

Sports Parenting in 10 Sentences

by Anne Josephson

1 word: Hi. Greet your child when they get in the car with “Hi” before you ask about practice, the score of the game or homework.

2 words: Have fun. In all likelihood you’ve heard this statistic: 70% of kids quit sports before they turn 13 for the primary reason that they are not having fun. Encourage and remind your kids to have fun.

3 words: Tell me more. Before forming an opinion or dispensing advice, ask for more information from your child. This will force them to tell more of the story and give you more information as to what is actually happening.

4 words: Good job. Keep working. Doc Rivers, head coach of the Los Angeles Clippers and parent of a NBA player suggests these four words. Rivers notes that as parents we are often tempted to say more and analyze their kid’s performance, but saying only this might be what’s best for the kid who simply needs support.

5 words: What’s new in your world? Ask your kids general questions that are not about gymnastics. Even if the reply is “nothing” it gives you the opportunity to share something about your day.

6 words: I love to watch you play. Best six words ever.

7 words: So what do you think about that? You know your opinion, so before you jump to tell your child what it is, ask what his/her opinion is. You are not only learning more about what your child thinks but are also helping develop critical thinking skills.

8 words: Is there something I can do to help? Before you give a solution or an action plan, ask if that is what the child really wants. Sometimes all the child wants to do is blow off some steam, and we jump directly to “solving” the problem.

9 words: You are more important to me than your achievements. You may be thinking that of course this is true. But remind your child of it. In the absence of hearing this from you, your children might think that one of the reasons you love them is because of what they do, not because of who they are.

10 words: No matter what, I’m glad that I am your parent. To be loved wholly and completely for exactly who we are, flaws and all, is the greatest gift one person can give another. Please give that gift to your child.