

Supporting a Coach's Discipline

Sooner or later, kids are going to get in trouble and a coach is going to take some form of corrective action. These actions can range from a discussion to a game suspension. There are four basic approaches that parents can take in response to a coach's corrective measures. They are:

1. **Ignore the Problem** - If kids know that their parents saw the coach's actions, they will expect to hear about it from their parents. To kids, ignoring the problem may seem like either parents are not interested or too embarrassed to discuss the matter.
2. **Criticize the Coach** - Whether a parent agrees with a coach's actions or not, any criticism of the coach in front of a child will only undermine the coach's ability to work with the child in the future and can even interfere with a kid's ability to work with future coaches. If the coach is the problem, parents must find other ways to deal with the issue rather than discussing the matter with or in front of their child.
3. **Double the Discipline** - Some parents may feel the need to add their own corrective actions to a coach's in the form of a lecture or a grounding. This method does increase the consequences for a player's mistake. However, the surest way for a player to avoid this double penalty for future mistakes is to quit playing sports. In the majority of cases, a coach's discipline is sufficient.
4. **Explain the Coach's Actions** - Sometimes kids know what they need to do differently and sometimes they can be confused by a coach's comments. For example, a coach's comment about a lack of "hustle" may be attributed to other factors. Parents need to work with their child and coach, if necessary, to help their child understand the things that can be done differently.

Of the four approaches, the last is always preferable. Discussing matters calmly and in a positive way can help children learn to deal with issues by themselves. Coaches may not always be justified in their reaction to a problem. However, the way a parent handles these situations helps shape the way a child handles criticism. By directing a child towards working on things they control such as performance and attitude and away from things they cannot control, parents create kids who are better able to deal with criticism in all areas of life.

(source: sportsesteem.com)