

10 ways parents can help their kids perform the best

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- 1. Verbally & Nonverbally communicate you believe in them.** Great parents believe in their kids and communicate it regularly. You can TELL them and SHOW them that you believe they can do anything.
- 2. Verbally & Nonverbally communicate that you accept them, love them, & are proud of them NO MATTER WHAT.** Let them know that their fun, happiness, and enjoyment are more important than winning and perfection. If you focus on their happiness and enjoyment, it might increase their success rate anyways because they are enjoying themselves.
- 3. Praise their performance, not their outcome.** You want to compliment any skills they did particularly well or a new skill that they finally mastered. For instance, if your kid finally makes a serve over for the first time, but them and the team lose the game anyway. Don't even focus on the outcome of the game – instead compliment and praise their serve. You want them to remember the first time they made a serve over, not the first time they made the serve over but lost the game anyway. Plus, Complimenting them too much for winning teaches them that winning is all that matters, and by default losing disappoints you.
- 4. If you do want to give your kid some constructive criticism, ask them first.** You can simply say, “Would you mind if I told you what I think?” This gives your kid a sense of power in the conversation and prepares them to hear some criticism.
- 5. Avoid always talking about the sport at home. Instead, let your kid bring up the topic.** That way, you know they want to and are open to talking about it. That way, your home can be seen as a place of peace, positivity, and mental recovery, especially after a hard practice, match, or tournament.
- 6. Just be positive and supportive at all times.** Most of the time that is what your kid wants and needs.
- 7. If you read news articles about other teams or see rankings of other teams, try to avoid talking about it with your kid.** They don't need to know if the team that beat them at the tournament ended up winning the whole tournament. It's just not necessary and puts salt in the wound sometimes.
- 8. It's really important to know your role.** The players play, the coaches coach, the refs ref – and as a parent, you should parent. Try to avoid overlapping these roles. Let each adult and kid involved play their role and it'll be more enjoyable for everyone involved.
- 9. Don't make a particular match or tournament “special” or hype it up too much.** This adds extra pressure on the kid especially because they pick up this mentality from you. The goal is to treat all types of competitions the same, so that a “more important” game won't psyche out your player too much and they can stay focused.
- 10. Finally, when in doubt of what to do, just give your kid some space.** This might be hard to do but most of the time it's the right thing to do. If your kid's team just lost an important game, give them some room to process it. But you can ask them, “Do you want to talk about it?” and if they do, then they will. But if they don't want to, don't push them to. Just tell them, “I know you're upset right now, but I just want you to know that it'll be ok.”

Note: These tips are important to remember because even athletes at the highest levels are aware of their parent's judgements and critiques because we all want to make our parents proud. But just know that your role in their sporting career is really important, most of the time you are their biggest fan but can also be their biggest critic. Just keep these tips in mind so that you can stay a fan instead of a critic.