

Soccer for Life

Supporting your child's growing love of soccer will help him or her discover a fun and healthy activity they can enjoy well into adulthood.

While few athletes ever reach an elite playing level, there is life in sports after high school. Most of our adult soccer players tell us they played "rec" soccer as children and continued to play in intramural college leagues before joining our Adult Rec Leagues. Adult soccer is a great way to maintain a healthy lifestyle, have fun, network with others and create a sense of community.

Here are a few tips to help support your child to help them sustain their love of playing sports:

- Take the pressure off: kids' sports should be more about fun than winning, plus they'll learn more and stay engaged longer if they are enjoying the experience.
- Save the "constructive feedback" for the coach to provide and refrain from the car ride home debriefing. Overly critical comments can hinder the parent-child bond. If you do have advice, let the game experience settle first then make sure your conversation is also filled with plenty of positive statements.
- Don't make them feel like their sport is a burden on the family. If you are going to let them play, then do so in a positive way. Complaining about the expense, carpools, or time spent driving to practice or sitting on the sidelines will weigh heavy on the child and send a very mixed message.
- Join in on the fun. Engage with them on a field or in the backyard. Have them teach YOU a thing or two.

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DO:

- Be a good sport!
- Your child will notice and follow your example.
- Be respectful. Cheer for all participants, even on the other team!
- Let the coaches do the coaching. Yelling instructions can be very distracting and confusing to the players.
- Let the referees officiate.
- Build relationships with other parents.
- Tell your child you enjoyed watching them play.
- Learn the rules! Most parents truly don't know what a foul is or isn't.

DON'T:

- Lose perspective or get too caught up in the competition. "Youth soccer should still be fun! 75% of kids quit playing organized sports between the ages of 13-15 because the pressure to win supersedes learning and fun and negatively affects the behavior of coaches and parents."
-Dr. Alan Goldberg, internationally known expert in the field of sports psychology.

- Yell at the referee – you wouldn't want your employees coming into your office or home to yell at you. We want to hear your comments, so please address any problems with the manager on duty.

Goals for Your Child

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that, to be safe and effective, organized youth sports should have reasonable goals for participation.

- Have fun!
- Develop Confidence
- Feel valued and respected
- Learn teamwork and sportsmanship
- Build relationships
- Acquire a strong work ethic
- Play with integrity
- Become knowledgeable and skilled in soccer.