

Sportsmanship

What Is Good Sportsmanship?

Good sportsmanship is when people who are playing or watching a sport treat each other with respect. This includes players, parents, coaches, and officials.

How Can Kids Learn to Be Good Sports?

Kids might not know how to show they are good sports. Teach them that good sports:

- Have a positive attitude.
- Give their best effort.
- Shake hands with the other team before and after the game.
- Support teammates by saying "good shot" or "good try". Never criticize a teammate for trying.
- Accept calls and don't argue with officials.
- Treat the other team with respect and never tease or bully.
- Follow the rules of the game.
- Help another player up who has fallen.
- Take pride in winning but don't rub it in.
- Accept a loss without whining or making excuses.

What's a Parent's Role in Good Sportsmanship?

Kids learn how to be a good sport from the adults in their lives, especially their parents and their coaches. As soon as your child starts competing in sports, it's important to be a good role model. And any teams your child plays on should have coaches that encourage good sportsmanship.

Show your good sportsmanship:

- Keep sideline comments positive and encouraging.
- Don't bad-mouth coaches, players, or officials. If you have a serious concern, talk privately with the coach or official.
- After a competition, don't focus on who won or lost. Instead, try asking, "What did you do well during the game?" "Was there something you wish you could have done better?" If your child feels there was something that could have gone better, offer to work on it together before the next game.
- Applaud good plays, no matter who makes them.
- Congratulate the winners, even if they're on the other team.

- Look for examples of good sportsmanship in professional athletes and point them out to your kids. Talk about the bad examples too, and why they upset you.

If you are a coach for your child's team, be fair and positive and encourage the players to do the same.

Parents and coaches who emphasize good sportsmanship help young athletes learn respect for others and self-control. These skills can help them manage other parts of their lives, and help them develop into mature, respectful, and successful young adults.

From KidsHealth.org

Reviewed by: Amy W. Anzilotti, MD

Date reviewed: February 2019