

HOW TO ESTABLISH RAPPORT WITH YOUR ATHLETIC CHILD

Golden Rules for Parents

1. 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.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic capability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship, and actual skill level.
3. Be helpful but don't "coach" on the way to the track, diamond, court, on the way home, at breakfast, etc.....
4. Teach them to enjoy the thrills of competition, trying, working, improving their skills and attitudes.... taking the 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 having fun.
5. 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.
6. Don't compete with the coach. The young athlete often comes home and chatters on about "coach says this and coach says that". This understandably, is often hard to take, especially for a father or mother who has had some sports experience.
7. Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with that of other members of the team, at least not in front of them. And if your child shows a tendency to resent the treatment they get from the coach, or other team members, be careful to talk over the facts and try to provide fair and honest counsel. If you play the role of overprotective 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.
8. You should 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 on your child.
9. Always remember 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 try to develop an even level.