

## Parenting children involved in sport

### **What is it like being the parent of a child involved in sport?**

It can be a great experience, giving you lots of opportunities to spend time with your child, seeing them grow and develop, and sharing experiences. But you might also encounter some challenges; anticipating and managing these challenges is important to help you and your child have a positive experience.

### **What challenges might I encounter when my child is involved in sport?**

The most common challenges are associated with competition, for example watching your child compete, knowing what to say and when to speak to them after competitions, and helping them to manage disappointments. Some parents also report organisational challenges associated with the cost of sport, the time that sport can take up, and concerns regarding coaches and training. Additionally, some challenges can arise from helping your child manage sport, social, and school commitments and make choices regarding how to spend their time.

### **How is my experience likely to change over my child's sporting journey?**

As you might expect, if children are involved in sport for 10+ years, it is likely that you might encounter lots of different situations and scenarios. For instance, your child moving into select squads/programmes, facing an injury, being dropped/cut from a team, or not reaching their goals. All these experiences can impact on you as a parent and change how you think, feel, and behave. Anticipating these challenges and planning for them can help.

### **What can I do to minimise the issues I might face as a sport parent?**

There are many strategies that might work for you but firstly you must spend time identifying the challenges that you are encountering. Once you know what challenges you face you can then either try and address the source of the challenge or manage the emotions that arise. These strategies are reviewed in detail in the resources below.

### **How can I manage my experience as a parent of children in sport?**

Different parents are likely to use a range of strategies to manage their sport parent experience and many of these may develop through trial and error. However, while you are learning what works for you it can be useful to take time to learn about your child's sport, talk to your child about their experience, develop a support network, practice basic coping skills to manage competition challenges, and try to focus specifically on your child's individual journey.