

TOP TEN RULES OF PARENTAL BEHAVIOR AT THEIR KID'S GAMES:

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Parents should be seen, but not heard too often

It's fine and good to go and watch your child play. But as a parent, you should try to blend in with the woodwork. Don't draw attention to yourself -the games are all about YOUR child, NOT about YOU. As such, parents (not children) should be SEEN....but not HEARD.



If you have to say something, it should only be positive praise.

Very simple. If you absolutely feel compelled to cheer, make sure your comments are only positive! And make your comments generic in tone. That is, "Way to go guys" or "Great job girls" is much more effective than highlighting just one kid. Root for the TEAM - not just one individual kid.

If you ask, "Did you win?" after a game your child will think winning is important.

If you ask, "Did you have fun?" after a game he or she will assume having fun is important.

Never criticize your kid....and never, ever criticize somebody else's kid!

This is an absolute sin. If you feel compelled to try and coach your kid from the sidelines, or make some disparaging remarks, e.g. "C'mon, Tommy, you're not even trying hard out there," or "Sally, you gotta get back faster on defense," then you have really crossed the line. Coaching is the Coach's job - - NOT yours. And even though it may kill you to say nothing, well, that's too bad. Act like the grown-up adult that you are. And by the way, if you ever criticize somebody else's kid in a game-well, now you're totally out of line and risking a well-deserved punch in the nose. You never ever criticize some other parent's kid, or risk the consequences.

Please do not do a play-by-play of the game.

This applies mostly to youth coaches who try and dictate every play of the game while it's happening...."Okay, Sam, dribble the ball up....now pass it over to Joe....Joe, pass the ball to Mike....Mike, take the shot. "Do this, Coach, at practice....but during the game, let the kids figure it out! Otherwise, they'll become too dependent on you for constant instruction. Even worse, they'll feel that they can't be spontaneous during the game, less you get angry with them and bench them. PS - when you played sports as a kid, did anyone dictate to you what to do?

If you can't control your mouth, then don't stand with the other parents....

stay way far away from the others, and stand off by yourself....Folks, you have to know your own personality. If you honestly feel that you might get too emotionally involved in your kid's game, then stand off by yourself during the action. You can come back and rejoin the sane parents during half-time, but there's nothing wrong with going away from the crowd and being alone with your thoughts. I'd rather you do that than make a jack-ass out of yourself where everybody can hear you and confirm that you're an out of control jerk AND embarrass your kid.

Refs are not there to be abused in any way.

Here's the deal. Without the refs, umps, or officials, the game quickly is transformed from a real game into just being a scrimmage....okay, so understand that. Then, understand that the vast majority of sports parents DO NOT know where to draw the line when it comes to questioning a ref's call....too many parents DO think that a ref can somehow be psychologically influenced during a game, and that the parent keeps chirping and pointing out mistakes, then the ref will begin to give them the close calls. Of course, that never happens. If anything, the ref will just get annoyed at the parent. So, here's what you do to fix the problem. Don't say anything to the ref. And don't say anything about their calls. Let the coach do that. You, as a sideline parent, just be quiet. The ref is NOT going to change their call. The ref is NOT going to be influenced on future calls by your catcalls. So, just be quiet.

It's okay to applaud a nice play by an opposing player....

we're trying to teach our kids to be good sports, and to respect their opponents. So if one of the opposing players makes a great play, applaud it! That's okay - yes, even sometimes the opposing team makes good plays! And you should tell your child that it's okay for their opponents to be talented as well.

Understand that you are a role model for the kids

they will follow your behavior. Along those lines, ALWAYS remember that your son or daughter is watching YOU on how they should behave. So if you're going nuts on the ref, or throwing a temper tantrum, or seem emotionally unsettled, don't be surprised if your kid starts acting the same way. And you know what? That's YOUR fault, not the kid's.

If a coach or a ref tells you to calm down, please take that caution seriously!

You folks know I'm a big fan of zero tolerance. And if a ref or ump or official singles you out, and tells you to calm down, then consider yourself fully warned! You won't get - nor do you deserve - a second chance. And if you can't calm down, then yes, you should be banned from the game. What gives you the right to ruin it for all the kids?

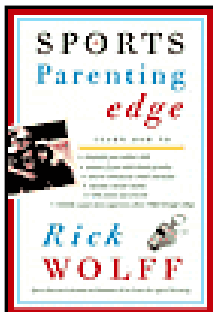
Try to give your kid a smile....

when your kid looks over to the sideline and, for a brief moment, sees your face, please make sure you have a smile on it...or at least, a look of quiet pride. Kids DO look to parents for approval, and if you look like you're having a good time, then he or she will feel the same way. But if you're scowling, or cursing, or stomping around, then your kid will take that as a sign that they ought to be nervous and angry too. So, relax - leave your game face at home - and wear a relaxed face to your kid's game.

Are any points left out here? If so, please email us and let us know - many thanks, Rick Wolff.

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The Sports Parenting Edge: The Winning Game Plan for Every Athlete-from T-Ball to College Recruiting



A practical, provocative, and comprehensive guide for parents who want to ensure that their children get the most out of all their sports experiences, The **Sports Parenting Edge** takes a fresh, resolutely positive approach to a popular subject. Parents and coaches today, claims author Rick Wolff, do not want to be lectured anymore about the problems inherent in youth sports. Rather, they want to learn how to work around the pitfalls of out-of-control parents, how to deal with win-at-all-costs coaches, and in short, how to make certain that their children enjoy sports and have the opportunity to develop their full athletic potential. A must for parents of children from kindergarten age through high school, this book also includes a frank discussion of college recruitment issues.