



Parents - A Positive Influence

As a parent, part of enjoying your children's participation in sport and recreation is watching them enjoy themselves, learning skills, making friends, improving their performance and generally having fun.

But some parents get too caught up in the excitement of the action. They forget the sport or recreation activity is for their child's benefit, not the parents' entertainment. This **SportSafe** Parent Contract provides you with information on what to watch for in your performance as a parent, so that your children can continue to have fun and play his or her own game.

Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour and Violence

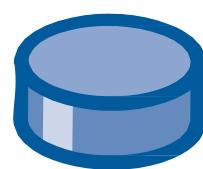
Everyone has heard of, or worse yet seen, the loud obnoxious parent on the sidelines during a childrens' sport or recreation activity. Whether the incident takes place at a gym, rink or field is irrelevant. This parent has it in for the referee, the coach, and possibly even the other parents. Every call, decision and play evokes some response from the "ugly" parent.

Most parents are not like this. But one or a few parents can make a difference. They affect the ability of the coaches and officials to do their jobs. They embarrass children, steal their fun and maybe, without realizing it, train children to act overly aggressively and violently. In short, ugly parents are not setting a good example.

And most kids learn from example. Whether it's by their friends, team mates or parents, those around them have a tremendous influence on their behaviour. That's why it's important for parents and other adults to act appropriately.

Many sport and recreation activity centres have developed measures to ensure the sport and recreation environment is a healthy and respectful one. One of these is the **Parent Contract**, a simple agreement that is increasing in popularity in many sports and recreation activities.

Be Involved



The Parent Contract lays out the acceptable rules of behaviour of a parent in relation to their child's sport or recreation activity. By agreeing to this code of conduct, parents are acknowledging that their child's activity is for his or her enjoyment, not theirs.

Many sport groups and associations already distribute a Parent Contract at the beginning of the season. Before contracts are signed, sports organizations should discuss with parents how they can live by the contract and outline disciplinary guidelines should a parent break the agreement (e.g. banning the parent from attending the next game).

The following code of conduct is modelled after one developed by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport.



The Parent Contract

- I will remember that my child plays sport for his or her enjoyment, not for mine.
- I will encourage my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- I will teach my child that doing one's best is as important as winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game/event.
- I will make my child feel like a winner every time by offering praise for competing fairly and trying hard.
- I will never ridicule or yell at my child for making a mistake or losing a competition.
- I will remember that children learn best by example. I will applaud good players' performances by both my child's team and their opponents.
- I will not force my child to participate in sports.
- I will never question the official's judgment or honesty in public.
- I will support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from children's sporting activities.
- I will respect and show appreciation for the trained volunteer coaches who give their time to provide sport activities for my child, understanding that I have a responsibility to be a part of my child's development.
- I will respect and show appreciation for the other parents who share these beliefs.

I agree to Play Fair. _____

(signature of parent)