

The Ten Commandments for Parents of Athletic Children

1. Make sure your child knows that win or loser, scared or heroic, you love him/her and appreciate his/her efforts and are not disappointed.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic capability, their competitive attitude, their sportsmanship and their actual skill level.
3. Be helpful, but don't coach them on the way to the gym, on the way home, at breakfast, and so on.
4. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be out there trying, to be working to improve their skills and attitudes, to take the physical bumps and come back for more.
5. Try not to relive your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure. You fumbled too, lost as well as won, were frightened, backed off at times, and were not always heroic. Don't pressure your child because of your pride.
6. Don't compete with the coaches. Remember that in many cases, a coach becomes a hero to the athlete, someone who can do no wrong.
7. Don't compare the skill, courage or attitudes of your child with that of other members of the team. If your child shows a tendency to resent the treatment he or she gets from the coach or the approval other team members get, be careful to talk over the facts quietly and try to provide fair and honest counsel.
8. Get to know the coaches so that you can be assured that their philosophy, attitude, ethics and knowledge are such that you are happy to expose your child to them.
9. Don't overreact and rush off to the coach if you feel that an injustice has been done. Investigate, but anticipate that the problem is not as it may appear.
10. Make a point of understanding courage and the fact that it is relative. There are different kinds of courage. Some of us can climb mountains but are afraid to get into a fight; others can fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Nobody escapes fear and that is just as well, since it often helps us avoid disaster.