



PARENTS GUIDE TO MATCH DAY

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Overall, a parent's role on match day is about respect and positivity. Remember to control your emotions, no matter how passionate you are. When young players have supportive parents who follow this guide, they are sure to benefit massively from The Beautiful Game.

SUMMARY

1. Encourage them with Positivity

First of all, this one should go without saying. Your child might be the best player on the team, or simply trying to improve while playing a sport they love, but we must remember - they're still children. We must remember that, and always strive to be an encouraging presence. They want to hear positive reinforcement from the sidelines - "Well done" goes a long way.

2. Allow them to PLAY

Unfortunately, some parents treat their child's journey in soccer as their own, attempting to live vicariously through every kick. Wishing they were out on the field themselves, they'll bark commands like 'shoot', 'pass', and maybe even groan when things don't quite work out. Remember, your child might be doing exactly what the coach has asked them to do, and you're giving them different advice. Your child knows what their role in the team is, and just wants to get on with the game.

3. Allow your child to make mistakes

It is important that your child develops their decision-making abilities by learning from mistakes. They will learn what works, and what does not, which helps them understand how to take responsibility for their actions. Did they choose the wrong pass? Did they spend too much time on the ball? Did they shoot when other options were available? It's fine to ask them about their decisions after the match, but don't lambast them for it, they must be given the space to learn the cause-and-effect of their choices. This is important not only in football and other sports, but in life, too.

4. Support the whole team

Your child is the most important player to you - of course they are. But they are a part of a team in which every player matters equally. Your child must also learn to value being part of a team, as some of the most important qualities they will learn from sport come from being a part of a greater cause: teamwork, leadership, empathy, and camaraderie. Don't tell other players what to do, don't criticize their mistakes, but do encourage them with positivity like you should your own child. They're children on a journey just like your own child, and your child will benefit from the whole team thriving.

5. Respect the other players, including the opposition

Some parents even get carried away and treat watching their child's match like spectating a heated fixture between two powerhouse professional teams. They shout abuse from the sidelines if a player gets away with a handball, or commits a foul on their own child. Please, don't be that parent either. It should also go without saying that the players on the other team are children just like yours - they're not Messi or Ronaldo who can shoulder the abuse and forget about it by the time they are chauffeured home in their Rolls Royce.

6. Allow the coach to do their job

Grassroots coaches will have had a variety of training and experiences in order to perform their role. We must remember that the players are children and we must also keep in mind that coaches are human. They will make mistakes, but at the end of the day they have a difficult job and are trying to do the best for their players. You might get frustrated that your child is sitting on the bench or being played in an unusual position, but the coach is likely using a system that ensures all players can play. FCLC has a unique curriculum that provides a guideline for coaches to follow, so ask that you respect his or her decisions and don't try to intervene from the sidelines.

7. Be conscious that your behavior rubs off on your child

As well as remembering to show respect to the players on the field and allowing the coach to do their job, we must be conscious of our general behavior on the sidelines and how this is perceived by our child. If you start whooping and hollering at the referee for an unfavorable decision, it's only a matter of time before your child themselves starts confronting the referee on the field. Showing disrespect to the referee or other parents is learned behavior, so don't show them that it is in any way acceptable.

8. Don't place too much importance on the result

You shouldn't focus too much on the result, whether it be a win, loss, or a draw. Dwelling too much on a loss can be demoralizing for your child, just as much as over-celebrating a victory can hinder personal development. Support the process, not the outcome. Congratulating a win and commiserating a loss are of course appropriate responses, but your child coming off the field having tried their best and gave a good account of themselves is far more beneficial to their overall development than a win or a loss.

9. Use the drive home effectively

Children want you to be a parent when they finish playing, not a second coach. It is very little wonder that many children like their grandparents watching them play because, more often than not, the grandparents are very proud of them, smile at them and then at the end of the game tell them something along the lines of: "Well done - I loved watching you play! Did you enjoy it?" For more about the drive home, read [this article](#) from "Working with Parents in Sport". As coaches and as parents, there is often an urge to analyze the game after it's complete. In this article we discuss how best to reflect on the game, allowing our children to lead any discussion.

Summary

Overall, a parent's role on match day is about respect and positivity. Try not to overstep the mark by trying to do the job of the coach, the referee, or even the players. Remember to control your emotions, no matter how passionate you (understandably) are about your child's soccer journey. When young players have supportive parents who follow this guide, they are sure to benefit massively from The Beautiful Game.