

# The Parents' Role on the Sidelines

## What is the Parents' Role on the Sidelines?

Do you think your child is getting the most out of soccer? The sport provides a fun, athletic activity that also builds teamwork, character and leadership skills. As parents, we always want the best for our kids. Have you ever thought about how you can help your young player get more out of soccer?

## Why do kids want to play?

1. Competence, learning and improving
2. Affiliation - Being a part of a team, a club or with friends
3. Fitness, agility, balance, coordination, and physical health
4. Fun - This is the overwhelming reason why children play sports

## So why do kids stop playing?

Studies have shown that it is mostly due to adult interference as a result from:

1. Lack of playing time opportunity
2. Over emphasis on winning and/or perfection
3. Lack of fun
4. Pressure coming from parents and coaches

What does this mean to you a parent? Most parents on the sideline are very positive. We all want the best for our child. How do we help them get the most out of their experience?

First think of your own experiences. What if your boss stopped by several times a day to tell you how to do your job? Or worse, imagine giving a presentation to your peers and your boss consistently yells out what you should say or do, just before you do it. Would you enjoy being in that environment? Would you learn or improve? Most people answer no.

Now put yourself into the cleats of your child, with parents yelling and "coaching" from the sidelines. Consider that we work hard to teach our kids to listen and respect what we have to say. Now they're playing a game and we're shouting commands and instructions. This is not the best way for kids to learn the game and grow. It is often stated, "There is no better teacher than the game itself." We want them to play sports so they learn to think for themselves and react in the moment to make good decisions.

What is the best way to prevent this from happening? Practice, just like the players, thinking about what you will say on the way to the game. Visualize yourself on the sidelines encouraging while not coaching. During the game stop every so often and reflect back on what you just said. Does it match with what you planned to do and say? Also, listen to what others are shouting. This alone can be very instructive.

Every child wants to be cheered during the game. Continue to celebrate the good plays and hard work that every play is contributing.

We encourage all the PDSA coaches to have a "Parent Meeting" and discuss how

parents can best support the team. Part of this meeting should also remind everyone that the goal for the team is fun and development, not winning for the team. The meeting should be at the start of the season. Remember our coaches are volunteers and do their best. Offer to help the coach set the meeting up or [help coach](#) yourself.

What to do on the ride home? Celebrate all the small victories achieved on the field. Don't focus on the goals and the biggest kicks. Focus on the whether or not they learned anything and had fun. Most importantly ask your player what they thought of the game. At this point, the player needs a parent much more than another coach.

Remember the game is for the kids to play, and for us to enjoy watching. So, let the kids play!

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