

Why do you attend your child's games?

Make sure they know that you are there because it is fun for you to watch them participate, not because you want to criticize."

Kids want support, not another coach

"Asked what embarrasses them most, every single child surveyed listed parents hollering plays or instructions from the sideline or stands."

"A good way to determine whether the sideline comments are helpful and supportive is to ask the children what they prefer to hear on the sideline, if anything."

Sideline Comments

"Kids playing a sport of near-continuous motion (basketball, soccer, hockey, lacrosse) make two decisions each second, according to Dan Whitham, a Boston-area coach and children's physical education teacher. Do you think you will help by adding yet a third piece of information to each second? The kids may hear you, but can they understand you? If they can understand you, by the time they can act on it, your command is probably obsolete. Everyone else has moved to a different spot."

"If you've ever driven a car with three kids screaming and fighting in the backseat, think about this: Does it tend to pull your attention away from the task at hand? Do you ever feel overloaded? If you add more pressure to that car ride, such as an icy road, can you handle all that at once? That's exactly what coaches do when they yell at kids to do something: They distract them. They create "cognitive overload."

"Because the game is constantly moving, words from parents often reach the ears of little children after those words are helpful. For example, if someone yells "Shoot the ball," by the time the child processes that command, the ball may be somewhere else and the child no longer has the shot."

Sideline Guideline

"When watching a youth sports game, if you can't carry on a normal conversation with the person next to you then you're probably paying too much attention to the game."

Ethics

"Young players play with great deal of fairness and sportsmanship. Once they learn how important the game is to the adults, they'll learn how to cheat."

"Parents and coaches need to remember that if officials can hear profanity and other verbal abuse directed at them when a call goes against the team, the children on the field can also hear it."



The Family Circus BIL KEANE



"The reason they can play that good is their parents aren't yelling at them from the sidelines."