

/ COMMUNICATION

7 WAYS TO BUILD MENTAL TOUGHNESS IN YOUR CHILD



Athletes can practice and prepare to get their bodies in the best shape for a game, but getting prepared mentally is a different thing. Fear of failure is real and affects how athletes perform, regardless of their age.

- 1 Look to the future.** Everyone loses once in a while, but that doesn't make it easy. Help your child put that last play behind them and focus on the next opportunity.
- 2 Focus on the positive.** Even after near-perfect performances, it's natural for players to dwell on one or two failures. Help your child focus on successes and how to learn from failures in order to overcome them.
- 3 Don't punish every mistake.** Not every misstep needs to be addressed. Don't step in until mistakes become a habit that needs to be corrected.
- 4 Don't show disappointment.** Your job as a parent is to help your child build confidence, so encourage, support, and just be there.
- 5 Let them own it.** When young athletes can accept that they make mistakes, that is when progression starts.
- 6 Be their rock.** Emotions ride high during games, and coaches and players sometimes overreact to what is going on. Your job is to show your child how to handle both success and failure in a mature fashion.
- 7 Repeat after me.** In the end, belief has to come from within. Create a mantra for your child to say over and over when times get tough. "Let's do it," "I believe," and "I got this," are all powerful starting points.

