

A Parent's Guide to a Great Soccer Season

Soccer, like all other youth sports is meant to provide your children with an opportunity to learn and have fun in a group environment. In order for your child to benefit from the experience, you need to be an active supporter in the process of learning. Here are some tips on how to help your child succeed:

- **Support the Coach**
 - Think of the Coach as your child's teacher in this activity
 - Do not shout instructions from the sidelines. It is easy to get emotional in a game, but remember it is confusing to a child to have many adults yelling different things to them.
- **Focus on Encouragement**
 - Recognize what your child is trying to do, not the result.
 - To make mistakes is a necessary part of learning
 - It is the coach's responsibility to focus on specifics and the parents responsibility to praise their child's effort
 - Provide positive reinforcement :“great effort”, “good idea”, “nice pass”. Avoid comments like, “what are you doing?” “PASS the ball!”, “wake up!”
- **Share the Experience Together**
 - Encourage your child to work on skills at home, in the backyard or with friends in a non-team situation.
 - Take some time to play with your children in this type of setting. You will both benefit.
- **Don't Be Critical**
 - If your child hears you being critical, it will make him/her more critical of other teammates. Focus on supporting and helping your child's progress above all else.
- **Support the Referees**
 - Referees have a very hard job. Like players, **they** are constantly learning from their experiences in the game.

- Mistakes will be made, however, your children will learn from your example. If you berate an official, they will **too**. If you accept the referee's decisions, they will focus on the game and not the sideline yelling.
- Remember, the Leagues has a zero tolerance policy for berating or verbally assaulting officials. Don't embarrass yourself and your child by being ejected from a game.
- **Let Participants Dictate the Level of Competition**
 - In an emotionally charged atmosphere, parents can tend to heighten the level of competition. This is intimidating to children and can prevent a child's progress because they lose interest in playing the game.
- **Recognize the Benefits of Your Child's Participation on a Team**
 - Everyone lives and works in a group environment. Being a team member is one of the greatest benefits offered to our children.
 - They learn how to contribute to group goals through individual tasks
 - Leadership, commitment, goal orientation, preparation and learning are a few of the qualities your children can benefit from in a positive sport learning environment, whether in victory or defeat.