

Tips for Parents and Coaches

Anyone on any sideline can influence a child's soccer experience positively, by following these simple ideas.

***THE FUN LIES IN BEING ABLE TO PLAY.** Encourage player development and giving a 100% performance over winning. Ask, "Did you have fun?" rather than "Did you win?" Winning is not a strong motivation if children are not having fun.

***KNOW THE GAME AND THE LAWS.** Soccer looks simple but is complex to play, coach and officiate. It is free flowing and ever changing and demands constant problem-solving. It is also physically demanding.

***SUPPORT THE ENTIRE TEAM, NOT JUST YOUR CHILD.** Don't give instructions, or get over-involved; applaud good plays by either side.

***PRACTICE GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP.** Youngsters learn by example. Win gracefully, not boastfully. Lose without being negative.

***LET THE PLAYERS PLAY.** Soccer is a player's game; they are being trained to make decisions on the field. Things happen quickly; players do not have time to react to sideline instructions. They do hear encouragement, however, so be positive.

***LET THE COACHES COACH.** Most coaches are volunteers who provide guidance and supervised fun. They give their time and energy to help your child learn skills and the joys of teamwork. Respect them and their decisions. Remember, their concern is the whole team---not just your child.

***LET THE REFEREES REFEREE.** Most are young and learning. They help teach children about sportsmanship, fair play and the spirit of soccer. Their calls are final. Disputing or disagreeing with a decision never changes it; it just disrupts the players and the game.

***GET INVOLVED WITH SOCCER.** Help your child's skills and sportsmanship improve. Take him or her to a game, or watch one on TV. Kick the ball around, even if you have no talent.

***BE SUPPORTIVE.** Volunteer to help with practices, transportation or administrative tasks. Make sure your child is prompt---this teaches responsibility.

***ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO BE A CHILD.** Young players see soccer as fun. They enjoy learning skills, being on a team and running around. They are building character and self-esteem. You'll see wonderful progress--and help your child to grow--if fun and technique development are your top priorities.