

 **USA FOOTBALL.**
PARENT GUIDE

Presented by *Children's*
Motrin *Children's*
TYLENOL



**IT'S MORE THAN A JERSEY.
IT'S MORE THAN A POSITION ON THE FIELD.
IT'S MORE THAN THE WINS,
THE DEFEATS, THE PLAYS, AND THE CALLS.
IT'S SOMETHING LARGER—IT'S THE TEAM,
THE DRIVE, THE ATHLETE ...
THE SPORT**

USA Football is creating a new standard in football by providing parents and athletes with trusted resources to make the game better and safer.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

SKILLS AND DRILLS

SPORTS NUTRITION

STRENGTH TRAINING



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Being a parent is simultaneously one of the most challenging and rewarding opportunities in life. The pride that comes with watching our children succeed sits on a delicate balance with any letdown in seeing them struggle.

As a father of two student-athletes, I know firsthand that a parent's role goes much deeper than sitting in the stands cheering on our kids and their teams.

We are coaches, nurses, psychologists, equipment managers, chauffeurs, chefs, and so much more. We are there in the morning when they wake up filled with enthusiasm for the day, and we are there when they lie down at night filled with joy or disappointment.

USA Football and the makers of MOTRIN® and TYLENOL® are proud to support the millions of young athletes who play this game and their parents as we prepare for another season of America's most popular sport. This guide serves as a resource for moms and dads as they alternate the next few months between being encouragers, healers, mentors, No. 1 fans, and shoulders to lean on.

Let's focus on making this season the best it can be for our kids by being the best sports parents possible. Thank you for your willingness to learn about these best practices, and good luck.



Scott Hallenbeck
USA Football CEO and Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Hallenbeck".





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FUEL UP FOR GAME DAY

Eating and drinking right are just as important as improving skills and practicing plays to be successful on the field.

Get your child ready for game day with some simple nutrition tips:

STEP 1 – CARB UP

Have your child eat a bigger meal two to four hours before he or she takes the field.

Incorporate protein and antioxidants, if possible, with carbohydrates.

STEP 2 – SNACK ATTACK

30 to 60 minutes before kickoff, have a small snack or sports drink ready for your child.

The key is to not fill your child's stomach, but to satisfy it.

3 KINDS OF FOODS TO AVOID

Fatty and fried foods. Greasy foods such as hamburgers and French fries are hard to digest and just sit in your child's stomach as he or she runs around.

Protein shakes and bars. Protein plays an important role in your child's overall diet, but they should not consume a large quantity right before a game.

Artificial sweeteners. These will stress your child's digestion, and the last thing anyone wants before a big game is an upset stomach.

Get the scoop on protein shakes.

PRO TIP:

Try a pasta dish with some lean ground turkey meat sauce, or a chicken stir-fry with lots of rice and veggies.



3 QUICK TIPS

Never skip. We are all rushed on game day, but having your child grab a yogurt, banana, or bowl of cereal before heading out the door will kick off the day off right.

Colorful plates. Foods that offer a variety of nutrients help with both performance and recovery.

Carb up. Kids burn through energy much faster than adults, so an abundance of carbohydrates is OK.

/ NUTRITION

SNACKS

ON THE SIDELINES

Halftime for coaches means a chance to reinforce what the team is doing and helping your young athlete get better. For players, those few minutes also means snacks.



Halftime is a crucial point in the game to refill your child's glycogen – a muscle's fuel source – and keep him or her energized for the second half.

Try these easy options when orange slices just aren't cutting it:

- Fig bars
- Fruit rope
- Bananas
- Granola bars
- Dried fruit
- Rice Krispies Treats®

For more snack ideas and recipes, visit www.usafootball.com/parent.

Original content provided by:
Joe Frollo, USA Football

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PRO TIP:

Ease digestion. Go for a high glycemic carbohydrate that absorbs quickly with minimal fiber.

GUARDIANS OF THE GAME

WE ARE THE DETAILS INSIDE YOUR GAME. WE ARE FOOTBALL-SAVVY AND SPORT-SCIENCE SMART. WE ARE THE CONFIDENCE ONLY A PLAYER IN A PLAYER'S HEART CAN KNOW.



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TYLENOL® and MOTRIN® are not affiliated with Shock Doctor®, McDavid®, or Cutters®, who are sponsoring partners of USA Football.

/ NUTRITION

HOW TO STAY HYDRATED

LEARN IT

Dehydration Symptoms

- Feeling faint
- Headache
- Fever
- Intense thirst
- Not urinating for many hours
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Breathing faster or deeper than normal
- Skin numbness or tingling
- Muscle spasms
- Extreme tiredness

PRO TIP: If your child's urine is a dark yellow color, resembling apple juice, it is time to rehydrate.

[Download this helpful Hydration Chart](#)

TEACH IT

Make hydration a habit

One of the best ways to keep your child hydrated is to get them in the habit of drinking fluids every 20 minutes during the course of activity and after it ends.

DO IT

When and how to hydrate

Before activity: Drink 16-24 fluid ounces of water 10-15 minutes before activity.

During activity: Hydrate with an electrolyte-packed sports drink or water every 15 to 20 minutes throughout play.

After activity: Have your child drink chocolate milk as a post-workout snack to replenish nutrients lost during exercise.

PRO TIP: Pair a favorite sports drink with a healthy snack, and on busy days, plan ahead for additional hydration opportunities the night before an activity or with breakfast.

Need more tips? Watch more on Heat and Hydration.

IN THE HEAT

Children have a harder time cooling down during activity than adults, and the chances of them becoming dehydrated is a real problem—especially when fluids leave the body faster than they can be replaced. But what goes out must come back in. Hydrating before a game or practice is just as important as during it.



DID YOU KNOW?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) suggests 4-6 fluid ounces of fluid every 15 minutes for a 90-pound child.

/ HEALTH & SAFETY

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SPORTS PHYSICAL



Athletes come in all shapes, sizes, ages, and skill levels. One thing they should all have in common is a pre-participation physical evaluation (PPE).

While pre-season examinations won't prevent the bumps and bruises that come with your child playing youth sports, it provides physicians with vital information to make informed decisions.

Covering the basics

PPEs measure the following factors, which may influence your child's health and performance:

- Height
- Weight
- Blood pressure
- Pulse
- Vision
- Flexibility
- Range of motion
- Strength
- Functional movement

At the heart of it

PPEs are a key component to identifying certain heart conditions, including murmurs, arrhythmias, and other potential cardiac problems.

Sudden cardiac arrest is the No. 1 cause of death for young athletes in action and often shows no warning signs. Screening can identify if your child is at risk.

Learn more on Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA).

TAKE A TIME OUT

Before your child begins practice, contact your pediatrician to schedule an exam.

/ HEALTH & SAFETY

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EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

The start of football season is an exciting time as millions of young athletes and their parents prepare to take the field decked out in the best equipment available for purchase.

Before dropping hundreds of dollars on the latest gear, be aware of what equipment you should buy.

Make sure your child is prepared for practice with the following checklist:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7-piece pad set | <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated football pants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic bag | <input type="checkbox"/> Mouth guard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Belt | <input type="checkbox"/> Padded girdle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chin strap | <input type="checkbox"/> Padded performance shirt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleats (<i>typically plastic</i>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Practice jersey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eye black | <input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder pads |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football | <input type="checkbox"/> Socks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helmet | <input type="checkbox"/> Wrist coach for plays (<i>if required</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clear helmet visor (<i>if desired</i>) | |

Watch proper equipment fitting techniques.



BEAT THE HEAT

WITH THESE SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

As parents, it's up to us to make sure our children don't come home dehydrated and overheated.

Here are some tips to keep your kids safer when the temperatures rise:

Avoid peak sun hours

Schedule outdoor activities early in the morning before the sun reaches its peak. Bring kids inside for a rest during the day's hottest hours, usually between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Hydrate before, during, and after activity

To prevent dehydration, make sure your child drinks 16-24 ounces of fluid 10-15 minutes before activity begins and breaks for water during playtime.

PRO TIP:

If mornings are a bad time for scheduled activity, plan plenty of breaks from the sun throughout the day. For more hydration tips, see page 08.

HEAT SYNCOPE

Becoming lightheaded or fainting during exercise

Treatment: Find a shaded area, lay your child on the ground, and raise their legs. This helps blood get back to the heart.

[Learn more about Heat Syncope.](#)

HEAT EXHAUSTION

May feel hot, tired, weak, or dizzy while sweating profusely

Treatment: Remove your child from activity and put him or her in a shaded/cool area. Lay your child on the ground and raise their legs about 12 inches. Make sure you replenish lost fluids and use ice wrapped in towels to help cool down.

HEAT CRAMPS

Painful and localized cramps that are usually visible and make muscles feel hard.

Treatment: Rehydrate with water and sports drinks. Use light stretching and ice massages on the cramped muscle to relieve cramping.

[Learn more about Heat Cramps.](#)

Beat the heat with these items when out and about with your child:

- Hats
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Aloe
- Ice packs
- Towel (can be soaked with cool water)
- Water
- Cold compress
- Sports drinks

For more information about keeping your child safe in the heat, talk to your pediatrician.

**PRO TIP:**

On both sunny and cloudy days, apply sunscreen with SPF 15 or greater that protects against UVA and UVB rays. In addition to dressing for the weather, apply sunscreen 15-30 minutes before sun exposure and repeat. Reapply sunscreen every two hours.

/ HEALTH & SAFETY

MUST-HAVE FIRST-AID ITEMS

Being a parent means knowing how to turn tears from aches and pains into smiles. And with a vast majority of youth sports injuries, that can be accomplished with over-the-counter (OTC) remedies that are easy to stock.

Include the following in your youth sports first-aid kit:

- Children's MOTRIN® (2-11 years)
- Children's TYLENOL® (2-11 years)
- MOTRIN® IB (12 years and older)
- TYLENOL® (12 years and older)
- NEOSPORIN®
- BAND-AID® Brand Adhesive Bandages in assorted sizes
- BAND-AID® Brand of First Aid Products gauze pads in assorted sizes
- COACH® Athletic Tape
- Tweezers
- Elastic wraps
- Cardboard splints, pillows, or commercial splint
- Finger splints
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Isopropyl alcohol
- Instant ice packs
- Latex gloves
- Pen light
- Scissors
- Arm sling
- Wound-care spray
- CPR pocket mask



TAKE A TIME OUT

If your child suffers an injury, talk to your pediatrician if you have questions about whether Children's MOTRIN® or Children's TYLENOL® is an appropriate choice for pain relief.* These are not recommended for headaches related to suspected concussions.

Use Products Only as Directed.

NEOSPORIN® and BAND-AID® Brand of First Aid Products are brands marketed by Johnson & Johnson Consumer Inc. TYLENOL® and MOTRIN®, are brands marketed by Johnson & Johnson Consumer Inc., McNeil Consumer Healthcare Division.

TREATING THE MOST COMMON INJURIES

Football is a physical sport. Players will come home with bumps and bruises once in a while, but most can be treated with a little ice, rest, and TLC.

Here are three of the most common injuries ...

NAME OF INJURY	DEFINITION	TREATMENT
Sprains	A stretch or tear of a ligament (tissue that joins the end of one bone to another), usually around a joint.	Use the R.I.C.E. method (see below).
Bruises	Small blood vessels below the skin break, allowing blood to leak into tissue around them.	Apply ice to your child's bruise to help start the healing process. After three days, rotate hot and cold twice a day for 15 minutes each. As the pain goes down, his or her range of motion will start to return.
Cuts/Scrapes	An injury that rubs or tears off skin but is not deep and may sometimes bleed. It's most commonly caused by accidents or falls.	Stop the bleeding with pressure from a towel. Ice the wound, then apply a sterile gauze pad, like a BAND-AID® Brand Gauze Pad, and elevate the body part. If you can't stop the bleeding with pressure, it might need stitches. Call 9-1-1 or go to your local emergency room. For minor injuries, consult with your pediatrician.

Recover with R.I.C.E.

For most minor injuries, recovery comes in four steps:

REST: Reduce your child's activity and help him or her avoid using the injured area for at least 48 hours — or longer if your pediatrician advises. If your child is concerned about staying in shape while healing, ask about alternative activities.

ICE: Wrap an ice pack in a thin cloth and hold it on your child's injured area for 20 minutes at a time, once an hour, as needed. Never put ice directly on skin.

COMPRESSION: Ask your pediatrician about wraps that can help apply gentle pressure (squeezing) to your child's injured area. Never wrap any body part too tightly.

ELEVATION: If possible, raise your child's injured area above heart level to decrease swelling.

/ HEALTH & SAFETY


**HEADS UP
FOOTBALL**

CREATING A NEW STANDARD IN SAFETY

USA Football's Heads Up Football program is a comprehensive approach to teaching youth organizations and high schools a better and safer way to play football.

The program focuses on:

- Equipment fitting
- Health and safety
- Tackling and blocking fundamentals

4 REASONS WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

1 FUNDAMENTALS

Focuses on age-appropriate methods of learning and teaches techniques to fit a player's progression in skills and development.

2 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Protects your child on and off the field through a comprehensive health and safety curriculum covering:

- Concussion recognition and response
- Heat preparedness
- Hydration
- Sudden cardiac arrest

3 EQUIPMENT THAT FITS

Covers the proper way to size and fit helmets and shoulder pads to decrease risk of injury on the field.

4 COACHING CERTIFICATION

Coaches are able to get certified with the help of USA Football and the nation's leading football and medical experts that have created content for our nationally accredited coaching certifications.

Watch more on
Heads Up Football.

Learn more about USA Football's Heads Up Football program at www.usafootball.com/headsup.



A concussion is a traumatic brain injury, and you should feel comfort in knowing the people coaching your child can identify the signs and symptoms.

Make sure your league has sufficient answers to the following questions provided by Children's National Health System:

Does the league have a general policy in how it manages concussions?

Does the league have access to healthcare professionals with knowledge and training in sport-related concussions?

Are coaches required to take a concussion education and training course?

Who is responsible for the sideline concussion recognition and response test for athletes with suspected concussions during practice and games?

Do coaches have readily available tools like concussion signs and symptoms cards, clipboards, fact sheets, smartphone apps, etc, during practices and games to guide proper recognition and response of a suspected concussion?

Does the league provide concussion education for parents, and what is the policy for informing parents of a concussion? What is the policy for allowing a child to return back to the game?

Does it coincide with USA Football, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and state concussion laws, which stress that athletes only be allowed to return to play after being cleared by a qualified medical professional?

Does the league teach proper techniques and fundamentals? If a player demonstrates unsafe technique during a practice or game, do the coaches re-instruct them on the spot?

Are there limitations to the amount of contact in practices? How often does practice include live contact? Is that any different than past years?

How amenable is the league, team, and coach to accepting feedback from parents about their children's head safety?

[Learn more about concussions.](#)



/ PERFORMANCE

REASONS FOR YOUR CHILD TO PLAY MORE THAN ONE SPORT

Participation numbers are dropping for many youth sports because children are focusing on a single sport at earlier ages.

Driven by year-round travel clubs and the availability of indoor practice facilities, parents are spending more money and time to specialize early.

Encourage children to play a variety of sports while they have the chance. According to medical experts, taking part in a variety of activities leads to greater skill and muscle development.

The numbers behind multi-sport and going pro.

5 COMMON MYTHS

about athletes who focus on a single sport:



Most college athletes specialize in one sport as a child. Eighty-eight percent of college athletes played more than one sport in high school.

The only way to build the skills necessary to play at the college level is to focus on one sport. Children who play multiple sports tend to be more physically developed than those who limit themselves to one sport.

Young athletes need to play year-round to stay in shape and avoid injury. Athletes who play just one sport are 70- 93 percent more likely to get hurt.

Kids who spend their time in one sport are more likely to stay active throughout their lives. Children who specialize in a single sport early in life are more likely to burn out and stop participating altogether.

The only way to truly love a sport is to start early and stick with it. Playing multiple sports statistically produces longer playing careers, better confidence, improved athletic development, and less chance of burnout.



Coaching is teaching, and like in the classroom, youth football coaches must stick to subjects that their players can first understand then put into action.

Right age. Right stage.

Every age group requires a different approach to training and development so young athletes can get the best and most appropriate training.

The five stages of development

Children learn through play, exploration and problem solving. They have shorter attention spans and process information differently.

While all children are different, most follow a distinct progression throughout athletics.

- 1 Discover, learn and play (ages 0-12).**
Kids are taught basic movement skills of the sport and learn to love the game
- 2 Develop and challenge (ages 10-16).**
Playing for the fun of the sport means focusing on skill development
- 3 Train and compete (ages 13-19).**
Adolescence brings explosion of physical, mental, emotional and social growth
- 4 Excel for high performance or participate and succeed (ages 15+).**
Focus on strength, speed and power for skill development in a competitive environment
- 5 Mentor and thrive (active for life).**
A business led by advanced coaches with a focus on winning

/ COMMUNICATION



©James Smith, Courtesy of Dallas Cowboys

10 PHRASES YOUR CHILD SHOULD HEAR OFTEN

Words have the power to encourage and motivate just as easily as they can hurt and discourage.

Your child will remember general tones, approaches, and phrases heard most often. Avoid the negative and foster healthy self-esteem, strength, and confidence in your child by picking the right words.

- 1 **"I love you."** You may think it is going in one ear and out the other, but trust that this phrase will stay with your child.
- 2 **"I am proud of you."** Look into your child's eyes and say it every day and before and after every game, win or lose.
- 3 **"I believe in you."** Self-confidence can be a struggle for some children. Having your child know you believe in what he or she is doing no matter what is a great foundation.
- 4 **"How was your day?"** Let your child know that you care about things other than sports.
- 5 **"You can do this."** Encourage your child to never quit, to keep pursuing dreams, and to overcome challenges when things get tough.
- 6 **"I forgive you."** Your child may say the wrong things during emotional times, like right after a loss. Put moments like that in the past and learn to forgive.
- 7 **"You've got to forgive yourself."** Any frustrations your child shows are nothing compared to what is going on inside their head.
- 8 **"I am listening."** Put down your phone, iPad, or TV remote and look your child in the eyes.
- 9 **"What do you think?"** Start a conversation with your child, even if you may not agree with what is going on.
- 10 **"Let's talk."** Don't give up on your child, even when it seems like you are being shut out. Let your child know you are always there.

4 EXPRESSIONS TO AVOID SAYING ONCE YOU LEAVE THE FIELD

The car ride home after a game or practice can be a magnet for emotionally charged comments that could later lead to regret.

After a disappointing loss or performance, silence is a valid option if you aren't sure what your child wants to hear.

Here are four things you should avoid with your child after a hard loss:



- 1 **"If only you hadn't ..."** Remember to give kids some credit. They know their performance wasn't great and probably feel bad about it. Reliving it could just make things worse.
- 2 **"We worked on this."** Let the coaches coach, and instead focus on giving your child the support he or she needs instead of discussing missed opportunities on the field.
- 3 **"Why didn't the coach put you in?"** Avoid asking why your child's playing time dwindled or why they lost a starting spot. It will only demoralize and discourage— and maybe even plant ideas that weren't there to begin with.
- 4 **"I've seen you play harder than that."** Effort and performance are unrelated, especially at younger levels. Avoid making kids feel like they have to please you while out on the field. Athletes who aren't trying their best already know.

Visit www.usafootball.com/parent for more tips on communicating with your player.

Original content provided by:
Janis Meredith, Author, Sports Parenting Survival Guide

/ COMMUNICATION

7 WAYS TO BUILD MENTAL TOUGHNESS IN YOUR CHILD



Athletes can practice and prepare to get their bodies in the best shape for a game, but getting prepared mentally is a different thing. Fear of failure is real and affects how athletes perform, regardless of their age.

- 1 Look to the future.** Everyone loses once in a while, but that doesn't make it easy. Help your child put that last play behind them and focus on the next opportunity.
- 2 Focus on the positive.** Even after near-perfect performances, it's natural for players to dwell on one or two failures. Help your child focus on successes and how to learn from failures in order to overcome them.
- 3 Don't punish every mistake.** Not every misstep needs to be addressed. Don't step in until mistakes become a habit that needs to be corrected.
- 4 Don't show disappointment.** Your job as a parent is to help your child build confidence, so encourage, support, and just be there.
- 5 Let them own it.** When young athletes can accept that they make mistakes, that is when progression starts.
- 6 Be their rock.** Emotions ride high during games, and coaches and players sometimes overreact to what is going on. Your job is to show your child how to handle both success and failure in a mature fashion.
- 7 Repeat after me.** In the end, belief has to come from within. Create a mantra for your child to say over and over when times get tough. "Let's do it," "I believe," and "I got this," are all powerful starting points.

QUESTIONS

TO ASK YOUR CHILD'S COACH

Your role as a parent of an athlete is to support, encourage, volunteer and guide them through the ups and downs of every season.

While it's the coach's job to instruct, you must become comfortable with the process and be aware of what your child is doing.

What are your thoughts on playing time? Know up front whether your coach's main focus is winning or development. At the younger levels, the final score should not matter. As athletes advance, a coach's job might be tied to the team's performance.

Do you have first-aid training? Don't assume that coaches can do anything more than apply a BAND-AID® Brand Adhesive Bandage. Insist that someone on staff is present at all games and practices, knows CPR and can identify both heat illness and sudden cardiac arrest.

What is your emergency action plan? If an emergency does occur, are you prepared to react? Is there proper cellphone coverage at all practice and game sites? Are there automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) and cooling tubs available nearby?

How can I help? This answer might surprise you. While every league and school welcomes volunteers to do the work behind the scenes, the coach's No. 1 request might be, "Please get your child to practice and games on time."

Do you have a child on the team? Don't jump to conclusions. If the coach says, "yes," seek assurances that favoritism will not be an ongoing problem throughout the season.

Original content provided by:
Janis Meredith, Author, Sports Parenting Survival Guide



SPORTS = INCREASED HAPPINESS

Kids who play sports show higher self-esteem, are less depressed and more satisfied with their lives.

TEACHES TEAMWORK

Working and playing as a team, it's one of the best lessons a young athlete can learn while participating in a sport. From understanding how actions can affect teammates to working with others, sports teach young athletes unparalleled life lessons in teamwork.

THE VALUE OF SPORTS

The value of sports goes far beyond the wins, losses, plays and games. In fact, the more children start participating in sports, the more likely they are to stay active as they grow older. And that is just the start to all of the benefits.

AFFECTS FUTURE CAREER SUCCESS

The benefits of youth sports can extend into the workplace. A survey of 400 female executives found 94 percent played a sport and 61 percent had contributed the lessons they learned to help them succeed in their career.

INSTILLS TIME-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Adding extracurricular activities, such as sports, can teach your child the importance of time management and prioritization of commitments. Parents can help their children prioritize their commitments, schoolwork and chores by creating a plan to help them handle their responsibilities while leaving enough time for sports.

/ VALUES **25****FOSTERS PERSEVERANCE**

Mistakes. Lost games. Errors. Every athlete will have a horrible game. It's how they overcome and fix the mistakes that matters the most. Participating in a sport teaches young athletes a valuable lesson of overcoming adversity and persevering when the odds seem against them.

DEVELOP AND IMPROVE COGNITIVE SKILLS

Organized sports help children develop and improve cognitive skills and is associated with improved academic achievement, attitude, concentration and behavior.

RTS

ENCOURAGES GOAL SETTING

From improving a particular technique or skill to mastering a position, participating in sports plays a huge role in how children learn the aspects of goal setting and achieving personal success.

NURTURES A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

The most obvious benefit of participating in sports at a young age is it teaches the importance of fitness. Staying active starts a life-long habit of living a healthy lifestyle.

/ VALUES

BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH OPPORTUNITY

Confidence and opportunity are two of the most important things that you and youth football coaches can give players.

For some, things come easy, and their personalities exude confidence. Others struggle to believe in themselves enough to give their best effort.

Confidence is something you can instill and improve by exhibiting great energy, providing positive feedback, and showing your child you know how hard they are working.



4 PHRASES THAT INSTILL CONFIDENCE

As your child leaves and prepares to join their teammates, choose your words wisely as they will carry those words with them onto the field.

Original content provided by:
Craig Sigl, Author, MentalToughnessTrainer.com

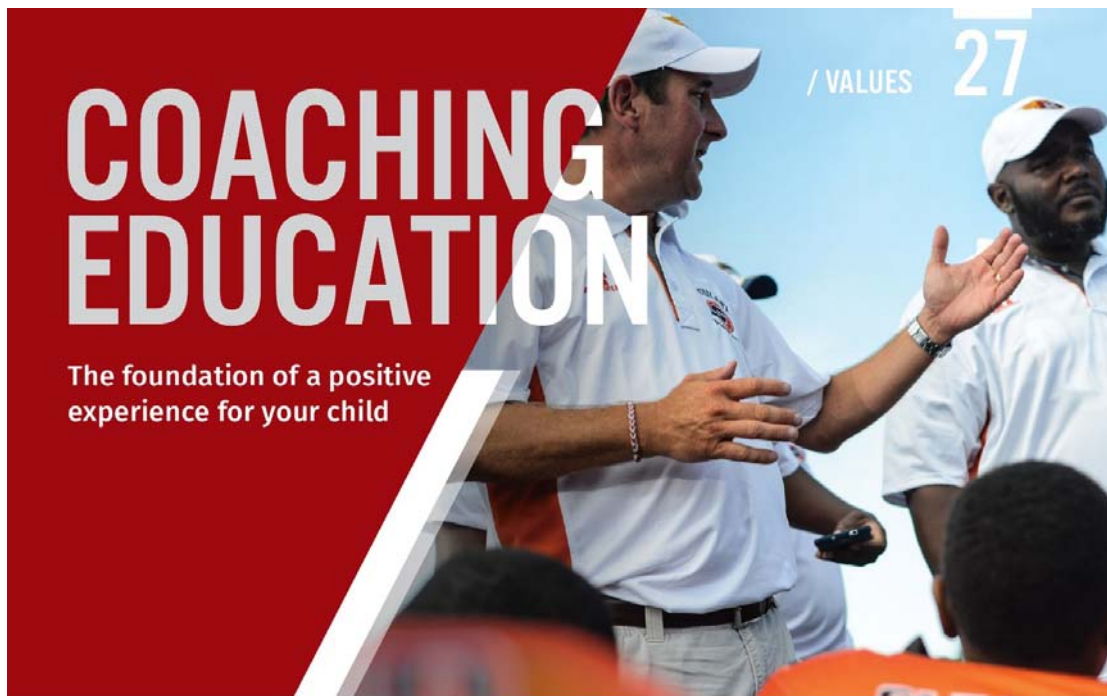
SHOULD SAY ...

- "You can do it."*
- "We're rooting for you."*
- "You are awesome."*
- "You've done it before. You can do it again."*

DON'T SAY ...

- "Woah, those guys look big."*
- "Don't screw up."*
- "It can't be as bad as last time."*
- "Make me proud."*

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COACHING EDUCATION

The foundation of a positive experience for your child

Many youth sports coaches are volunteers, and only five to 10 percent of these coaches will receive relevant training related to the sport they are coaching. The value of coaching education goes way beyond the wins and losses.

Longer engagement in sports

Sports can play a positive role in your child's life, and playing for a trained coach lessens the chance of dropout. Athletes who play for untrained coaches drop out at a rate of 26 percent compared to five percent of those who play for a trained coach.

Chance of a positive experience

As a parent, a fun experience should be the No. 1 goal for your child. Ultimately, it is your child's coach who can make or break the desire to keep playing. Studies show that coaches who have received proper coaching education are better at establishing a fun-filled and stress-free environment that keeps children engaged.

Reduce injuries on the field

Coaches with proper coaching education and development teach age-appropriate fundamentals, techniques and drills properly, effectively reducing the risk of injury.

We wouldn't send our children to schools with teachers who haven't received proper training, and the same should go for coaches.

PRO TIP:

Football parents, check out www.usafootball.com/parent to see if your coaches have taken a step toward a new standard in football.



USA FOOTBALL

THE POWER OF A STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM

Running a successful football program can be challenging, especially when costs surpass what registration fees and budgets can handle. Fundraising is a key component of creating a solid foundation for your program.

USA Football offers organizations the opportunity to gain additional funds through fundraising partners.

FUNDRAISING CAN:

- 1 ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF YOUR PROGRAM
- 2 SAFEGUARD YOUR BUDGET
- 3 MAKE THE GAME BETTER AND SAFER FOR PLAYERS

FUNDRAISING PARTNERS

Everyone needs help with fundraising, and our partners offer a wide variety of options to best suit your program's needs.



SpiritCups Fundraising programs help youth football organizations raise money through the sale of officially licensed SpiritCups and SpiritTravelCups - featuring the all 32 NFL, 30 MLB, 30 NHL, over 100 colleges and U.S. Military designs.



FlipGive is a unique fundraising tool that allows you and your supporters to shop online with popular brands and raise money for your team, club, school or cause. Fundraisers earn up to 50% back when they and their friends shop online with popular brands like Nike, Under Armour, Starbucks, ALDO and many more! It's fast. It's easy. It's 100% free. To start a fundraising campaign, visit usafootball.flipgive.com.



Super Fan Fundraising is the only company to offer officially-licensed merchandise from the NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, NASCAR, and top COLLEGES around the country. Featuring a wide variety of TERVIS Tumblers, Super Fan also has the ability to make CUSTOM Tervis Tumblers with your team name and logo. With your organization receiving up to \$10 profit for each item sold, Super Fan is the Fundraiser to help you this football season!

Learn more about how you can receive the power of a strong support system. Visit www.usafootball.com/fundraising and see what options are right for you.

TYLENOL® and MOTRIN® are not affiliated with SpiritCups™, FlipGive, or SuperFan®, who are sponsoring partners of USA Football.



/ VALUES 29

THE BENEFITS OF FREE PLAY

Free play teaches children about leadership and problem solving that an organized, coach-led team may not allow.

Children who grow up on the playground and compete for the fun of it have an advantage because they adapt to different roles depending on whom they play with.

Here are six skills children can learn from free play:

- 1 Physical skills.** Simple games such as tag, follow the leader, and ping-pong address important skills including speed, reaction time, hand-eye coordination, balance, and how to fall down.
- 2 Footwork.** The same crossovers, lead steps, and backpedals players use in football are there in basketball, soccer, tennis, lacrosse, dodgeball, and dozens of other sports.
- 3 Mental balance.** If you play enough games around the house or at the park, you are going to lose a few. Dealing with disappointment is a key lesson for children.
- 4 Courage.** It's hard competing against older, more talented kids. By stretching the boundaries of comfort, children go beyond what they may think is possible.
- 5 Visualization.** Whether riding a bike, bearing down on a skateboard, or trying not to get tackled, it's about keeping your head up and watching the angles.
- 6 Decision making.** With no adults in charge on the field, kids are pretty good at finding common ground. After all, everyone wants to get back to the game.

Original content provided by:
Ken Taylor, Author, howtobefaster.com

A group of football players in red jerseys and helmets, with the USA Football logo overlaid. The players are wearing red jerseys with "TERPS" and "HOWARD COUNTY" visible. The USA Football logo features a stylized American flag and the text "USA FOOTBALL".

USA Football leads the game's development for youth, high school and other amateur players. USA Football advances coaching education and player skill development for safer play and positive experiences through athletics.

Visit www.usafootball.com to learn more.



HEADS UP FOOTBALL

Heads Up Football® is a USA Football program designed to create a better, safer game through important standards rooted in education.



U.S. NATIONAL TEAM

USA Football manages the U.S. National Team in football, which represents the United States in international competitions and IFAF World Championships.



NFL FLAG powered by USA Football provides opportunities for children ages 5-17 to enjoy America's favorite sport while wearing NFL gear.



7ON7

USA Football's 7on7 program was built by high school coaches with the core principles centered around professionally organized and managed events featuring high quality competition with top high school programs from each region, certified high school officials and a high volume of games allowing for maximum repetitions.



FUNDAMENTALS

USA Football's Fundamentals program introduces children to football by teaching basic skills in a fun, non-contact, energetic environment.



Players and parents learn proper tackling fundamentals, concussion education and helmet fitting during annual Protection Tour stops.

USA FOOTBALL GRANTS PROGRAM

USA Football annually awards more than two million dollars in Equipment, AED and Field Building Grants. Is your youth or high school Football Team in need of new equipment, a lifesaving AED, or assistance in building a field? Make sure they apply for a USA Football Grant at www.usafootball.com/grants.



Nearly 20 percent of children ages 6-12 in the United States are inactive, meaning they do not participate in any of the 100 sports or activities recognized by the Physical Activity Council.

As a result, about 17 percent of U.S. children and teens – more than 12 million – are obese.

Regular physical activity in children and teens:

- Improves strength and endurance
- Builds healthy bones and muscles
- Helps control weight
- Reduces anxiety and stress
- Increases self-esteem
- May improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels

Playing sports has shown to help improve students' academic performance, including:

- Academic achievement and grades
- Time management
- Concentration and attentiveness in the classroom

PRO TIP: To combat what the Center for Disease Control (CDC) calls a "health epidemic in young people," the American Academy of Pediatricians (AAP) encourages all children and teens to be physically active and play sports, including football.



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PARENT GUIDE TO ORDERING TEAM GEAR

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Kick off a new season using SquadLocker's® online Store Builder for your custom apparel needs. Add your logo and create your store with top athletic brands for you, your youth player and the rest of the team to purchase from.



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Play ON OUR Team

JOIN THE OFFICIAL YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL PROGRAM OF THE NFL

NFL FLAG is the only flag league that allows your child to play for the NFL

NFL FLAG powered by USA Football is a fun and exciting sport played year-round by boys and girls ages 5-17. Players enjoy the fast-paced nature of football in a non-contact environment while coaches and league organizers are held to the highest standards for coaching credibility and safety through the USA Football certification program. USA Football is the national governing body of the sport and the official youth football partner of the NFL.

WHAT YOUR PLAYER RECEIVES:

- ☑ NFL FLAG reversible team jersey
- ☑ Official NFL FLAG football belt and flags
- ☑ USA Football joint parent/player membership
- ☑ Opportunity to compete at Regional Tournaments held in eight different NFL markets
- ☑ Opportunity to compete at NFL FLAG Championships held at the Super Bowl

Find a league in your area, and learn more about NFL FLAG by visiting www.nflflag.com.



USA FOOTBALL THANKS OUR PARTNERS FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT TO HELP US CREATE A BETTER, SAFER GAME.

