Safe kids Healthy kids Happy kids

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Coaching a Youth Sports Team

Coaching is more than just choosing plays and winning games. This is especially true when coaching youth. Coaches must provide the right conditions for youth to learn. Under the right conditions, sports will help children develop:

- Fitness
- Positive attitudes
- Specific skills
- Self-confidence
- Good character traits like honesty
- A positive self-image
- A sense of caring for others
- Coping skills
- Good communications skills
- Sportsmanship
- A healthy respect for others and
- Discipline.

You may look at this list and think, "I cannot do all that." After all, you just signed up to coach your teen's recreational sports team.

You influence every child on your team – positively or negatively.

When you take on the task of coaching a youth sports team, you must:

1. Create fun. Long, hard and painful practices are for major league camps. Kids want to have fun while they learn.
2. Have a positive attitude. Your attitude and actions will influence kids for the rest of their lives. It certainly affects both parents and kids during practice and games.
3. Know and be able to teach specific skills. Work with kids alone and as a team. Each child learns and develops skills at his ability level.
4. Welcome all players. Youth should never be afraid or embarrassed to come to practice or games. Every child contributes to a team's success. It is your job to make each child feel a part of that success.
5. Model good sportsmanship. Be respectful of kids, parents, referees and the opposing team. Do not call names or assign blame. If you need to disagree, be firm - not hostile.
6. Give praise for good efforts as well as good plays.
7. Welcome parents. Let them help.
8. Set the tone for respect and fairness. Make it clear that during games the coach, players and parents must be positive and non-violent.

Before you sign up to be a coach, decide how you will measure success. It is unlikely that any of your team will be future major league sports figures.

It is likely, however, that they will be moms, dads and future youth sports coaches. Your success will be giving them happy memories and positive skills for life.

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. , 7 days a week.

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