

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

Everyone is likely to have slightly different experiences of parenting a child involved in sport. For some it is likely to be a smooth journey, while for others there may be more bumps challenges. Parents across a range of sports and countries have identified some of the best parts of being a sport parent and some of the more challenging parts – anticipating these may help you on your own journey.

Being a Sport Parent:

The Best Bits

- Seeing your child having fun and enjoying being active
- Watching your child improve and perform
- Seeing all the skills your child is learning that will help them in their sport and in life
- Helping your child to develop a physically healthy lifestyle
- Meeting other parents and gaining new friendships
- Sharing an activity with your child and strengthening your relationship
- Having a shared family activity
- Seeing your child make friends and develop a social network

Being a Sport Parent:

Some Challenges

- Seeing your child disappointed about results, selection, injury etc
- Working out how best to help your child to enjoy sport and perform at their best
- Talking to your child after difficult or disappointing performances
- Managing the financial and time commitments associated with sport
- Developing and maintaining relationships with coaches and other parents
- Making decisions regarding the balance of education and sport
- Not spending as much time with your family or partner as you would like

Based on:

Harwood, C., & Knight, C. J. (2009). Stress in youth sport: A developmental investigation of tennis parents. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 10, 447-456.
Wiersma, L. D. & Fifer, A. M. (2008). "The schedule has been tough but we think it's worth it": The joys, challenges, and recommendations of youth sport parents. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 40, 505-530