



THE CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC  
ATHLETIC CONFERENCE



THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION  
OF ATHLETIC DIRECTORS



THE CONNECTICUT HIGH SCHOOL  
COACHES ASSOCIATION

*Presents*

# PARENTING YOUR STUDENT-ATHLETE

*A supplement to the parenting DVD <http://www.caadinc.org/parentvideo.html>*

*Parents often claim “Things have changed since I was a kid” and of course they have. Today schools work hard to provide your sons and daughters with a well rounded educational experience. Part of that educational experience is the school’s athletic program.*

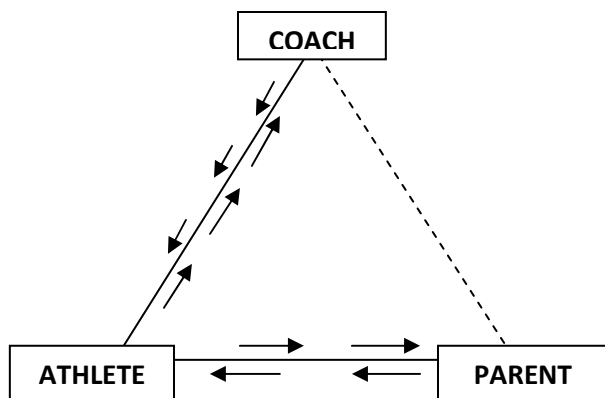
*Most parents are familiar with recreation and elite youth sports programs where parents are intimately involved in all aspects in the success of their child and in some cases they are actually coaching their child. We know it is difficult as a parent to “cut the cord” and relinquish your child’s prowess to another individual but this is how they will develop and grow into young adults. When your son or daughter enters into a school program there has to be a realization that they are being nudged out of the nest and being given the opportunity to fly on their own. This handout will hopefully help you better understand how as a parent you can help your son or daughter take those independent steps to fly on their own, and how the athletic program and the coach will be there to help with that growth.*

*As parents you should follow three main themes that will surely help your child have a very successful interscholastic sports experience.*

1. **“SUPPORT” your child, the team, the coach, and the entire program in a positive way** – Parents can also contribute to the success of a team. Supporting “everyone” involved in a positive way, not just their child will go a long way to help build team unity and provide a tremendous confidence builder. There is nothing worse for a child than the feeling that they have failed their parents. They need to know you have pride in them and love them win or lose and that you will always be there for them regardless of their performance.

2. **Make it “FUN”** – Research shows that the number one reason students participate in sports is to have fun. The school is providing a well designed program that will certainly provide vigorous and strenuous activity. All of that hard work is only rewarding when it is supplemented with fun. Parent’s screaming at their child, other players, the officials or the coach only creates a stressful environment. Parents need to relax and enjoy the game knowing that the coach and the school is doing everything in their power to help each child grow. Parents need to understand that it is not about “their” child but rather that the decisions and actions of the coach should best serve the entire “team.” Trying to coach ones son or daughter only undermines the entire program, and it never helps to be overly critical of your child’s performance. Most importantly parents need to make their child feel proud of their accomplishments regardless of their playing time or their position on the team.
  
3. **Keep it in “PERSPECTIVE”** – A parent needs to understand where their son or daughter fits into the big picture. Most of the time the athletes know exactly what role they play and how they are contributing to the team’s success. They may not be a starter, or getting the playing time a parent would like to see, but they are all contributing in some way and the athletes are aware of how. Coaches and athletes spend a lot of time together each day practicing working hard to prepare for the upcoming competition. Whether your child is one of the starters or is one of the players that work hard against the starters in practice, they are all contributing to the success of that team. Parents who become dissatisfied with the coach or the program are very often expressing their own personal desires and not that of their child. We are not saying that coaches don’t make mistakes, however continual criticism and back biting only serve as a destructive force affecting the entire team. Parents who have legitimate concerns should certainly feel free to communicate with their child’s coach but should observe these simple communication ground rules when they do.

**TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CHILD AND THEIR COACH**



Always use the communication triangle first. That is, channel all questions or comments about the program such as playing time, formations, plays or strategies through your own child. A good coach who is communicating to their team will equip their athletes with information that will very often answer parental questions. It may not always be the answer a parent may want to hear but it will be a tremendous way to help their child learn to communicate. If the athlete does not know the answer or says “I don’t know” then the parent should ask the athlete to obtain the answer from the coach. Speaking to the coach directly will complete the triangle between the parent and coach, but should only be done in matters of health and safety.

***When speaking to the coach or your child remember these tips:***

- ✓ ***Always be positive and in control of your emotions.***
- ✓ ***Before or after a game or during a practice or game is not a good time to approach a coach or an athlete.***
- ✓ ***Focus on your child’s best interest and not your own ego.***