

A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS

- Make sure your children know that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love them, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed with them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for positive reinforcement.
- Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic capability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship and actual skill level.
- Be helpful but do not coach them on the way to the game or on the way back, or at breakfast, and so on. It is tough not to, but it is a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advice, pep talks, and often critical instruction.
- Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying", to be working to improve their skills and attitudes. Help them to develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, and having fun.
- Try not to relive your athletic life through your children in a way that creates pressure; you fumbled to, you lost as well as won. You were frightened, you backed off at times, you were not always heroic. Do not pressure them because of your lost pride.
- Do not compare the skill, courage of attitudes of your child with other members of the team, at least within his/her hearing.
- Do not compete with the coach. If the coach becomes an authority figure, it will run from enchantment to disenchantment, etc., with your athlete.
- Get to know the coach so you can be assured that the philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his leadership. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before overreacting.
- Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear but a means of doing something in spite of fear or discomfort. The job of the parent of an athletic child is tough one, and it takes a lot of effort to do well. It is worth all the effort when you hear your youngster say, "My parents really helped, I was lucky in this."