

PARENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Encourage your children to participate for their own interest and enjoyment, not yours.

Support your children in their participation in basketball but do not force them to play if they don't want to. Sport is played by children for enjoyment and fitness. It is good for their bodies but should also be good for their minds. If they feel too much pressure from you it may make them rebellious or even depressed. It is very tempting for parents who are involved in a sport, or who have children with abilities they wish they had themselves to try and force the children to participate or to participate at a level to which they do not aspire. Resist the temptation.

2. Encourage children to always play by the rules.

Just as responsible parents teach their children to obey the law of the land, so should those same parents encourage their children to play sport by the rules. If your children show no respect for the rules of the game of basketball, they can also come to believe that breaking the law is acceptable too. If you see your children constantly breaching rules you should be prepared to speak to them at an appropriate time.

3. Teach children that an honest effort is always as important as a victory.

Your children will suffer many disappointments in their lives. You should teach them from an early age that whilst a win in basketball will bring them much pleasure, it is not the most important thing. Participating to the best of their abilities is far more important than winning. You can help them learn this, so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.

4. Focus on developing skills and playing the game. Reduce the emphasis on winning.

If children see that effort is rewarded by an increase in skills, they will derive considerable pleasure and see the importance of striving to improve over the necessity to win every game. Primary responsibility for skills training rests with the children and their coaches but you can assist with their enthusiasm by attending games, encouraging them to practise away from formal training and games and even joining in with this practice.

5. A child learns best by example. Applaud good play by all teams.

Acknowledge all good plays whether they be by your children's team or the other team. Good manners and respect can be infectious. If you acknowledge the achievements of your children's opponents it is likely your children will follow suit. This can assist to create a positive and supportive climate for all children involved in the game.

6. Do not criticise your or others' children in front of others.

Reserve constructive criticism of your own children for more private moments. Children can be very sensitive and feel strong humiliation if they are criticised in front of their peers. When you do feel the necessity to speak to your child about something that displeases you, make the effort to explain what the problem is and why you are concerned about it. If you can see some way of avoiding the problem in the future, also explain this to the children. Give your children an opportunity to offer you an explanation. You are not communicating with your children effectively if all the communication is one way.

7. Accept decisions of all referees as being fair and called to the best of their ability.

Referees and officials have a difficult task to perform and your children could not play the game without them. They are there to enforce the rules of play but they cannot always be right. Accept bad calls graciously. Abuse of referees is unacceptable behaviour. Players who consistently dispute decisions or do not accept bad decisions are bad sports. If you disagree with a decision, discuss it with your children in a constructive manner.

8. Set a good example by your own conduct, behaviour and appearance.

Children often learn by example. You are the prime role models for them. Make your parenting rewarding and beyond criticism by leading by example. Do not criticise opposing team members or supporters by word or gesture. Accept loss graciously and applaud the efforts of all playing the game. Do not be one of the "ugly" parents occasionally seen at sporting events.

9. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from sporting activities.

Parents have considerable influence in how sports are conducted. Often they are called on to perform volunteer work to help organise their and others' children's activities. Use this rewarding experience, not just to assist in getting the necessary work performed, but also to influence the atmosphere in which your children play the sport. Children not as fortunate as yours whose parents are not willing or able to be involved may need some guidance on what is or isn't acceptable behaviour.

10. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person.

Regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background, religion or other factor irrelevant to the game, all persons connected with basketball are entitled to equal treatment and respect. Avoid any remarks that could be construed as offensive or discriminatory. Sometimes even a joke may give offence. Even if a person refers to themselves with a particular label, it should not be taken as an invitation for you to do so. Using discretion is imperative and it is better to err on the side of caution. Your children will most likely follow your lead in matters of discrimination and vilification.

11. Show appreciation for volunteer coaches, officials and administrators.

Volunteers are necessary for the functioning of sporting activities. Without them, your child could not participate. Whilst many are parents of people involved in the sport, many are also people dedicated to the sport and its development. Show them the respect and appreciation that they deserve.

12. Keep children in your care under control.

Basketball encourages you to bring your children to games. However, there can be dangers to them in a basketball stadium. They can also constitute a danger to players. You should ensure that children with you at a basketball game are well behaved and do not wander onto or too near to courts. They can easily be knocked down by a player or a player can trip over a child when concentrating on the play and not expecting a small child to be in the way.

13. Always respect the use of facilities and equipment provided.

Facilities and equipment cost money and will only function properly if kept in good order. Ensure that you do not abuse anything provided for use. Discourage your children from engaging in dangerous practices such as hanging off hoops or "slam dunking". Quite properly, these practices are

banned in most venues. Not only can equipment be damaged but serious injury can occur.