

# RULES FOR THE PARENTS OF ATHLETIC CHILDREN

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Maybe your child will be a great hockey player some day, or maybe he/she won't be, but he/she will be a better hockey player if you follow these rules. Also, if you follow these rules, your child will have a lot more fun.

- Make sure your child knows, win or lose, you love them. Let them know that you appreciate their efforts and that you won't be disappointed in them if they fail. Be the person in their life that they can always look to for support.
- Try to be completely honest with yourself about your child's athletic capability, their competitive attitude, their sportsmanship and their level of skill.
- Be helpful, but don't coach your child on the way to the game or at the breakfast/supper table. Think how tough it must be on your child to be continually inundated with advice, pep talks and criticism.
- Teach your child to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying", to be constantly working to improve their skills, to take the physical bumps and come back for more. Don't tell them that winning doesn't count, because it does, and they know it. Instead, help them to develop a healthy competitive attitude, a "feel" for competing, for trying hard, for having a good time.
- Try not to live your life through your child. You've lost as well as won; you've been frightened; you've backed off at times; you've been the villain. Don't expect any better of them. Sure your children are an extension of you, but don't assume they feel the same way you did, want the same things you did, or even have the same attitudes. Don't push them in the direction that will give you the most satisfaction.
- Don't compete with your child's coach. A coach may become a hero for a while; someone who can do no wrong and you may find that hard to take. Or, your child may become disenchanted with the coach. Don't side with them against the coach. Talk to your child about the importance of learning, how to handle problems and how to react to criticism. Try and help them understand the necessity for discipline, rules and regulations.
- Don't compare your child with other players on the team - at least not within their hearing. If your child has a tendency to resent the treatment they get from the coach; if they are jealous of the approval other players get, try to be honest with them. Don't lie to your child about their capabilities as a player. If you are overly protective, you will perpetuate the problem.
- Get to know your child's coach. Make sure that you approve of his attitude and ethics. A coach can be very influential and you should know what his values are so that you can decide whether or not you want them passed onto your child.
- Remember that children tend to exaggerate when they are praised and when they are criticized. Temper your reactions to the stories your child brings home from the rink. Don't criticize them for exaggerating but don't over-react to the stories they tell you.
- Teach your child the meaning of courage. Some of us can climb mountains, but are frightened to get into a fight. Some of us can fight without fear but turn to jelly at the sight of a bee. Everyone is frightened of something. Courage is learning to perform in spite of fear. Courage is not getting rid of fear; it's overcoming it.