

# WORKING WITH PARENTS

Here are some strategies youth sport coaches can use to work effectively with parents:

## COMMUNICATION



### CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

At the beginning of the season, hold a meeting or distribute a handbook outlining practice schedules, game schedules, communication protocols, and team policies. Include what will define a successful season.

### OPEN CHANNELS

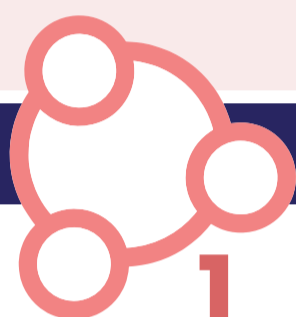
Establish preferred communication methods (email, text, or call) and address parent concerns promptly and professionally. Set healthy personal boundaries as desired (e.g. Ask parents not to communicate on game days except for emergencies).

### POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Focus on communicating player progress and positive contributions rather than solely on mistakes.

### PROVIDE REGULAR UPDATES

Consider a team website, social media account, or weekly newsletter for parents to access news and information. Ensure that schedule changes and updates are pushed out to everyone.



## COLLABORATION

1

### PARTNER WITH PARENTS

Emphasize that coaches and parents are a team, working together for the best interests of the participants.

2

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Encourage parents to volunteer for team activities like scorekeeping, fundraising, or equipment management.

3

### MUTUAL RESPECT

Treat parents with respect and courtesy, even when you disagree. Listen actively to their concerns and explain your coaching decisions rationally.

4

### DEFINE CLEAR ROLES

You are there to coach. Parents should support their child - not coach or officiate.

## BUILDING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT



### FOCUS ON FUN AND DEVELOPMENT

Reinforce that youth sports are about learning, enjoyment, and skill development, not just winning.

### SPORTSMANSHIP

Promote good sportsmanship from both players and parents by setting clear expectations for respectful behavior towards coaches, referees, opponents, and teammates. Acknowledge and celebrate instances of sportsmanship displayed by players, opponents, or even parents during games.



### TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Incorporate team-building activities beyond practice to foster camaraderie and social interaction among players and parents. This could be a team picnic, bowling night, or volunteering together at a community event.

### CELEBRATE TEAM SUCCESS

Organize an end-of-season celebration to recognize player achievements, thank parents for their support, and create a sense of closure for the season.

## ADDITIONAL TIPS

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Develop strategies for addressing conflicts calmly and professionally. If necessary, involve a league official or athletic director as a mediator.

### MAINTAIN BOUNDARIES

While open communication is important, set boundaries regarding after-hours communication or discussing individual playing time with parents during practice or games.

By implementing these strategies, coaches can foster positive relationships with parents and create a supportive and enjoyable environment for everyone involved in youth sports.

CONTENT CREATED BY :



**Sport Coaching,  
Leadership, &  
Administration**  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



**COACHES'**  
TOOL CHEST