

PCA's mission is to change the culture of youth sports so that every child, regardless of social or economic circumstance, has access to a positive, equitable sports experience. Parents/Caregivers play a crucial role in ensuring these outcomes. Positive Sports Parents/Caregivers contribute to a positive youth sport culture by supporting their athlete, their athlete's coach, and the team community in a way that creates a sense of belonging.

The Big Picture in Youth Sports

A Positive Sports Parent/Caregiver recognizes that there is a **small picture** and a **big picture** in youth sports. The **small picture** concerns things like whether their athlete is playing the right position, the team is winning, the coach's defensive strategy, etc. The **big picture**, which often gets drowned out by the little picture, is about what the athlete is learning from their sport experience - both inside and outside of the sports space.

The best way that parents/caregivers can support their athletes, their athlete's coaches, and the team community is by focusing on the **big picture** - the lifelong impact of the life skills developed within a positive, supportive youth sports experience.

The How

Parents/Caregivers can contribute to a developmental sports experience by:

- Reinforcing the life skills athletes develop during their sport
- Collaborating with their athletes on setting goals for their sports experience
- Showing empathy in interactions with their athlete by listening to understand and validate their perspectives
- Letting the Coaches coach and refraining from interfering with their game plans, strategy, etc.
- Understanding the principles of positive coaching and seeking out coaches/teams/programs that utilize tools to create the best possible sport experience for their athletes
- Engaging with and supporting the other parents/caregivers within the team community to create a sense of belonging

When parents/caregivers embrace their role as a Positive Sports Parent/Caregiver, it can transform the way they see and interact with their athlete. By providing their athletes support, building a positive parent/caregiver-coach partnership, and contributing to the team community, a positive sports parent can ensure the best experience for all involved.

This resource was adapted from an excerpt of Jim Thompson's Positive Sports Parenting.

