

Teach Your Child to be a Good Loser

Sport teams teach children many skills and lessons. If your child plays sports, his team will lose some games. One of the skills your child must learn is how to react when his team loses a game.

Winning is fun. However, for young children, playing a game with friends is more important than winning. Parents often value winning more than the child does.

Teach your child to be a graceful loser.

- **Examine your feelings.** What do you want your child to learn and experience by playing sports?
- **Model good sportsmanship.** Let your child hear you make good comments about the winning team. For example, *“What a great goal kick.”*
- **Encourage your child to shake hands or give high fives with a smile.** Teach him to say, *“Good game.”* Let him know that she will want the same respect and enthusiasm when her team wins.
- **Avoid “trash-talk” about the other team.** Do not use words like *bad* and *cheat*.
- **Thank the referees.** Do not blame or insult them.
- **Compliment your child and her team on their efforts.** For example, *“It was a good game. I look forward to next week.”*

- **Praise good behavior.** For example, *“I was so proud of you when you patted Bob on the back after he struck out. It must have made him feel better.”*
- **Help your child cope with defeat.** Allow him to feel sad or angry—for the moment. Help her focus on what she did right.
- **Omit the minute-by-minute replay when the game is over.** Also, avoid a lecture on your child’s mistakes or her team’s mistakes. Move on. Get some ice cream. Go home and play together.
- **Compliment your child when he is a “graceful loser.”**

You will lose count of games won or lost. Your proudest memories will be of your child as a good sport. Be sure your child realizes you value him and his effort, not the victory.



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Revised 2017