

2023-2024



**Parent
Curriculum**

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I. [Panoramic Parenting](#) (Click the Link to Watch the Video):

- A. Perspective:** Parents often make judgments based on their emotions. Coaches make judgments and decisions based on their experience and expertise. A coach's responsibility is to look out and make decisions based on the team while a parent's sole concern is what is best for their child and sometimes these do not seem to line up on the same page.
- B. How to Develop a Team Player:** Being a team player isn't just important while on the athletic field, it is critical while working on group projects, participating in choirs or other extra-curricular activities and even while planning and carrying out events. A team player is someone who respects other individuals, is willing to put forth her best effort, asks for help when needed and is dependable and responsible. Teaching your child how to be a team player is critical because it is something that will help her throughout her schooling, career and even her marriage.
- 1. Teach respect:** Being a team player means being respectful to other individuals. Start while your children are young by teaching them the importance of listening to others, especially those with authority. Help them understand the way they present themselves and behave is a way they respect others. If a child shows up late to practice, without his gear and without any remorse, he is showing a lack of respect to his coach and teammates. Respect is something that once it is lost, it is hard to get back.
 - 2. Provide Opportunities:** Your children will not learn how to be a team player unless they are given opportunities to become one. If your child shows an interest in sports, find a team sport she can participate in. If she loves singing, find a youth choir she might be willing to join. If your child loves to plan, lead and organize, find a youth group such as the youth city council. These organizations allow children to work in groups to plan service projects, city events and more. By giving your children opportunities to work with others, they will have the chance to learn what it means to be a team player.
 - 3. Model the Right Behaviors:** Your children learn from your example. At home, be careful what you say in front of your children. Don't encourage a child to degrade other team members or cheat to win. Take these moments to teach her the importance of being on a team and being a valuable player. Also, be careful of your behavior at your child's sporting events or other extra-curricular activities. If you can't control your temper or you don't show respect to others involved, your child will likely display that same sort of behavior.
 - 4. Follow the Rules:** A team player is someone who follows the rules both on and off of the court. Encourage your child to do what the coach tells her and to attend all meetings or practices. When a team member

follows the rules, she is dependable and trustworthy. She is someone who the coaches and team members can look to and never worry about.

5. **Accept Criticism:** Sometimes being on a team can be tough. There may be other participants who are better than your child and your child may have a difficult time coping. Help your child accept criticism from coaches, players and even yourself. Help her understand that criticism is a way to make her better. When we accept it, it shows that we value the opinions of others and we want to do all we can to become the best we can be.

C. Supporting the Team Through Actions and Words:

1. **Fill Your Player's Emotional Tank:** Competitive sports can be stressful to players. The last thing they need is your critiquing their performance on top of what the coach may deliver and what they already are telling themselves. Let your children know you love and support them regardless of their performance.
2. **Contribute to a Positive Environment:** Fill all the players' Emotional Tanks when you see them doing something well. Honor the Game as a spectator, respecting ROOTS (Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates and Self), and encourage others around you to Honor the Game.

D. Developing Resilience and Confidence:

1. **Research shows stress is growing with our younger generations:** Social media, faster moving information, pressures from peers, parents, and education is intensifying quickly. Knowing how to teach our kids to cope with life and become resilient is critical to their ability to overcome stress and become resilient in their lives.
2. **A child learns to cope with adversity by encountering difficulty and figuring out how to work through it:** This process begins at a very young age—falling over when learning to walk, for example—and trials and errors continue throughout life. To strengthen coping, let your child struggle and make mistakes without jumping to fix it for them. Instead, let them do it. Let them fall, listen with compassion, be a supportive presence, and whenever possible and advisable, let them figure out their own solutions. Your trust in their ability to prevail boosts their resilience, a key feature of emotional wellness.
3. **7 Tips to help your child developing resilience:**
 - a) **Self-Care:** If our buckets are empty we are pretty much worthless. It's critical to teach kids not to over book themselves; play everyday, laugh everyday, take time to be quiet at least once a day (10 minute meditations are perfect), and be mindful of listening to others.
 - b) **Socialization:** Children learn through face-to-face interactions with other children and adults. Give them opportunities after school and on the weekends to just be with others (without a

computer or device) so they can learn about themselves and others.

c) Giving Back: Kids learn so much by seeing and helping others in need. It feels good to give to those who need it—it feeds the soul and teaches them so much about life.

d) Sleep and Eating Properly: None of us can function well on lots of sugar and lack of sleep.

- Eating a healthy diet filled with protein, veggies, and fruit will fuel their brains and their resilience.
- Sleeping at least 8-9 hours (more for younger children) will give them clear minds and the ability to think and move.

e) Limited Cell Phone/Electronic Devices:

- Teens' lives are busier than ever between school, homework, activities, and friends. Add the prevalence of digital and social media in their lives, and suddenly their day extends well into the night. When activities and smartphone use run into the wee hours of the night, teen sleep deprivation becomes an issue.
- Removing electronic devices from your kids at night is another way to help them get adequate rest. Make a policy for all members in the household to keep their phones on a counter in the living room or kitchen during the night.
- Why are teens not sleeping at night?
 - 97% of teens have at least one electronic device in their room.
 - Blue light emitted from your teen's devices delays the release of melatonin, a sleep-inducing hormone, making it hard to fall asleep.
 - Blue light can even penetrate closed eyelids.
 - Teens unknowingly disrupt their sleep patterns by staring at their smartphones immediately before they attempt sleeping.

f) Talking about Feelings: We as a society often don't like to talk about how we feel; yet processing challenges in life out loud or on paper is imperative to building resilience. Talking or writing about an experience not only helps us understand what we've been through, but it gives us a better look at how we've already coped (good or bad) and thoughts about what else we might do when facing difficult situations.

g) Positivity: There is so much research on the power of positivity. People who live longer are often positive by nature. Teaching

kids that there is always something positive in any situation is so important to keeping their brains and bodies healthy and a smile on their face.

h) Imagining New Possibilities: Teaching a child to imagine and define their goals, supporting them in achieving their goals, then joining in when they are proud of themselves will build any child's resilience. Some kids need smaller goals, some bigger, but every child needs to imagine new possibilities in their lives, hope is everything in keeping us resilient.

II. Managing the Emotions of Competition as a Parent: Learning to be a gracious winner and respectful loser is something that takes a village to teach from the coaches, parents and teammates.

A. Tip #1 - Work on Perspective: A shift in perspective can totally change your demeanor. Here's one way to make that shift: Take whatever is in front of you now and envision it in 20-30 years. Then ask yourself: How important will it be then?

Will it be important in 20-30 years if your child played outside hitter instead of libero like they want? Will it be important in 20-30 years if your child played half the game, instead of 3/4? More than likely the answer to those questions is a resounding NO.

There are enough things that happen to your children that will impact their whole lives. A lot of what happens in youth sports that parents get so emotional about will not. Working on your perspective will help you gain control of your emotions.

B. Tip #2 - Create Margin: One reason so many people struggle to control emotions is that they are tired and over-scheduled and have no time for themselves. If you have no margin, you are probably exhausted and if you're exhausted it becomes harder to counterbalance strong emotions.

C. Tip #3 - Take Good Care of Self: Creating margin is the first step to taking good care of yourself, but real self-care goes further. It includes eating properly, getting enough sleep, exercising, building your own support system, and looking for ways to grow and learn.

We know what you're thinking: *I don't have time!* But you cannot be the parents you really want to be if you don't take time to invest in yourselves. You tell your athlete that they must take time to practice extra and work out if they want to reach their athletic goals. In the same way, parents must allocate time to take care of themselves if they want to reach their parenting goals.

Not all emotions should be questioned or dismissed. If you're angry about something that threatens your child's safety or well-being, then let that anger prompt you to do whatever is necessary.

As parents, it's important to remember that you should set an example of handling your emotions instead of letting your emotions handle you. This is a lesson your child can take into the game as well.

III. Teaching Rather than Doing:

- A. **Don't Put the Player in the Middle:** You wouldn't complain to your children about how poorly their math teacher explains fractions. Don't share your disapproval of a coach with your children. Doing so may force the child to take sides, and not necessarily your side! If your child has an issue with the coach and can maturely articulate it, encourage your child to approach the coach and at the very least learn some life lessons in self-advocacy with an authority figure. Otherwise, if you disapprove of how the coach handles a situation, seek a private meeting to discuss the matter.
- B. **Teaching concepts to your player:**
 - 1. Those who put forth more effort over a period of time will have the best chance for success in sports and life.
 - 2. Having a positive attitude, showing respect for your teammates and coach, as well as being humble, are all qualities that make a good teammate
- C. **Communication:** One of the best things my mother taught me was to write things out. She had me write out everything I wanted to say to the coach or teammate (the good, bad and ugly). She then helped me formulate it into ways I can communicate my feelings, concerns, etc., into a positive communication style to my coach or teammates. These strategies below help a player communicate without forgetting what they would like to say. Sometimes facing a coach, especially at a young age, is intimidating and daunting. Below are some ways of how to teach your player to communicate with a teammate or coach:
 - 1. Writing out what you would like to communicate on a notecard or paper and reading it to your coach or teammate rather than having to remember everything.
 - 2. Practice saying what you would like to say in front of a parent or the mirror. Check out your body language because sometimes body language speaks louder than the words coming out of your mouth.
- D. **Body Language:** Body language can represent both positive and negative connotations in youth sports! Coaches have seen the best and worst of both and do not tolerate the negative body language in a culture that represents and embodies teamwork. Accountability from parents when they see negative body language can tremendously impact a team's positive cohesiveness. Everyone notices these behaviors, so keeping your player accountable is one way you can support team cohesiveness.
 - 1. **Positive body language:** Players who smile, high five, make good eye contact while given instruction, and nod their head in agreement all show positive signs of wanting to be a good teammate.
 - 2. **Negative body language:** Players who turn away while coaches are

giving instruction or feedback, roll their eyes, display limited engagement with players on the court, and/or refuse to go into the circle between points or high fiving another teammate all show signs of not caring about being a good teammate.

IV. The Official/Referee Shortage: At the high school level, there are nearly 20,000 fewer referees across all sports than before the pandemic.

- A. Long-time referees in different youth sports say there's an expectation for referees to be perfect. Parents want their child to excel and coaches are under pressure to win.
- B. Many referees are doing this job because they love the sport and want to find a way to give back to the community within that sport.
- C. Perspective: Think about your child becoming a referee after they have finished playing the sport and how you would like them to be treated by the parents that come to watch the games.

V. [The Car Ride Home](#) (Click the Link to Watch the Video)

A. What to do:

- 1. Allow for silence.
- 2. Establish some rules.
- 3. Allow them time to process.
- 4. Create a space where processing is productive.

B. What not to do:

- 1. Do not make excuses.
- 2. Do not speak negatively about officials, teammates or coaches.
- 3. Do not compare.
- 4. Minimize coaching.

C. Things to consider:

- 1. Where do the conversations in my car normally gravitate?
- 2. Do my conversations remove pressure or create more anxiety in my child?
- 3. What is the first step I need to take in order to change my family's car ride conversations?
- 4. How does a healthy car ride help my child physically, mentally, and emotionally?

VI. Managing the Emotions of Tryouts: Tryout Season can be an emotional time for parents and kids. Unmet expectations, disappointment, excitement, and a range of other emotions are present. From the anxiety of showing up to the fear of being let down, our preparation as parents for the tryout is crucial. It's very important as parents to determine "our" response before we receive the result. We all know we are going to hear one of the 3 things:

- A. **Outcome #1: Your child makes the team they hoped they would make:** Although this seems like an easy response, we still need to think through how we manage these emotions. For many of us, our kids have been blessed to make a lot of great teams so as parents we need to make sure we are cultivating the right attitudes. It's

easy to forget our role as parents in these moments because of our excitement. Cultivating the right characteristics is crucial in the development of our children so determine how you are going to lead when you get the result you desire. Below are a few things to consider when your child makes that top team:

1. Celebrate their success.
2. Remind them to be humble.
3. Have them check on a friend who wasn't so fortunate.
4. Remind them you are proud of who they are, not simply proud of the team they made.

B. Outcome #2: Your child doesn't make the team they wanted: This scenario is often the most difficult because we have to decide if we will let the disappointment drive us to another opportunity or embrace the challenge ahead. We are not suggesting it's never the right choice to pursue other options but it doesn't need to always be our first resort. By thinking through these things ahead of time, we can make a decision based on logic rather than emotion. If we seek other options simply because we are upset, we are sending the wrong message to our child. Talk with your child about this and make sure you are ready to respond in an appropriate way. The ability to endure the early struggles of life creates a resiliency they will thank you for later in life. Here are a few things to remind your child and some questions to ask when they are placed on a team you didn't anticipate:

1. Remind them of the ultimate goal. No matter the team, you can still get better!
2. What are some advantages to being on this team?
3. I am proud of you no matter what team you make.
4. Listen, don't lecture. Let them talk through the situation. They may not be as upset as you are at that moment.

C. Outcome #3: Your child doesn't make a team at all: This one hurts to even write. We believe every child should have an opportunity to participate but we also realize there are factors outside of our control. Parents, we must be ready for these moments. The seeds you plant in these difficult times will produce the characteristics that give your child a chance to bounce back later and that later will be way more significant than a game or team. If we are prepared for these moments, it allows us to empathize with our children without making excuses and remind them that there will be other opportunities. Less than 2% of High School kids will play after they are 18 years old. These moments we walk through are preparing them for a season of life that is far longer and far more important than any game or team. Here are a few great reminders as you deal with disappointment:

1. Remind your children that you are proud of their courage to try! We never want a temporary struggle to prevent us from trying later.
2. Be honest. Being a great athlete is not in everyone's cards. To be honest, it's not in most of our cards.
3. Listen, don't lecture. We want to fix things and sometimes, they just need our support.
4. Don't make excuses. Even if you feel they are valid, expressing those to your child leads to an attitude of blame rather than accountability.
- 5.

VII. How to Engage Your Coach:

A. Recognize the Coaches Commitment: Your child's coaches have made a commitment that involves many hours of preparation beyond the time spent at

practices and games. Quite likely in youth sports they are volunteers. Respect their commitment and imagine yourself in their place before approaching them to discuss any issues you may perceive.

- B. Make Early, Positive Contact with Your Coach:** As soon as you know who will coach your child, contact those coaches to introduce yourself and offer any assistance you may provide. Establishing a positive relationship with the coaches will help you proactively shape a positive experience for your child and will lay the foundation for respectful, productive conversations with coaches should a conflict arise later.
- C. Fill the Coaches Emotional Tank:** Too often, coaches hear only from parents who have complaints. Filling the coaches' Emotional Tanks with specific, truthful praise positively reinforces them to continue doing the things you see as benefiting the youth athletes.
- D. Let the Coaches Coach:** It can confuse players to hear someone other than the coach yelling out instructions. Also, your instructions may counter the coaches' strategy and tactics, undermining team performance.

VIII. The View from the Bench:

In youth sports, we sometimes hear about the kids who don't get to play as much. The parents get disappointed and abrasively challenge coaches about their kids' playing time.

Parents, we urge you not to do that. What you're doing is showing your children it's okay to complain. It's okay to whine, to be mad, and to have a bad attitude.

The reality is, every team needs those role players and not everyone can be a star. And you know what? That's life. We don't mean "That's life, get over it because you can't do anything about it." We mean, *that's life*, that's how you learn to be part of a team. To know your role, to maintain a positive attitude, to overcome adversity, and be the best you can be in that role.

As we've heard from coaches, there are two things you can always control: attitude and effort. So, to all the benchwarmers (and their parents) we encourage you to choose your attitude. Which will you choose? Will you be bitter? Will you sulk because you're not the all-star? Or will you go to practice every day with a positive spirit because you love and respect the game? Will you put all your efforts into making your teammates better because that's your job—even though you know your picture won't be in the paper and your name will never be in the record books?

It may not be during your season. It may happen during your first group project in college, or in the first business meeting you lead. But it will hit you and you'll think, "Ah, now it all makes sense. Thanks, Coach."

Your moment will come. In the meantime, keep working hard and always be ready for Coach to call your name.

IX. 3 Ways to Help Your Child Finish the Season Well:

- A. Encourage Them:** How often do our kids feel as if they are living in an environment where they are never good enough? It's absolutely exhausting. It's never intentional,

but the consequences are still detrimental. Encouragement is not about lowering expectations but rather about creating an environment where kids have the courage to strive for those expectations. You may be saying, "It's not me, it's the coaches who are the ones who should be more encouraging". We agree coaches could be more encouraging, but the one person we can control is us.

Question: How often as a parent could you be more encouraging? Encourage actually means to insert courage! As the season winds down, the best thing we can do for our children is encourage them. This is not false praise that they deserve to be the starter or fabricated talk that says they are the best on the floor. Encouragement is meaningful feedback that simply says you believe in who they are and are proud of who they are BECOMING. Below are 3 practical ways you can implement to encourage your child:

1. **Look them in the Eye and Tell Them You Are Proud of Who They Are:** It's easy to praise accomplishments but what our kids need is to be praised for who they are becoming. In a world of distractions, these pointed conversations are powerful!
 2. **Leave a Meaningful Note in their Bag:** There is power in a written note and there is nothing better than getting a surprise dosage of encouragement from someone you love. Sometimes, the smallest acts can leave the greatest impact. They don't have to respond, they just get to process how much you care.
 3. **Send a Text of Affirmation:** Our kids are constantly receiving information in the palm of their hand and there is nothing more impactful than an affirming text from a parent that has no agenda. Small messages over time begin to play a part in shaping what our kids believe about themselves. Take the time to send one today!
- B. Minimize the Pressure:** Our kids are already facing a lot of pressure from academic, athletic, and social expectations. Imagine the anxiety of being up to serve with the game on the line or the shame they might be feeling standing on the sidelines when they aren't getting to play. We often feel it as a parent and we aren't even on the team! Put yourself in their shoes. Minimizing the pressure is one of the most effective ways to improve performance and the experience for our kids. Research shows that where fear and anxiety increase, performance decreases! It's never intentional (or at least we hope it's not) but oftentimes our well-intended behavior and responses add pressure and simply make it worse for our own kids. If we want our seasons to end well, it has to be our goal to relieve the pressure rather than adding to it. This isn't an absence of expectations but rather an intentional shift of expectations to the things under our control. None of this is easy, but our willingness to be intentional and disciplined makes the experience much healthier and positive for our kids, the coaches, their team, and even you. It also lets us enjoy these moments with our kids that aren't going to last forever. Our kids are worth it and

YOU can do this! we would suggest these 3 objectives parents can achieve to minimize pressure:

1. **Talk Less about Performance and Outcomes:** Even if you think you have great advice, hold it in. Our constant conversation and critiquing can turn a bad set or match into a bad weekend or season. They are going to be okay without you telling them all the things they need to do in order to improve.
 2. **Be Grateful:** If your child is safe and being supported, that's a win. We always want more for our kids but when they see that mom and dad are thankful, it relieves the pressure from them. An uptight parent will usually result in an uptight player!
 3. **Zoom Out:** When we only see the moment it seems monumental, when we zoom out, it gives us the perspective to realize this is just a part of the journey. This perspective will actually help us talk less and be more grateful!
- C. **Avoid Negativity:** We often see small groups of parents circled up at volleyball tournaments discussing everything they would have done differently. The game or tournament is over and parents circle up to critique all that could have been better. We analyze and start forming stories of why our kid isn't getting the opportunity they deserve or why the team isn't performing as they should. One of the greatest ways to help your child end the season well is to run (literally run) from the negativity. It doesn't do any good, ever! "There is no value in venting." After an event, everyone is emotional and we have to be disciplined to focus on what truly matters. Our kids don't want to hear it, the coach doesn't want to hear it, and we need to avoid it. If we want our kids to be part of a positive sports experience, it starts with us. If we want our kids to finish the season well, negativity will never help. Here are 3 ways to avoid negativity:
1. **Walk Away:** You know who they are and you can usually see them coming. Just walk away (run if they are coming quickly).
 2. **Change the Subject:** Simply redirect the conversation to a better place. If you can't do it, refer back to #1 and walk away. What's more damaging, avoiding an adult or talking about someone else's child or the coach?
 3. **Celebrate Something Good:** Thank an official, intentionally tell a player how impressed you were with their play, or remind another parent what a joy it is to watch their child play. Forcing ourselves into positive conversations helps us change our own negative attitudes. It also models for our children the importance of celebrating others.