

10 Things Parents of Soccer Players Need to Know

1. Soccer teaches failure

Sports is such a great foundation for learning and growth through tumultuous years in adolescents. Letting your child get out there and learn from individuals other than yourself can teach skills that will last years past their youth soccer career.

Your child will be defeated. Your child will cry. Your child will get hurt. It is giving them the freedom and the power to pull themselves together that makes playing sports such a fundamental component of any child's life.

Soccer is such an exciting and physical sport. Dreams can change from good to bad or bad to good in seconds. Soccer teaches hard work from the beginning to the end and lets children learn the foundation of a hard work ethic.

2. Your child is not the best, nor will they ever be

You may be the best on a team, in a league, in a city, or even in a state, but your child is not the best. There is someone else in the world that is better than them. They need to know this as well and you need to teach them this.

If your child thinks they are the best or are continuously told they are the best, they will may no longer strive to be the best. There is always room for growth.

3. At every level, soccer needs to be fun or players will quit

From beginner to professional, sports need to be fun. When sports are no longer fun, players quit, and it is usually not the sports fault. Players often quit because they don't enjoy the coach or other players on the team.

4. Unless you are designated the coach, do NOT coach

Unless you have the title of coach or assistant coach, you should not be coaching your child on the field or during practice. There is a reason hierarchy works in our society, it provides a foundation of accountability. If players are told one thing by the actual coach and another by you, you are doing more of a disservice to your child than helping them. If they are not following orders of their coach, they may lose playing time, the ability to bond with other players, or the ability to further excel. While you may be looking out for the best interest of your child, you need to understand that the coach is looking out for the best interest of the team. In soccer, the team comes before the player.

5. Make friends with other parents from the beginning

Your child may meet their new best friend on this team. When they see you being social, they may be more likely to be social and be more open to the potential new friends in their life. Be active in your child's soccer and be friendly to other parents.

6. Do NOT be "that" soccer parent

If ever someone makes a snarky joke about your enthusiasm, how loud your voice is, how much you "think" you know about soccer, or continuously glares at you during games, you probably have already crossed the line of being a good cheerleader.

You may not know that you are doing it or you may be overly energetic, either way, there are sideline boundaries about what can and how things can be said. Remember, your child is watching you and they are easily influenced. Teach your child to be a good cheerleader, someone that cheers for everyone, on both teams.

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7. Do NOT talk to your child's coach

You really should never talk to your child's soccer coach about coaching decisions. If you wanted to make the decisions for the team, you should have signed up to coach.

If you absolutely need to talk to your child's coach, **you should wait at least 24 hours** after any practice or game. Too many emotions are involved when you approach a coach at the fields after a game or practice.

8. Do NOT ever yell at officials

Most of the time, when someone yells at an official, it is not for a good reason. Referees are often quite young, some as young as 12 years old. Ultimately, your consistent negative comments towards a younger referee is bullying, and in a world where bullying is already too prevalent, it is not something we should be teaching our children.

9. Soccer is Easy to Understand, Once You Learn the Rules

There are intricacies to soccer that are unique to the sport, but you have to learn them before you can begin to help your child become better, to have an intelligent conversation with other parents, or to be able to judge a call by a referee.

10. You Need to Understand Your Child's Definition of Success

Soccer players can feel proud of many different accomplishments within the game of soccer. Just because they didn't score a goal, doesn't mean they didn't do their job successfully. Because the way the sport is structured, your child may never score a goal in their whole life, but they can still enjoy the sport. Understand what your child hopes to get out of the sport, what they enjoy, what give them happiness after games and practices. While some children define success as scoring goals, others may define success by having fun, or seeing friends, or getting out aggression.

One thing you need to be certain is you do not define success for your child. You may define success as your child's win or lose, but the coach on the sideline may tell the team they played the game of their life, even if they still lost.

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