

# How to Talk to a Coach

Parents and coaches can have different visions for players or for a team. Too often, the coach-parent relationship is tense.

When problems arise, parents want to talk to their child's coach. A parent may have good intentions. Sometimes, however, a meeting with the coach can hurt rather than help your child.

When you want to talk to your child's coach:

- 1. Find a good time to schedule a meeting.** Do not talk right after a game. Emotions are high, and coaches have many post-game tasks. Meet when you and the coach are calm. Face-to-face contact helps avoid misunderstandings. A phone call or email limits communications.
- 2. Keep your child's best interest in mind.** You want what is best for your child, and the coach may have some good ideas. Be open to what the coach has to say.
- 3. Be a good listener.** You may have many complaints. Fight the urge to tell them all to the coach. Simply tell the coach *your main concern*. Then listen to what she has to say – without interrupting. Try to look at her point of view. Ask questions. Repeat what you heard. This ensures good communication.
- 4. Explain how the sport affects you and your child.** Coaches are usually unaware of specific concerns or problems. Give him a chance to help you problem-solve.



- 5. Avoid judging the coach.** Use respectful words. Do not accuse or verbally attack her. *You can be firm without yelling or becoming angry.*
- 6. Work with the coach and the team.** *Every parent has wishes and concerns. Coaches must balance everyone's concerns. Work together to find as many options as possible to address your concern. If one option does not work, try another.*

Not all coaches are positive role models. You may decide to look for a new team and coach. When playing other teams, observe the players and the coach. If you see a coach you respect, go meet him after a game. Introduce yourself and compliment his coaching style. Next year, ask if that coach has any opening on his team.

Dealing with a coach teaches an important social skill. Set a good example for your teen. Show him positive skills that will be useful in solving future problems.

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