

## Coaching Education: Parental Behavior

The Spring brings with it an excitement for kids who play the game of soccer. Often times, that excitement carries over to the parents, who are equally excited for their children. Let the following points serve as simple reminders to all who support the positive involvement of children playing soccer. In doing so, you will be putting your children first. **Enjoy the games!**

### **“CAUTION! Children at Play. Proceed with Care.”**

**Support your child unconditionally.** Do not withdraw love when your child performs poorly.

**Support all players** on the team. Your child’s teammates are not the enemy. When they are playing better than your child, she has a wonderful opportunity to learn.

**Support the program.** Get involved by volunteering, helping with fundraisers, car-pooling, or however else you can.

**Encourage your child** to talk with the coaches. “Taking responsibility” – whether about playing difficulties or missing an upcoming match – is a big part of soccer.

**Let your coach do the coaching.** This includes goal setting and psyching up your child for practice and post game critiques. Having more than one “coach” will confuse your child.

**Do not bribe or offer incentives.** Leave motivation to the coach. Offering money for scoring goals, for example, will send the wrong message, leading your child to participate for the wrong reasons.

**Understand and display appropriate game behavior.** When you cheer appropriately, you are supporting the kids, allowing them to develop. Screaming and coaching from the sideline will only distract the kids, and take away from their ability to have composure with the ball.

**Help your child keep priorities straight.** A youngster needs help balancing schoolwork, friendships, and other commitments besides soccer. But having made a commitment to soccer, she also needs help fulfilling her obligation to her team.

**Ask your child** if they had FUN and if they did their best, after a practice or game. Pass the reality test. If your child’s team loses but he played his best, help him see this as a “win.”

**Keep soccer in its proper perspective.** The game should not be larger than your life. If your child's performance produces strong emotions in you, suppress them. Keep your own goals and needs separate from your child's. Remember that your relationship with your child will continue long after her competitive soccer day's end.