

Try Hard

Coach Talk:

We're going to learn a lot of new soccer skills. It's important that you understand that we all get better when we learn something new by trying really hard. No one is born being a great soccer player. Learning means not being afraid to try and make mistakes. When you were a baby learning how to walk, you fell many times but you didn't give up. You kept trying until eventually you learned how to keep your balance and walk.

- What are some things that you are trying hard to learn or do?

Story:

Drew is on Maria's soccer team and also in her class at school. Drew's favorite thing about playing soccer is playing with his friends. Drew has only been playing soccer for one year. He likes soccer but sometimes finds it hard to learn some of the soccer skills. Today at practice, Coach taught the players how to juggle their soccer ball. Coach explained that you can juggle the ball with your feet, thighs or head. When you juggle, you try to touch the ball as many times as you can without letting the ball touch the ground.

Maria was very excited to learn this new skill. She knew it would be hard but she loved the challenge of learning something new. Drew on the other hand, was afraid that if he couldn't juggle well others would think that he wasn't a good soccer player. Maria explained to Drew that everyone has to learn new skills. No one is born with the ability to juggle. You learn new skills by trying hard. Even if you fail, you keep trying until you get it. Drew thought this sounded familiar. He could remember his mother saying that if at first you can't do something that you must try and try again until you can do it. Drew was going to keep this in mind and try hard to learn how to juggle. He knew it would take time but it would be worth it.

- Why is it important to try hard and give your best effort, even if you experience setbacks and failure?

Parents' Corner:

For most of us, it's uncomfortable to watch someone struggle while learning new things. In fact, our natural instinct is to try and rescue the person who is struggling. We may feel sorry for a child and want to help him/her out of a seemingly difficult and embarrassing situation. Why is that? In Western culture, we are quick to link academic success to intelligence, so we tend to think that people who struggle are just not that smart. We view struggling as a sign of weakness. Conversely in Eastern culture, struggle is seen as a predictable and natural part

learning. Everyone is expected to struggle while learning, so it's a chance to show you have the mental makeup to persist through the learning process. Struggle is often seen as a test for emotional strength. This is all very important because how a child views the act of struggling while learning something new profoundly affects their actual behavior.

"If you'll just try and be stubborn about trying, you can do whatever you set your mind to do."

Sonia Sotomayor