

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN PASSIONATE ABOUT FOOTBALL

Supporting your child's interest in football is not as easy as it first may seem! The following suggestions offer parents hints as to how they can help their children to maximise their enjoyment, and hence their passion and improvement when playing the game.

Encourage responsibility



Endorse respect

**Let them love the
game**

Value integrity

SUGGESTIONS FOR EVERY PARENT

ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBILITY

- Allow them to look after their clothing & equipment; let them pack their bags, carry their own bags and tidy away their things afterwards.
- Teach them to tie their own boots and how to clean them
- Encourage them, support them, but avoid shouting instructions from the side lines. Be their parent not their trainer, and let them make their own decisions, even if they get it wrong.
- Encourage your child to embrace difficult challenges, allow them to set their own targets, but be careful about the sort of questions you ask – ‘did you score today/did you win?’ sends the wrong message.
- Make them see how they are responsible for their effort and their willingness to stretch themselves, rather than for any perceived "talent".
- Be responsible for ensuring that the environment you have chosen for your child is as good as it can be. Are the coaches qualified? Do expectations/values match your own?
- Allow the team to support each other; give them space & opportunity to forge team spirit and togetherness.

ENDORSE RESPECT

- Be punctual and greet the coach and other players. Similarly, encourage them to say thank you afterwards.
- Encourage them to value their possessions. For example, try not to buy new boots until they are outworn or outgrown
- Do not hate the opposition; they provide an opportunity for your children to practise, so work with them.
- Everyone involved in the game wants to enjoy it. Treat teammates, the opposition, the refs, the other team’s coaches as you would like to be treated. Be a role model

LET THEM LOVE THE GAME

- Emphasise the importance of consistent effort; performance will vary, but they can control their effort.
- Be there to play with them, but allow them to practise alone if they want too. Recognise the importance of free play.
- Win or lose, success or failure remind them to love the game, and the game will love them back. Keep your own frustrations to yourself.
- Let them dream they can be a Messi and play at the World Cup, but be wary of feeding them false expectations.
- Feed their enthusiasm: take them to games, have a ball handy at all times, watch tricks and moves on Youtube they can practise.
- Tell them football is for FUN, even training. If it is not fun for them, talk to the coach/club or move to another club.
- Don’t car-coach as it sucks the fun out of the game. They know if they played well or poorly. Apply a 20 minute rule in the car! - talk about other stuff! - give everyone time to catch their breath!

VALUE INTEGRITY

- Do not comment publically on their performance. Be particularly wary of comments on social media.
- Discourage your children from commenting about other children on social media
- Teach them to win with humility and lose with dignity
- Discuss sportsmanship and let them practise it in as many sports as possible; the more the better!
- Encourage and support without offering incentives. For example, offering money for goals is counter-productive in the long run.
- Mistakes are part of getting better. Encourage your children how to use mistakes, rather than avoiding them through, mistruths, cheating or making excuses.