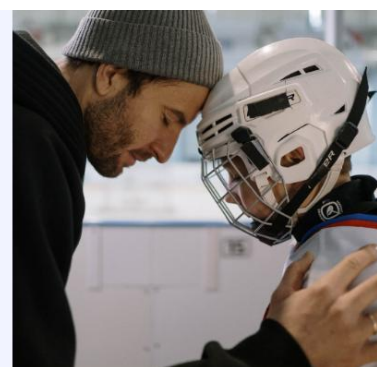


HOW TO TALK

to your young competitive athlete



You want your kids to be happy, healthy little athletes.

However, you might also realize they also have the potential to be GOOD. Like really good. Scholarship good. Pro good. So how can you best support your future star? Here is a guide on how to talk through specific situations as a parent of a young, talented athlete to best set them up for **enjoyment of their sport AND success.**

01

At Games

- Leave it to the coaches to coach. You most likely don't know the planned game strategy that day.
- Don't give technical instructions such as "keep your front shoulder in" during games. Leave that to practice times.
- Be positive, encouraging, supportive. Ex. **"You got this!"** Remember it's about the kids and not you.

02

Before Games

- Be supportive and upbeat. The work has been put in at practice and now it's time to get ready to have some fun.
- Refrain from over-coaching or giving all kinds of instructions.
- Help get them get pumped up by playing fun music.
- Tell them they are awesome, to have fun, and to give it their best **effort.**

03

The Ride Home

- Don't ask for explanations of what happened in games.
- Focus on how you enjoy watching your kid play.
- **Praise effort** over outcome. ex. Tell them, "That was an awesome dive!" even if they missed the ball.
- Listen more than you talk.

04

Before Practice

- Encourage your athlete to make the most of the practice time to work out what they need to.
- Encourage them to **listen** to their coaches.

05

At Home

- Remember, your child is your child before they are an athlete.
- Don't bring up past game mistakes.
- Talk about lots of other topics in addition to their sport.
- **If they ask**, be there to listen about their thoughts on their play, or support them with supplemental practice.



This more relaxed approach may seem counterintuitive for nurturing a competitive athlete to greatness. However, it has been proven that parental praise, understanding and support **increase an athlete's performance**, in addition to their increased enjoyment of playing and overall happiness.¹



The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice.

~Peggy O'Mara

