

**PLAY LIKE
A CHAMPION
TODAY**

A Team for Every Child

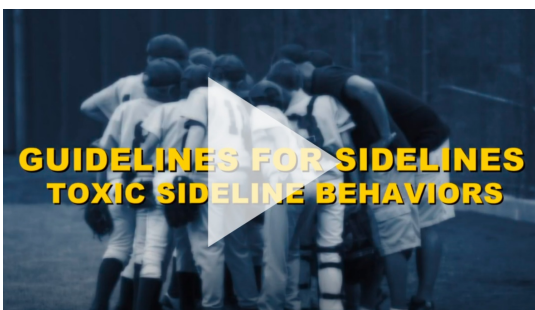
Champion Parent Note

Educating and Forming Champion Parents

Guidelines for Sidelines

Parents Play a Pivotal Role in Creating a Positive Youth Sports Culture

Parents play an important role in the youth sports experience. From driving to practice to being in the stands on gameday, our support means the world to our children. Unfortunately, the sports parent today is often vilified, with too many having behaved poorly and contributed to a toxic environment for young athletes, coaches and officials. Even if we're not guilty of the most extreme examples, we've all witnessed the parent screaming from the sidelines or seen the online clips of parents throwing punches in the stands. These actions ruin the game for our children and have no place in youth sports. As parents, it's our responsibility to create a positive environment and work diligently to eliminate these issues from the experience.



[The video above provides tips](#) to promote positive sideline behavior and strategies for working with coaches to develop an exceptional culture within our teams. While it may be tempting to think the problem lies only with the extreme behavior other parents, the reality is that all of us can likely improve our own approach in a way that benefits our children. Examine your words, actions and demeanor based on the *Guidelines for Sidelines* in the above video, then **make a commitment to improving in one area** during your child's next game. In addition, consider other ways that you can create a supportive environment for your child, his or her coach, and officials. Are there ways that you can set a positive example, promote the desired environment, or hold others accountable for the expectations set by the team?

Our children need us to be leaders in the effort to establish a fun and enjoyable experience in youth sports. By working together, parents can become an important part of the solution, building an environment where our kids' favorite games provide an opportunity to laugh, play and grow.

"Parents have the grave responsibility to give good example to their children." Catechism of the Catholic Church (2223)

Officials Shortage a "National Crisis"

One of the unfortunate results of a toxic culture in youth and high school sports has been the continuing decline in the number of officials nationwide. State high school associations and *Play Like a Champion* youth partners alike have lamented a shortage of officials that has



begun to result in rescheduling, postponement and cancellation of games. The shortage is being felt the most in sports with the greatest participation, including soccer, football, volleyball and basketball, with the impact expected to widen unless actions are taken to address concerns and increase the number of officials. Poor behavior by fans and coaches is perhaps the greatest single reason cited by officials who leave.

[The NFHS recently put out a video](#) from Executive Director Dr. Karissa Niehoff that addresses this issue and provides ways that parents, coaches, administrators and athletes can both support current officials and work together to increase numbers. In addition to creating a more positive environment, parents can also encourage their own children to become officials or consider becoming one yourself. Officiating is a terrific way to earn money, serve the kids in your community, learn more about the game, or stay involved in something you love once a playing career is finished. Watch the video linked above and think about the ways you can be a part of the solution.

A Prayer for Parents

O God, the Father of humankind, who has blessed me with my children and committed them to my charge to raise them and prepare them for eternal life: Grant me the graces I need to fulfill this most sacred duty and stewardship. Teach me both what to give and what to withhold; when to reprove and when to forbear; make me to be gentle, yet firm; considerate and watchful; deliver me equally from the weakness of indulgence, and the excess of severity.

Help me also to teach them to play. That I might instill in them the joy and benefit of participation in the gift of sport and recreation. And grant that, both by word and example, I may be careful to lead them in the ways of wisdom and true piety, so that at last I may, with them, be admitted to the unspeakable joys of our true home in heaven, in the company of the blessed Angels and Saints. Amen.



Play Like a Champion's "Daily Prayers for Champions" page has been updated! Visit www.playlikeachampion.org/daily-prayers for more than 200 prayers plus resources that can help you and your team grow closer to God while participating in sports.

Access Resources & Learn More at
www.playlikeachampion.org

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