

# Enjoying the EXPERIENCE

**A**bove all, remember that hockey is a game, meant to be fun, including at the highest levels. Keep hockey in perspective and help your children do the same. Often the score isn't as important to them as simply gaining the experience of playing and making memories with teammates.

Savor every opportunity to watch your child on the ice. The hockey experience can be a source of great memories and lessons that last a lifetime. Traveling that road together can strengthen family ties.

## Here are some ideas for making the experience great:

- Create a scrapbook for your child with photos, news clippings, website postings and tournament programs. Have each teammate sign it.
- Encourage your child to write a journal about his or her hockey experience.
- Turn road trips into true family vacations; see the sights and explore the local culture. Take lots of pictures.
- Take the lead in coordinating public service opportunities for the team, such as hosting a food or toy drive.
- Join or create a hockey parent social club for your child's team; use social media to keep the conversations and friendships flowing.

***"PLAY IS OFTEN TALKED ABOUT AS IF IT WERE A RELIEF FROM SERIOUS LEARNING. BUT FOR CHILDREN, PLAY IS SERIOUS LEARNING. PLAY IS REALLY THE WORK OF CHILDHOOD."***

**– FRED (MISTER) ROGERS**



## Getting Involved

Joining your local hockey association as a volunteer committee member, a coach or a helper of any sort can be a rewarding experience. It also strengthens your association.

Everyone has different strengths and skills that they can bring to a local hockey association, and every contribution helps, since associations are almost entirely powered by the extraordinary efforts of volunteers.

Even parents who never played hockey can make huge contributions as volunteers, so don't be reluctant. There's strength in numbers. Ask your local association about volunteer opportunities today. And if you have ideas for new ways you could help your association, don't hesitate. Jump in and join the team!

# What to expect as a HOCKEY PARENT

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**Y**our child's hockey experience will be influenced by many factors, but nothing will influence that experience more than you. As a parent, you are the most influential figure in your child's development, both as a hockey player and as a person. Embrace that opportunity.



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## Remember:

- **Let kids be kids.** Fun should be paramount.
- **Be supportive.**
- **Be disciplined.** Manage your emotions and set a good example that teaches your child to do the same.
- **Be positive,** and when adversity comes, be constructive not destructive. If you must be critical, don't get personal. Direct your comments at the action, not the person.
- **Be proactive.** Getting involved as a volunteer or coach in your association can give you an even greater influence on your child's hockey experience. And as a parent, being a proactive communicator with coaches

and administrators can help avoid frustration and conflict.

- **Your child's coach** is likely a volunteer, and often also a parent, donating their time to help your child. While criticism might be appropriate, it should be done constructively and through appropriate channels.
- **Be respectful,** especially in situations of disagreement or conflict.
- **Don't bully or harass.** Speak out if you see bullying or harassing behavior from others.
- **Focus on the process,** not the outcome, and teach your child to do the same.

- **Kids learn** best by doing.
- **Praise your child's effort** more often than their performance. Studies show it helps them better develop the confidence to meet new challenges and overcome obstacles.
- **Keep hockey** in perspective. Maintain a healthy balance of hockey and non-hockey activities. Encourage your child to be well-rounded.
- **Enjoy the youth** hockey experience with your child. Life moves fast and time passes quickly. Soon your child will be grown and you'll wish you could return to these days, if just for a moment. So savor these seasons, don't rush them. Make the experience one that you'll remember fondly together years from now.



**“PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS, AND COACHING THAT VALUES WINNING OVER HEALTHY CHILDHOOD PLAY EXPERIENCES, PLACE CHILDREN AT BOTH PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK.”**

**– MARGARET PUCKETT & JANET BLACK** *The Young Child*

## Ask Questions:

- The youth hockey environment should be open and transparent. As a parent, you have the right to be involved and aware. Please don't hesitate to ask questions like these:
  - What educational resources are available to parents, prospective coaches and/or volunteers?
  - What if I am experiencing financial hardship?
  - What resources and options are available to help me provide the hockey experience for my child?
  - When should I speak out about questionable behavior exhibited by a player, coach, parent, administrator or anyone else in my child's hockey environment? To whom should I report that behavior? What is the process for reporting that behavior?
- What role can I play in my child's hockey development? What roles are available to me within the association?
- How will the coaches and administrators communicate with me?
- How can I help my child be safe on and off the ice?