

# A Parent's Guide to A Great Experience

**Soccer, like all other youth sports is meant to provide your children with an opportunity to have fun in a group environment. Learning how to love and enjoy an activity like Soccer is the key to progress. In order for your child to benefit from the experience, you need to be an active supporter in the process of learning.**

Here are some tips on how to help your child succeed:

- Support the Coach
- Think of the Coach as your child's teacher in this activity
- It is easy to get emotional in a game but remember it is confusing to a child to have many adults yelling different things to them.

Focus on Encouragement:

- Recognize what your child is trying to do, not the result.
- Making mistakes is part of learning.
- It is the coach's responsibility to focus on specifics and the parents responsibility to praise their child's effort.
- Give positive reinforcement("great effort", "great idea", "good try") Don't be a negative influence, avoid comments like, "What are you doing?", "Pass the ball", "Wake up".

Share the Experience Together:

- Encourage your child to work on skills at home, in the backyard or with friends in a non-team situation.
- Take some time to play with your children in this type of setting. You will both benefit..
- It is the coach's responsibility to focus on specifics and the parents responsibility to praise their child's effort.
- Give positive reinforcement("great effort", "great idea", "good try") Don't be a negative influence, avoid comments like, "What are you doing?", "Pass the ball", "Wake up".

**Don't Be Critical of Your Child's Teammates!** If your child hears you being critical, it will make him/her more critical of other teammates. Focus on supporting and helping your child's progress above all else.

Support the Referees:

- Referees, like players are constantly learning from their experiences in the game.
- Mistakes will be made, however, your children will learn from your example. If you berate an official, they will. If you accept the referee's decisions, they will focus on the game and not the sideline yelling.
- Remember, most Leagues if not all have a zero tolerance policy for berating or verbally assaulting officials. Don't embarrass yourself and your child by being ejected from a game.

**Let Participants Dictate the Level of Competition** In an emotionally charged atmosphere, parents can tend to heighten the level of competition. This is intimidating to children and can prevent a child's progress because they lose interest in playing the game.

Recognize the Benefits of Your Child's Participation on a Team:

- Everyone lives and works in a group environment. Being a team member is one of the greatest benefits offered to our children.
- They learn how to contribute to group goals through individual tasks.
- Leadership, commitment, goal orientation, preparation and learning are a few of the qualities your children can benefit from in a positive sport learning environment, whether in victory or defeat.

### **PARENTS'S PLEDGE**

I pledge to enjoy the journey with my child and not just focus on the destination. I will support the positive aspects of the experience and my child's own personal objectives. I will support and respect the Referees and coaches.

Too many parents are thinking about what they want their children to become. Playing youth sports is an opportunity to provide your child with a forum to learn. Personal growth and achievement can not be forced, it can only be encouraged.