

DO'S AND DON'TS CHECK LIST FOR PARENTS WHEN COMING TO TRAINING AND GAMES

Been there done that...we all know those terrible sports parents. They come when they shouldn't and don't turn up when they should. They make the coach's life a nightmare and generally do everything they can to ensure that the training sessions and games are as unproductive as possible. Here is a list of 'dos' and 'don'ts' for parents when they come to the training sessions and games.

THE DO'S

DO PRIORITIZE YOUR KIDS: There is nothing more frustrating than a parent who is always late or is too early because they have too much else going on. Take the time to support your child and keep the appointments. Offer to attend the games and training sessions but do not insist if they tell you not to come.

DO BE IN YOUR KID'S CORNER: We all expect that parents and families will want the player to win but it is not always so. Some parents only support their kids when they are winning. If there is a problem, they will go berserk. Your child should know that you are always in their corner no matter what happens.

DO BE NICE TO THE STAFF: Shouting your head off and screaming at the referee is just going to embarrass the kids and make it impossible for them to learn. There is no downside to being nice to the people that make things happen. Say hi to the coaches and remain friendly with the people you meet at the training facility.

DO ALWAYS REMAIN THE PARENT: Being a sports parent can be a series of rollercoaster transitions. Sometimes you are the assistant coach, at other times you do the physio then you might end up being a therapist when things have not gone well. However, you must not remain in these other roles for too long. Your primary duty is to be the parent.

DO OFFER SMILES AND HUGS: Sports can be a daunting task that is full of disappointments and stress. You should be the fun anchor to which the player returns for comfort. That means being ready and prepared to be the shoulder to cry on when they have had a hard day at the office. Kids perform better when they are given unconditional support and that is your role as a parent.

DO GIVE CONSTRUCTIVE AND TIMELY FEEDBACK: It is very important for parents to be honest with kids. They do know when you are lying and it hurts them when you do. Make sure that the feedback is constructive. You are not telling them off so that they can feel bad but because you love them and want them to succeed. Give them feedback on not what they did badly but what they can improve on. The last thing they want to hear is everything they did wrong.

DO LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD: Once you build a relationship of trust and confidence, you will get honest answers. Asking questions can inspire your child to learn more and to think about what they are actually doing in the game. It is all part of a communication process in which they can give you feedback.

DO EMPHASIZE SPORTSMANSHIP: Although winning is desirable and makes every parent proud, you should not over-emphasize it. Your child had better learn to be a great human being before they become a magnificent player. Certainly you should always encourage your child to do the right thing even if it means losing a point or a game.

DO SHARE GOALS AND HOPES WITH YOUR CHILD: It is always good when you share goals and objectives with your child. That means that you are both working on the same page and you will not end up in a situation where you are forcing them to do something that they would rather not do. In other words, you become partners in this endeavor of sport.

DO BECOME A ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR CHILD: Children learn by example. If you have been behaving badly then the chances are that it will rub off onto the kids. Parents that are angry, aggressive and generally abusive cannot hope to create little angels. On the other hand, mature and friendly parents will soon get their children to be liked by everyone on the team.

THE DON'TS

DON'T ENCOURAGE THEM TO CHEAT: Some parents are so enthusiastic about winning at all costs that they end up encouraging their kids to cheat in order to get the big "W". This is very bad practice. You never know, that little kid might end up being the biggest cheat ever and they will lose it all because you started them off when they were young.

DON'T BE DOWN ON THEM WHEN THEY LOSE: It is tempting for parents to reflect how the game has gone. Children are very sensitive after a loss and they will watch out for any sign that you are not happy with them. A change in voice or even a frown will be enough to tell them that you do not support them unconditionally. That can be devastating for their confidence.

DON'T USE THEM TO ACHIEVE WHAT YOU COULD NOT ACHIEVE: Your kids are individuals with their own hopes and dreams. It is not good form to try and relive your life through them. Many parents do this because they think that if they do things differently, somehow their children will go much further than them. That may be true some of the time but not all the time. Give them the space to be their own being. Don't force them to live in the past.

DON'T UNDERMINE THE COACH AND STAFF: The coaches and staff know what they are doing. They are trained and have been doing this for a lot longer than you. Don't make it your business to second guess their decisions or to provide some alternatives that you think are better than what they are doing. If you believe that you are the master coach, don't take your child to the coach in the first place.

DON'T BECOME COMPLETELY DETACHED FROM THE WHOLE THING: Although it can be tough working up an interest about everything your kid does, show that you care. The parents that look the other way will discourage the child. The kid will want to tell you all about their success and the least you can do is tune in. Nothing is more important than your relationship with your child so don't spoil it for other unimportant things.

DON'T DEMAND FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE: Making unrealistic claims for your child can put them under so much pressure that they fail to do the things that they can do. You are not going to get a Lionel Messi overnight and don't tell them that they are a Lionel Messi. Some kids take things to heart and they will feel depressed if they can't live up to your unrealistic standards.

DON'T TAKE OVER THE COACHING SESSION: Some parents are just larger than life in every sense of the word. They suck the life right out of the room with their grand pronouncements and amazing knowledge about the sport. If you do this, you are damaging the player-coach relationship which is critical for learning to take place. Try as much as possible to know your limited role and stick to it.

DON'T LAUGH AT THE CHILD OR THE TEAM: Making fun of your kid or their friends because they don't quite make the cut is not only cruel, but also highly irresponsible. You are the adult and an adult who is in a position of trust. Bullying and maligning your child is really not within the job specification for a good parent. Remember that your taunts will hurt a lot more than those of anyone else because they come from a loved one.

DON'T BECOME AN EMOTIONAL DRAMA QUEEN ON THE PITCH: There are parents that just play high drama in everything. A little scratch here becomes an ER incident. Don't become a factory for official complaints and inquiries. It makes your kid unpopular and you actually stop them from building the relationships they need in order to get the game going.

DON'T DO STUFF YOU KNOW IS EMBARRASSING: Above all, never do anything that is embarrassing to your kid. Of course sometimes our kids are embarrassed by us for no reason. However, you can help for example by not coming in dressed as if you were advertising for clandestine services or even drunk. Your child will never be able to live down an embarrassing parent.

Good parents support coaching as well as their child. They are team players, always there in the highs and lows. Above all, they let the professionals do their job.