

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

A POSITIVE APPROACH

Parent/Coach Relationship

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to children. As parents, when your children become involved in the athletic program, you have a right to understand expectations placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's team.

Communication You Should Expect From Your Child's Coach

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations the coach has for your child as well as for the team
3. Locations and times of all practices and contests
4. Team requirements such as rules, paperwork, equipment, and suggestions for off-season conditioning
5. Procedure should your child be injured during participation
6. Discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation

Communication Coaches Expect from Parents

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach
2. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
3. Specific concern about a coach's philosophy and/or expectations

As your children become involved in FWISD athletics, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve.
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

It is very difficult to accept your child is not playing as much as you may hope. **Coaches are professionals.** It is imperative parents and athletes trust that our coaches are trying to do the right thing for the team and all individuals involved. It is important to understand that the coaches are the ones with the team on a daily basis in practice and competition and therefore will make judgment decisions based on what they feel is in the best interest of the team.

As seen from the list above, you and your child's coach discuss certain things. Other things, addressed in the following section, are at the discretion of the coach.

Issues Not Appropriate To Discuss with Coaches

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Other student-athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the others position. When a conference is necessary, the following procedure help promote resolution to the issue of concern.

Procedure to Discuss a Concern with a Coach

1. Call to set up an appointment.
2. If you cannot reach the coach, call the principal. He/she will set up the meeting for you.
3. ***Please do not attempt to confront a coach either before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution.***

Next Step for Parent when Meeting with the Coach Does Not Provide a Satisfactory Resolution

1. Call and set up an appointment with the principal and the athletic director to discuss the situation.
2. At this meeting, the appropriate next step can be determined.

Research shows that athletic participation provides girls and boys with motivation for academic performance and physical activity, a structure to teach time management and self-discipline, and a means to develop self-esteem. Student-athletes benefit from a positive sports experience. The FWISD Athletic Department provides this information for parents to foster understanding between you and your child's coach, and to ensure an enjoyable season for your child.

Parental Conduct

1. Please do not shout advice to your player during the game. Shout encouragement? You bet. A steady stream of technique suggestions, though, has no value. Your insightful tips may conflict with the coach's instruction.
2. Please do not harass the refs. Parents that loudly harass the referee are embarrassing to the player and the team.

When a parent makes a spectacle of himself at a game, the player is embarrassed. If the ref is being reamed by a parent for a bad call, (by definition, a bad call is any decision made against the parent's child), what does the player learn? He learns that the mistake was not his fault. It was the result of poor officiating. This is a bad habit to get into.

Do not encourage your child to place the blame for their failures upon others. One of the benefits of playing sports is learning to accept responsibility instead of making excuses.

Sometimes a call is hard to take for whatever reason. Such times are test of emotional control. If a player can learn to bite his lip and move on, a parent can learn to sit quietly for a moment and let the emotion pass. Learning to cope with disappointment is a valuable life skill.

3. Do not blame the coach for your child's problems or lack of playing time. Your child's struggles to succeed are your child's problems. Let him work them out without your interference. A player has every right to ask a coach what needs to be done to earn more playing time, for example. However, a parent stepping in to demand playing time is another thing altogether.
4. Please do not talk bad about the coach in front of your child. The worst thing a parent can do is take pot shots at the coach, criticizing decisions, and complaining about his/her leadership. Support the coach and stand behind his decisions.
5. Please do not razz the other team's players. The other team's players should be considered off limits. Yelling at or deriding someone else's child is a shameful practice for an adult at a sporting event. Parents who intend to disrupt, distract or upset players exhibit the worst of poor sportsmanship.

As a parent, be involved in a positive way. Attend your child's games as often as you can. Cheer for all the kids on the team. Help with fund raising. Assist with logistics. If you are not sure how to help, ask the coach.

There is probably a hundred ways to be a good team member and a good parent at the same time. When the larger definition of team is working well, the experience can be wonderful for everyone involved. People who see our program in action will want to be a part of it. Parents looking ahead to when their child will be old enough to participate will want to fit in and help. This kind of teamwork perpetuates itself. Once it gets momentum, it can be quite a force. It just takes parents who care.

A Coach's Letter to Parents

by Dr. Darrell J. Burnett

Dear Parents,

Here are some hints on how to make this a fun season, with lots of positive memories for your kids and your family.

1. Make sure your kids know that, win or lose, you love them. Be the person in their life they can always look to for support.
2. Try to be completely honest with yourself about your kids' athletic capability, their competitive attitude, their sportsmanship, and their level of skills.
3. Be helpful, but do not coach your kids on the way to the game or at the breakfast table. Think how tough it must be on them to be continually inundated with advice, pep talks, and criticism.
4. Teach your kids to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be out there trying, to be constantly working to improve their skills, to take physical bumps and come back for more. Do not tell them that winning does not count because it does, and they know it. Instead, help them develop a healthy competitive attitude, a "feel" for competing, for trying hard, for having a good time.
5. Try not to live your life through your kids. You have lost as well as won, you have been frightened, and you have backed off at times. Sure they are an extension of you, but do not assume they feel the same way you did, want the same things, or have the same attitude.
6. Do not push them in the direction that gives you the most satisfaction. Do not compete with your kids' coaches. A coach may become a hero to your kids for a while, someone who can do no wrong, and you may find that hard to take. Conversely, do not automatically side with your kids against their coaches. Try to help them understand the necessity for discipline, rules, and regulations.
7. Do not compare your kids with other players on their team - at least not within their hearing - do not lie to them about their capabilities as a player. If you are overly protective, you will perpetuate the problem.
8. Get to know your kids' coaches. Make sure you approve of each coach's attitude and ethics. Coaches can be influential, and you should know the values of each coach so that you can decide whether or not you want them passed on to your kids.
9. Remember that children tend to exaggerate. Temper your reactions to stories they bring home from practice or the game about how they were praised or criticized. Do not criticize them for exaggerating, but do not overreact to the stories they tell you.
10. Teach your kids the meaning of courage. Some of us can climb mountains, but are frightened about getting into a fight. Some of us can fight without fear, but turn to jelly at the sight of a bee. Everyone is frightened about something. Courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is learning to perform in spite of fear. Courage is not getting rid of fear. It is overcoming it.
11. Winning is an important goal. Winning at all costs is stupidity.
12. Remember that officials are necessary. Do not overreact to their calls. They have rules and guidelines to follow representing authority on the field. Teach your kids to respect authority and to play by the rules.
13. Finally, remember, if the kids are not having fun, we are missing the whole point of youth sports.

Darrell J. Burnett, PhD. Clinical and Sport Psychologist, has several publications in the area of Youth Sports. Contact him at FUNAGAIN Press, PO Box 7223, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607-7223. 1-800-493-5943. Fax 949-495-8204. E-mail funagain@pacbell.net. Website: www.djburnett.com

Keys for Passing and Playing

Extracurricular activities like athletics are a very important part of my life. I want to keep my grades up so I can play. I know that each six weeks I have to pass all of my classes with a 70 average or better to maintain my eligibility.

*I am really concerned. **What can I do?***

How can I improve my grades so I will not have to be so concerned each six weeks about my eligibility?

IMPROVE YOUR STUDY SKILLS

- Listen carefully to the teacher
- Learn test-taking skills for the different types of test
- Outline reading assignments
- Exercise note-taking skills
- Identify weaknesses such as poor concentration or memorization skills and work on developing them

What is one of the most important things I can do to maintain my eligibility?

YOU MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PASSING

- Turn in all assignments on time
- Ask about make-up work when you are absent and turn it in
- Ask for help from teachers, fellow students, and parents when you do not understand something
- Keep a record of your grades so there will be no surprises
- Attend tutorials if you have difficulty

I hate doing homework, but I know it is a fact of life. How do I go about getting it done?

PRACTICE GOOD STUDY HABITS

- Set aside a specific time every school night to do homework
- Avoid distractions such as phone calls, TV, radio, etc
- Find the best study procedure for you and use it
- Work from the easiest assignments to the most difficult or vice versa
- Do take short breaks
- Designate a certain area for studying
- Be sure it has good lighting, a chair, and a desk or table for writing

How can I learn how to develop these habits and skills?

USE YOUR RESOURCE PEOPLE

- Ask your counselor or librarian for information about developing good study habits and test-taking skills
- Involve your parents; they can check math problems, listen to memory work, drill for a vocabulary test, or proofread a paper
- Ask your teachers, especially a reading teacher, for techniques that help you concentrate, memorize, and take notes

How can I do it all, participate in extracurricular activities and have enough time to keep up my grades?

THE KEYS ARE SETTING PRIORITIES AND MANAGING TIME

- **PLAN AHEAD**
- Develop a time schedule based on assignments due and your activities such as practice time
- **STICK TO YOUR SCHEDULE**
- Manage your time to meet your activities so that you **have time** to accomplish them all

Do Your Best



*In the Classroom
On the Playing Field*

