

TOP 10

Things Every Parent Needs to Know About Kids & Sports

As related from 22 Pro-Football Hall of Fame Players including legendary greats

Larry Csonka... Dick Butkus... Mike Ditka

Howie Long... Paul Krause...

Mike Singletary... Merlin Olsen...

and many more!

Pigskin DREAMS

THE PEOPLE, PLACES, AND EVENTS THAT FORGED THE CHARACTER OF THE

NFL's Greatest Players



- 1. Let the kids have fun.** Sports should be all fun, especially when you're younger than ten or twelve years old. While winning is great, when you're in the second grade just being out there playing with your friends is even better. If you're a bit over-zealous in your approach to your child's game, maybe it's time to give it a little rest. If your child's team loses, maybe the best thing to ask is if your child had fun today. Then go ahead and take them out for pizza, even though they lost, and let them know that they may not win every game, but they can sure have fun every time they step on the field.
- 2. Respect.** As a parent you should show respect to others. Likewise, upon offering respect to others, you should also expect that in return. Children copy what they see adults doing. Even behind closed doors, parents must maintain their self-respect and their respect for others, because your children will emulate your actions. Be proud of your right actions. Be proud of your children's right actions. Set that tone and your child will want to do things to make you, and others, proud of them.
- 3. Parents are the real head coaches.** If you have kids, you've got an enormous responsibility. Parenting is the only job where you provide massive training and resources with the intent of preparing your "trainee" to leave the nest. From the time your child is born, to the time they leave the nest, life could be viewed as a long line of teaching moments. Your kids get their foundations from you, and if you've coached them well enough along the way, they will have solid foundations upon which to build a wonderful life. While some "coaches" may be better than other "coaches," you still have the opportunity as a parent to be the best coach you can be. It's not the teacher's job, the preacher's job, or the grandparent's job to raise your child. It's your job, and that job ought to be number one on your list.
- 4. Athletics isn't the only thing that can define a person.** While athletics certainly offer real advantages to the physical and mental development of a child, that doesn't necessarily mean that kids have to be athletes to define themselves. Some kids don't have the skill sets or desire for athletics. Whatever they choose to do, be it music, scholastics, or some other activity, as parents you need to be behind them supporting them and encouraging them.
- 5. The no quit rule.** If your child has made the decision to play a sport, or participate in anything for that matter, the rule has to be that they have to complete what they started, and that needs to be clear from the start. If your child is halfway through the activity and wants to quit, you've got to remind him or her that they gave their word that they would finish the activity. Help them understand that it's important to finish what you start, because if you're always quitting when you get to a rough spot, you'll never learn how to overcome adversity and won't be able to accomplish as much in life.
- 6. The best effort rule.** If you're going to show up, show up with all you have. It doesn't matter if you're the best player on the team or the worst player on the team. Everybody has the same opportunity to give their best effort.
- 7. Offer constructive correction and praise.** If your child is doing something wrong (on the field or in life), you've got an opportunity to help your child learn how to do it right, or better. Identify what the problem is without any malice or anger, and if you have a solution, offer it in a constructive manner. Likewise, if your child is doing something right, offer them constructive praise for their performance. Don't beat your kids down when they aren't perfect, and don't praise them to the point that their heads swell up. Life is full of failures and victories. Use these opportunities to move forward, always.
- 8. Talk to your kids, not at them.** While parents certainly need to be authority figures, that doesn't necessarily mean that the environment around your house has to always feel like Marine basic training. Adults spend an inordinate amount of time directing orders at their children, and at times, children need concise direction such as that. But, what if the conversation became more in tune with trying to understand what was going on in your child's mind and how your child perceived certain situations or circumstances? Have a conversation with your child. You'll understand them better and they'll understand you better. How does it make you feel when someone orders you around? Don't you think you'd be more likely to respond positively if you had a better understanding of why something needs to be done in a particular way?
- 9. Don't live vicariously through your kids.** You are you. Your kids are not you. They are themselves. They might have a lot of similarities to you, but don't make the mistake of expecting them to be carbon copies of you. They aren't. Encourage them, support them, enjoy the high spots with them, and help them learn from the adversities they face. You're not the one playing the sport, so don't act like little Johnny or Jane needs to duplicate your sports successes, or lack thereof.
- 10. Let your kids make their own decisions about the sports they play.** That even applies to younger kids. This doesn't mean that you can't encourage your kids or make suggestions about what they might play, but the final decision needs to be their own decision. Teaching your kids to make decisions about things is one of the biggest jobs you have as a parent. Sports can provide an outstanding environment to help your kids make decisions and choices about what they will or won't do, and that will carry over into other areas of their lives.