



Developing Great Parent Relationships

A strong coach-parent relationship starts with clear communication, transparency and collaboration. When coaches and parents are on the same page, it creates a more positive sport experience overall for each athlete.

Kick off Your Season With a Parent-Coach Meeting

A thorough and well-organized kickoff meeting creates a blueprint for the season and cornerstone for coaches, parents and athletes alike to refer back to.

Sample Meeting Agenda (60 min or less):

- 1 Share your coaching philosophy, background and training experience.
- 2 Invite your assistant coaches to share their philosophies and background as well.
- 3 Review the season schedule.
- 4 Discuss expectations for parental behavior on the sidelines at games, practices or any other team event.
- 5 Distribute codes of conduct. (one for players, parents and coaches)
- 6 Review budget and recruit volunteers (keeper of jerseys, snack coordinators, etc).
- 7 Discuss team goals for the season (invite player and parent contributions).
- 8 Discuss how parents can help their kids reach their goals on the playing field.

Remember the scoreboard/standings should NEVER be the season's main focus. Work with your athletes and their parents to identify goals that everyone can see and measure (technical skills, fitness, playing time etc).

Put It Into Practice

Developing a great relationship with both your athletes AND their parents is a key ingredient to a great season.

- Invite parents to volunteer for team positions including: treasurer, statistician, social committee, trainer/first-aid, tournament coordinator, etc.
 - Schedule a parents-coach night out near the beginning of the season to help everyone get to know one another.
- Include parents and kids in a team bonding outing – try a non-traditional activity like archery tag, trampoline or go-karting to build chemistry and trust.

Be Clear With Your Expectations

Stay consistent throughout the season.

- In your first meeting, outline expectations for arrival times for games, practices and dress code.
- Establish a zero-tolerance policy for any harassment by players, parents or coaches.
 - Request face-to-face or meeting on the phone, rather than through email or text.
- Require players, coaches and parents to sign a Code of Conduct.
- Ask that parents speak to coaches directly about any issues they may have with other staff, players or parents.

Communication Is Key

Consistent, regular communication keeps everyone on the same page.

- Always keep your tone positive and reinforce how important it is for everyone to have fun during the season.
- Share weekly insights on your athlete or team's progress, goals, scheduling, etc.
- Share interesting resources that encourage parents to learn.
- Plan mid-season and end-of-season meetings with parents.
- Ask for feedback - conduct anonymous parent surveys throughout the season.

References: Glen Mulchahy, Paradigm Sports (2019) "Meeting and Engaging Your Youth Sports Parents"
Dr. Jennifer Nalepa, Michigan State University (2019) "Coaching the Parents: 5 Strategies for Creating a Positive Coach-Parent Relationship"