

## Six tips to maximise your involvement in your child's sport

### 1) Select appropriate opportunities for your child and provide necessary support

Evidence consistently indicates that children benefit from sampling a range of sports when they are young before specialising in one or two sports when they move into mid-adolescence. As a parent you will face lots of conflicting information but encouraging your child to participate in a range of sports will be helpful.

### 2) Understand and apply an authoritative or autonomy-supportive parenting style

People parent in lots of different ways and we need more research about the pros and cons of different approaches in sport. So far, it appears that if you adopt an autonomy-supportive approach, whereby you provide your child with choice, allow them some flexibility over demands, and provide guidance rather than strict instruction, it can be helpful.

### 3) Manage the emotional demands of competition and role model this for your child

With all the emotion associated with competitions it is easy to find yourself acting in ways you wouldn't normally! Taking time to understand what impacts on your behaviours at competitions and developing strategies to manage these demands is really important.

### 4) Foster and maintain healthy relationships with others in the sport environment

Children's sporting experiences are influenced by lots of people, particularly their coach(es) and other parents, so as a parent developing effective and friendly relationships with these individuals is important. If you have good relationships with others in the sport environment you can share lifts and information and ensure you know what has been happening in training and competitions and match your comments and guidance to that of the coach.

### 5) Manage the organisational and developmental demands placed on you.

Unfortunately youth sport can be very demanding for parents. To be able to best support your child, it is really important that you are able to manage these demands and have some strategies in place to reduce the impact they can have on you and on you and your child's relationship. Some suggestions to manage these demands are provided in the parents' experiences section of the sportparent.eu website.

### 6) Adapt your involvement to the different stages of your child's sporting journey

What children need from their parents changes as they progress in sport and encounter different challenges. As a parent, being aware of when your child's needs change is really important. Engaging in constant communication with your child about the support they need from you is the best way to do this.

Based on:

Harwood, C. G., & Knight, C. J. (2015). Parenting in youth sport: A position paper on parenting expertise. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, 16, 24-35