

5 TIPS FOR PARENTS

Many children in sport today feel pressure to produce results for their parents—either to gain respect or approval, or to make their parents happy.

1. Your own agenda is not your child's. Young athletes compete in sports for many reasons. They enjoy the competition, like the social aspect, engage in being part of a team, and enjoy the challenge of setting goals. You might have a different agenda than your child and you need to recognize that racing and competing is your child's sport, not yours. **Always comment on the positive aspects of your child's game or race, do not relive the negative aspects.**

2. Emphasize a mental focus on the process of execution instead of results or trophies. We live in a society that focuses on results and winning, but winning comes from working the process and enjoying the ride. Teach your child to focus on the process of the challenge of playing one shot, stroke, or race at a time instead of the number of wins or trophies.

3. You are a role model for your child. As such, you should model composure and poise on the sidelines. When you are at competition, your child mimics your behaviour as well as other role models. You become a role model in how you react to a close race or the questionable behaviour of a competitor. Stay calm, composed, and in control during games so your child can mimic those positive behaviours.

4. Refrain from game-time coaching. During competition, it's time to just let them play. All the practice should be set aside because this is the time that athletes need trust in the training and react on the court or field. "Just do it" as the saying goes. Too much coaching can lead to mistakes and cautious performance. Save the coaching for training and use encouragement at game time instead.

5. Help your child to detach self-esteem from achievement. Too many athletes attach self-worth to the level of performance or outcomes. Help your child understand that they are a person FIRST who happens to be an athlete instead of an athlete who happens to be a person. Success or number of wins should not determine a person's self-esteem.

