

Irvine Ranch Little League

Character. Courage. Loyalty.

Little League International Mission Statement

Little League Baseball, Incorporated is a non-profit organization whose mission is to “promote, develop, supervise, and voluntarily assist in all lawful ways, the interest of those who will participate in Little League Baseball and Softball.”

Through proper guidance and exemplary leadership, the Little League program assists children in developing the qualities of citizenship, discipline, teamwork and physical well-being. By espousing the virtues of character, courage and loyalty, the Little League Baseball and Softball program is designed to develop superior citizens rather than superior athletes.

Youth Sports Have Many Benefits

Fun

Leadership

Teamwork

Physical Activity

Peer Socialization

Self-Esteem

There is a Dark Side

Injury - Traumatic and Overuse

(Too) Early Specialization

Overemphasis on “Winning” and pressure to “Excel”

Inappropriate expectations of achieving scholarships/professional career

Money and Time

Attrition - those who drop out no longer receive the benefits

FACTS:

70% of youth discontinue organized sports by the age of 13

At least 50% of injuries are due to overuse

3-11% of High School athletes compete at the college level

1% of High School athletes receive any scholarship

.03-.5% of High School athletes reach professional level

Guidance

Primary Focus - fun and lifelong physical activity

Rest / Recovery / Injury Prevention

Variety - playing multiple sports decreases injuries, stress, and burnout

Early Diversification and Later Specialization = greater chance of lifetime sports involvement, lifetime physical fitness, and possibly elite participation

General recommendation: hold off on specialization until age 12-14 (for baseball)

Why Kids Play Sports

9 out of 10 youth in survey after survey report FUN as the the reason.

What makes it FUN (George Washington University - 2014):

1. Trying your best
2. When the coach treats a player with respect
3. Getting playing time
4. Playing well as a team
5. Getting along with teammates
6. Being active

Further Down the Line:

48. Winning

63. Playing in tournaments

66. Private training with specialized coaches

81. Taking team pictures

Summary: Kids want excitement, support, and positive interactions with peers and adults

Why Kids Quit

Intrapersonal:

Not Having Fun

Anxiety and Nervousness Due to Excessive Criticism

Pressure from Coaches and Not Getting Along with Coaches

continued...

Interpersonal:

Parental Pressure and Loss of Ownership (excessive involvement and pressure from parents)

Not having enough time to participate in other activities

continued...

Structural Constraints:

Injuries

Overuse / Burnout

Lack of Playing Time

Too Much Structure - not enough time for free play or just being a kid

Increasing Youth Engagement

Redefine goals away from winning towards having fun

Balance parental involvement and decrease pressure about winning

Encourage multiple sport participation (especially 6-12 year olds)

Enable children to have autonomy and ownership (it's about them, not you)

What Parents Can Do

Positive parenting through appropriate praise and emphasis on fun over winning

Focus on goals of skill acquisition and effort

Positive reinforcement before, during, and after games and practices

Avoid the dreaded car drive home!!

Promote desired behaviors:

Sportsmanship, Punctuality, Preparedness, Commitment, Perseverance

Tips For Parents

1. Remember winning isn't important
2. Focus on your child's enjoyment
3. Don't pressure your child to perform
4. Don't live out our dreams through your child
5. Understand your child won't play professionally (probably)
6. Allow your child to choose and sample multiple sports
7. Let the coach do the coaching and don't undermine coaching decisions (but do communicate concerns in a positive, productive way if necessary).
8. Volunteer
9. Display good body language at games

continued

10. Don't compare your child to other players
11. Never yell at officials
12. Treat you child the same after a win or a loss
13. Cheer for all players on the team
14. Know Your Role - Players play, Coaches coach, Umpires umpire, and Spectators watch!!

IRLL Sportsmanship

Double Goal Coaching - strive to win while pursuing the more important goal of teaching life lessons through baseball.

Second Goal Parent - ensuring children take away from sports lessons that will help them be successful in life.

Read more at Positive Coaching Alliance and/or take the free quick parent course at Little League International's website!!

Honoring the Game Award for Sportsmanship - each team's coach selects one player who best exemplifies the ROOTS of Honoring the Game (next slide)

IRLL - ROOTS and Honoring the Game

We strive to Honor the Game through ROOTS:

Rules - make the game fair - respect the spirit and the letter of the rules

Opponents - a worthy opponent is a gift that make us better and allows for play

Officials - are guides to fairness and are to be respected even if they are wrong

Teammates - behave in a way that teammates, school, and family will be proud

Self - live up to our own standards even when others don't

Resources and References

Little League International - website

Little League University - website

Positive Coaching Alliance - website

Changing the Game Project - website

American Academy of Pediatrics - Sports Specialization and Intensive Training in Young Athletes

USA Baseball Long Term Athlete Development Plan