

## Ten Tips to Being a Good Sports Parent

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A good baseball or softball experience for your child begins with us: the parents of each player. It is up to each of us to make being a youth more enjoyable, and to make baseball or softball season a greater learning experience for the kids. After all, no matter how much we enjoy it too, this is FOR THE KIDS.

We believe that these ideas will help to make the next few months more fun for your children, more enjoyable for you, and a heck of a lot easier on those people who volunteer their time and skills.

1. **Work with your child.** There really is little more satisfying than going out at least a few evenings a week and playing ball with your kids. This gives them quality time, and helps your child improve his/her skills (and, trust me, the better your child can play, the more she/he will enjoy the Baseball or Softball experience!). Some day, your child will look back fondly on the spring evenings spent playing catch with mom and/or dad.
2. **Get involved.** The program is run on a volunteer basis, and we can use all the help we can get. Anything you can do will help all the kids, from helping out at registration, to scorekeeping or field preparation, to concession stand. If your child sees that baseball or softball is that important to you, he/she will learn that it is important to the kids, too. Everyone can find a place to help.
3. **Show up for the games AND the practices.** In today's busy world it is sometimes hard to juggle schedules, but this is your child! Often kids who do not try to excel at baseball or softball are invariably the kids that are dropped off at practices/games and picked up afterwards, without the parent(s) ever watching. It's only a couple of times a week, a couple of months out of the year!
4. **Don't create pressure.** Some parents may have dreams of their child becoming an all star or major league player, but they are only children and deserve to enjoy the game as children. Don't expect more than they can deliver. Give positive encouragement, and be there when they need you. Besides, often a child in early years will lack certain skills, and blossom later on.
5. **Respect the rules.** This is one of the most important things the kids should be learning. If you don't agree with an umpires call, keep it to yourself. If there is a team rule that bothers you, well, it's their team...not yours. If you think there is a serious problem, take it up with the coach or a League official on your own time, not your child's'. Rule of thumb: during practice or games, don't speak unless spoken to (except, of course, to cheer on ALL the kids).
6. **Have Fun!** This should be a positive experience for everyone: kids, coaches, support staff, and parents. Winning is nice, but losing is inevitable. Being a star is fun, but being a bench player is just as important.
7. **Losing is a normal result of competition—help your child learn to accept it.** No one likes to lose, but the nature of a team sport is that one team always loses. Teach your child that he/she didn't lose, the team lost. And they lost to a team that just happened to play better that day. There is always next time, and the important thing is to learn from the defeats. One of life's most interesting truisms is that we learn more in failure than in success. Its okay to analyze why your team lost, and how they can do better next time. It's never okay to place blame!

## 10 Things Kids Say They Don't Want Their Parents to Do

- 1. Don't yell out instructions.**  
During the game I'm trying to concentrate on what the coach says and working on what I've been practicing. It's easier for me to do my best if you save instructions and reminders for practice or just before the game.
- 2. Don't put down the officials.**  
This embarrasses me and I sometimes wonder whether the official is going to be tougher on me because my parents yell.
- 3. Don't yell at me in public.**  
It will just make things worse because I'll be upset, embarrassed, or worried that you're going to yell at me the next time I do something "wrong."
- 4. Don't yell at the coach.**  
When you yell about who gets to play what position, it just stirs things up and takes away from the fun.
- 5. Don't put down my teammates.**  
Don't make put-down remarks about any of my teammates who make mistakes. It takes away from our team spirit.
- 6. Don't put down the other team.**  
When you do this you're not giving us a very good example of sportsmanship so we get mixed messages about being "good sports."
- 7. Don't lose your cool.**  
I love to see you excited about the game, but there's no reason to get so upset that you lose your temper! It's our game and all the attention is supposed to be on us.
- 8. Don't lecture me about mistakes after the game.**  
Those rides home in the car after the game are not a good time for lectures about how I messed up -- I already feel bad. We can talk later, but please stay calm, and don't forget to mention things I did well during the game!
- 9. Don't forget how to laugh and have fun.**  
Sometimes it's hard for me to relax and have fun during the game when I look over and see you so tense and worried.
- 10. Don't forget that it's just a game!**  
Odds are, I'm not going to make a career out of playing sports. I know I may get upset if we lose, but I also know that I'm usually feeling better after we go get a pizza. I need to be reminded sometimes that it's just a game