

## How can I work with coaches to ensure my child has the best experience?

The child-parent-coach triad can be very powerful; each person will contribute to helping a child grow as a person, become a better athlete, and overcome challenges. But, it is not always easy to maintain positive relationships. By understanding each others' priorities a lot of frustrations can be avoided and everyone can have a better experience!

Things parents do that may frustrate coaches:

- Showing a lack of knowledge about the rules and etiquette of the sport
- Demanding too much of the coach's time
- Hold excessive expectations about a child's sport
- Putting pressure on a child at competitions
- Not respecting the coach's role by giving tactical or technical directions during training or competition that contradict the coach's instructions

Things coaches do that may frustrate parents:

- Not giving equal or fair play time, displaying favouritism
- When children are not having fun or learning in training sessions
- Not understanding child development
- A lack of preparation or attention for training
- Poor organisational skills
- Poor or limited communication
- A lack of respect or understanding for your role as a parent

### How to strengthen the relationship you have with your child's coach

- Understand and anticipate the behaviours that may frustrate the coach (and vice versa). Try and avoid such behaviours or talk to each other about why they may be present.
- Get to know each other: Talk after training, go to parent meetings, volunteer at the club
- Learn about the coach's philosophy and how they will approach your child's training and competitions. Support this philosophy or, if it is not right for your child, consider alternatives.
- Respect the coach's private time and the time she/he needs for training. Try to talk at an agreed moment
- Talk about your problems and frustrations early and try to understand the coach's perspective.
- Learn about your child's sport and the rules of the club/organisation
- Show respect for, and trust, your child's coach

Based on:

Knight, C. J., & Gould, D. (2016). The coach-parent interaction: Support or Distraction? In R. Thelwell, C. Harwood & I. Greenlees (Eds.), *The Psychology of Sports Coaching: Research and Practice* (pp. 84-98). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.