



10 Rules For Parents of Athletes

1. Make sure your children know that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love them, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their lives they can look to for constant, positive encouragement.
2. Try your best to be completely honest to yourself about your child's athletic capability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship and actual skill level.
3. Be helpful, but don't coach them on the way to the court or on the way back, at breakfast, at dinner and so on. It's tough not to, but it's a lot tougher for children to be inundated with advice, pep talks and often critical instruction.
4. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve their skills and attitudes. Help them develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, for having fun and learning.
5. Try not to re-live your athletic life through your children in a way that creates pressure. You missed your serve or shot 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 lost pride.
6. Don't compete with the coach. You both have clearly defined roles that should complement each other. Encourage your child to respect their coach – they will learn more in the process.
7. Try hard not to compare the skill, courage or attitudes of your children with other members of the team, especially within your child's hearing distance.
8. Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his/her philosophy, attitudes, ethics and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your children under his/her leadership.
9. Always remember children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before overreacting.
10. 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 a parent of an athletic child is a tough one, and it takes a lot of effort to do it well. The best words to say to your child after they compete?

"I love to watch you play."