

Building positive parent-coach relationships

Keeping

Your Child Safe
in Sport

Working with parents can be both a rewarding and challenging experience for coaches. Given that parents play a critical role in the engagement and enjoyment of youth sport, it's important for coaches to find strategies to enhance relationships with parents and avoid potential conflict.

Coaches can help build informed, positive, and proactive relationships with parents by addressing four key areas:

1. Behaviour at competitions and training



Parents may display negative or hostile emotional reactions towards coaches or become overly involved in their child's sport and training. Coaches can help to reduce this issue by educating parents on appropriate involvement and interactions with coaches.

- help to reduce emotional outbursts by communicating rules regarding when and how parents can contact coaches after competitions
- make time to adequately communicate with parents and avoid rushed conversations
- clearly communicate expectations around appropriate parental behaviours



2. Understanding of talent development and sport structure

All sports have varying structures and views regarding talent development are frequently changing. This can be challenging for parents to navigate. As an expert in the area, coaches should educate parents around the systems in their child's sport, helping to enhance parent's understanding and limit potential conflict.

- regularly update parents about plans, goals, and realistic expectations for their child
- provide parents with approved resources to help them become as educated as possible



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3. Perception of coaches

A key stressor arises when parents do not respect a coach's role in their children's development and progress. Changing how parents perceive coaches can be challenging, but coaches can help to build trust by demonstrating their expertise, behaving and communicating professionally, and supporting children to reach their potential.



- keep a high level of sport education, ensuring you have the latest technical, physical, and psychological information
- always maintain professional conduct when interacting with parents and children
- develop a clear learning environment to help children develop as athletes
- share your coaching values and philosophy with parents

4. Demands placed on coaches

There are no requirements for how much time or energy a coach must commit to children and parents, and while regular communication is recommended, coaches also need time off. It's important for coaches to implement boundaries and help manage parents' expectations.

- openly communicate with parents around what to expect from you as to how much time you commit to children, parents, and sport generally
- create a schedule for when parents should expect to hear from you and are able to contact you



For more helpful information, resources, podcasts and advice visit our website: thecpsu.org.uk

Based on research and guidance provided by Dr Camilla J. Knight, professor at Swansea University