don't say "winning doesn't count" because it does. Instead, help them develop the feel for competing, for trying hard and for having fun.
- Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure. Remember, you fumbled too; you lost as well as won; you were frightened; you backed off at times; and you were not always heroic. Don't pressure them because of your pride.
- They are an extension of you, but let them make their own voyage of discovery into the world of sports.. Let them sail into it without interference. Help them calm the water when things get stormy, but let them handles their own navigational problems.
- Find out what they are all about and don't assume they feel the same way, want the same things, or have the same attitude that you did.
- You gave them life, now let them learn to handle it, and enjoy it. Let them need you on their terms- don't overwhelm them with help.
- Children need their parents, so you must not withdraw. Jut remember, there is a thinking, feeling, sensitive, free spirit out there in that uniform who needs a lot of understanding, especially when their world turns bad.
- If they are comfortable with you- win or lose- they are on their way to maximum achievement and enjoyment-and you will get your kicks too!
- Think of your child as a child, not as "my son/daughter, the athlete!" if you do, the morale of the family of the family will greatly improve.

- Don't compete with the coach. The young athlete often comes home and chatters on about "coach says this, coach says that." This, understandably, is often hard to take, especially for a father or mother who has had some sport experience.
- When a certain degree of disenchantment about the coach sets in, some parents side with the youngster. This is a perfect opportunity to discuss (not lecture) with the youngster the importance of learning how to handle problems, how to react to criticism and how to understand the necessity of discipline, rules, regulations and so on.
- Don't compare the skill, courage or attitudes of your child with that of other members of the squad or team, at least not in front of them. If your child shows tendency to resent the treatment they get from the coach, or the approval other team members get, be careful to talk over the facts quietly and try to provide fair and honest counsel. If you play the role of the overly protective parent, who is blinded to the relative merits of your youngster and their actual status as an athlete and individual, you will merely perpetuate the problem. Your youngster could become a "problem athlete."
- You should also get to know the coach, so that you can be assured that his or her philosophy, attitudes, ethics and knowledge are a good influence on your child. The coach has a tremendous potential influence.
- Always remember that children tend to exaggerate both when praised and 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 level.
- 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.
- Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. There are different kinds of courage. Some of us can climb mountains, but are frightened to get into a fight. Others can fight without fear, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas-nobody escapes fear and that is just as well since it often helps us avoid disaster. Explain to your youngster that courage does not mean an absence of fear, but rather, means doing something in spite of fear or discomfort.
- In a way, the parents are the primary coaches. We have talked with many great athletes who, in evaluating the reasons for their success, have said, "My parents really helped. I was lucky in that respect." The parent's "coaching job" is the toughest one of all and it takes a lot of effort to do it well. It is worth all the effort when you hear your youngster boast (now or later on) that you played a key role in their success.