



How to get involved and help your kids enjoy sport

Source article: Furusa, M. G., Knight, C. J., & Hill, D. M. (2021). Parental involvement and children's enjoyment in sport. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 13(6), 936-954.

The challenge



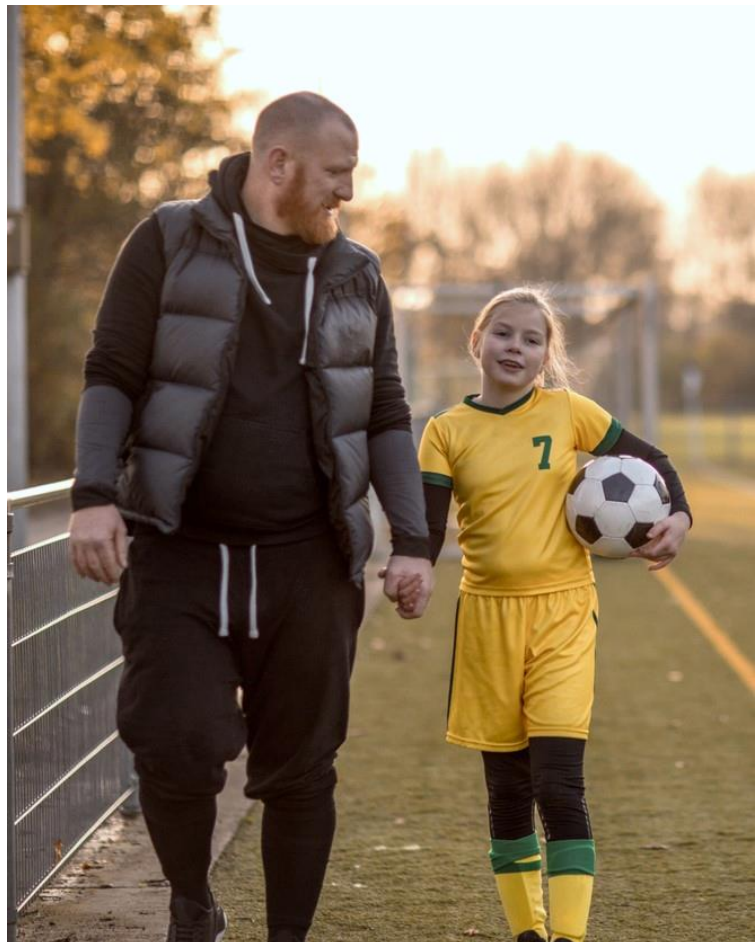
We have known for a long time that one of the major contributors to whether children 12 years and under stay in sport or not, is whether they enjoy it.



(McCarthy et al., 2008)

We also know that one of the major factors influencing enjoyment, is parental involvement.

Explore the insights for parents, coaches and clubs below and find out how best to involve parents in children's sport.





Insights for parents



Show you care

- Assist with, prioritise and show you value your children's participation.
- Keep competition times/dates free so you can attend.
- Be punctual and organised for matches and training sessions.
- Remind your children what they need to pack for training and matches. This might include creating a checklist.



Recognise needs and wants

- Think about what your children needs and wants before, during and after a match, so they feel supported.
- Talk to your children about what they want to continue and take part in, rather than what you think they should be doing.



Communicate

- Build opportunities for communication, so you can understand how your children are feeling.
- Provide support and encouragement that focuses on effort rather than outcomes.
- Be aware of how you vocalise your support during a match and whether it aligns with your child's preferences.



Foster perspective and balance

- Make sure your children know that the sport they play is not what defines them.
- Allow your child to take part in things other than sport and have a 'normal life'. This makes sport more enjoyable, since it's not the only thing they do.
- Allow your child to disengage from sport once training or the match is over.





Insights for coaches and clubs



Inform parents

- Some parents have limited knowledge and experience of the sport their child is playing, so it's important to help educate them.
- Provide detailed information about training plans, competition rules and the more technical and tactical parts of the sport. This will help parents have more meaningful conversations with their children about the sport, where this is what the child wants.



Consider family commitments

- Recognise that parents are often juggling work and other commitments. Take this into consideration when scheduling training and matches.



Involve parents

- Consider the distance to the training location and where possible, improve access to both training and games.
- Encourage parents to attend training and games and consider how they can be more involved.



Organise social support networks

- Help parents with limited support from friends or family by organising social support networks, where parents can engage with each other and offer support where they can.

More information

Read the full [research paper](#) or learn more about the modern approach to coaching on the [Australian Sports Commission website](#).