



## **Your Responsibilities As a YMCA Sports Parent**

All parents want their kids to do well and have fun in the activities they pursue. We want you to be actively involved in positive ways with your child's sport experiences in YMCA Sports. To do that, you need to first understand your responsibilities as a parent of a child in YMCA Sports.

1. Encourage your child to play sports, but don't pressure. Let your child choose to play – and to – quit if he or she wants.
2. Understand what your child wants from sports, and provide a supportive atmosphere for achieving these goals.
3. Set limits on your child's participation. Don't make sports everything in your child's life; make it a part of life.
4. Keep winning in perspective, and help your child do the same.
5. Help your child set challenging but realistic performance goals rather than focusing only on "winning the game."
6. Help your child understand the valuable lessons sports can teach.
7. Help your child meet responsibilities to the team and to the coach.
8. Turn your child over to the coach at practices and games – don't meddle or coach from the sidelines.
9. Supply the coach with information on any allergies or special health conditions your child has. Make sure your child brings any necessary medication to practices and games.

## **Be Involved, But Not Too Involved**

YMCA Sports needs enthusiastic involvement from parents to be successful. Volunteering your time not only helps that program, it's also an enjoyable way to meet other adults and make new friends. Here are just a few ways to become involved:

- ☺ Be a coach or an assistant coach.
- ☺ Be an official or umpire.
- ☺ Keep time or score.
- ☺ Be a team mom or dad
- ☺ Be a first aid attendant.
- ☺ Coordinate refreshments.

A healthy involvement will usually be welcomed by both the coach and your son or daughter. However, no coach wants to be – or should be – second-guessed by parents on strategy moves or other coaching decisions. Signs of parents being too closely involved include these:

- ☺ You are overly concerned with the outcome of the game.
- ☺ You spend a lot of time talking with the coach about the game plan, player levels, and the way he or she conducts practices and coaches games.+
- ☺ Your son or daughter has stopped enjoying the sport or has asked you to stop coming to games or practices.
- ☺ You require your son or daughter to take extra practice.

Be involved, show interest, help the coach where he or she needs help, encourage your child – and enjoy the sport yourself!

## **A YMCA Sports Parent's Code of Conduct**

1. Remain in the spectator area during competitions.
2. Let coaches coach.
3. Keep comments positive to players, parents, officials, and coaches of either team.
4. Come to games sober, and refrain from drinking alcohol at contests.
5. Cheer for your team.
6. Show interest, enthusiasm, and support for you child.
7. Be in control of you emotions.
8. Help when you're asked to by a coach or an official.
9. Thank the coaches, officials, and other volunteers who conducted the event.

## **Helping Your Child Enjoy Sports**

You can help your child enjoy sports by doing the following:

- ☺ Developing a winning perspective
- ☺ Building your child's self-esteem
- ☺ Emphasizing fun, skill development, and striving to win
- ☺ Helping your child set performance goals

## **Developing a Winning Perspective**

Every decision parents make in guiding their children should be based first on what's best for the child and second on what may help the child win. Stated another way, this perspective places **Athletes Fist, Winning Second.**

We're not saying winning is unimportant. Winning – or striving to win – is essential to enjoyable competition. Pursuing victory and achieving goals are sweet rewards of sport participation. But they can turn sour if, through losing, you or your child lose the proper perspective also. An obsession with winning often produces a fear of failure, resulting in below average performances and upset children.

## **Building Your Child's Self-Esteem**

Building self-esteem in you child is one of your most important parenting duties. It's not easy – and it's made even more difficult in sports by the prevailing attitude of “winning is everything.” Athletes who find their self-worth through winning will go through tough times when they lose.

Building self-esteem in your child takes more than encouragement. You need to show you child unconditional approval and love. Don't praise dishonestly; children can see through that. Always show the same amount of love and approval for your child no matter how they perform on the court or field.

## **Emphasizing Fun, Skill Development, and Striving to Win**

The reason you should emphasize fun is quit simple: without it, your child may not want to keep playing. Kids don't have fun when they stand around in practice or sit on the bench during games, when they feel pressure to win and don't improve or learn new skills. Conversely, they do have fun when practices are will organized, they get to play in games, they develop new skills, and focus is on striving to win.

## **Helping Your Child Set Performance Goals**

Performance goals – which emphasize individual skill improvement – are much better than the outcome goal of winning for two reasons:

1. Performance goals are in the athlete's control.
2. Performance goals help the athlete improve.

Performance goals should be specific, and they should be challenging but not too difficult to achieve. For example, if you child plays soccer, you might help him or her set the goals of making short, crisp passes; of staying between the ball and the goal on defense; and of giving his best effort throughout the game.

You (and you child's coach) should help your young athlete set such goals. And help your child focus on performance goals before a game; this focus will help sports be an enjoyable learning expense for your son or daughter.

*YMCA Mission: “To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.”*