

The SMAYSO Soccer Parent Covenant

Thou shalt not impose your ambitions on thy child. Improvement and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of others, and don't push based on what you think they should be doing. Do not critique your kids play after games, instead ask if they had fun?, tell them you enjoyed watching them play, and let them tell you if they want some guidance.

Thou shalt be supportive no matter what. There is only one question to ask your child - Did you have fun? If games and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate. If you are going to show up at a soccer game, cheer, applaud, but never criticize. Always strive to set a good example for your child. Your behavior on the sidelines will have a lasting influence on your child.

Thou shalt acknowledge your child's fears. A soccer game can be stressful. It is appropriate for your child to be anxious. But encourage them to overcome their fear.

Thou shalt not coach your child. Do not undermine the coach by coaching your child on the side. If you want to coach, then volunteer! Your job is to support and love your child and the coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. The bond between coach and player is a special one which contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child. It will only serve to hurt your child's game.

Thou shalt not criticize officials. While our officials are getting paid, they are learning too. If there is something that needs to be corrected, the coaches are the only ones who should talk to the referees. Set an example of sportsmanship for your children.

Thy child shall have goals besides winning. An honest effort, regardless of the outcome, is much more important than winning. There are so many more ways to be successful than winning. Look for ways in which your child is growing and give them praise!

Thou shalt place your child first above everything. Ask yourself this question - Are your child's goals more important to you than they are to your child? Remember that the focus of youth sports should be fun. A child is constantly changing, and his/her goals, interests and participation in activities will change as well. Parents should remain flexible, patient and always supportive while their child strives to find his/her niche in life.

Thou shalt not expect thy child to get a college scholarship. Only about 2 percent of high school athletes win sports scholarships every year at NCAA colleges and universities. Yes, the odds are that dismal. There are more than 10,000 competitive players registered on 600 teams in the South Texas Youth Soccer Association alone. The odds of your child winning one of those scholarships are slim. Soccer teaches self-esteem and fitness, it can provide lifelong friendships and much, much more. Soccer builds good people and you should be happy that your child wants to participate.