

PAL/SAY CODE OF ETHICS & BEHAVIOR FOR PARENTS

A Parent attending their child's game is, and should only be, a spectator. The referee is there to referee the game; the coach is there to coach the game. A parent is there to watch the game and cheer for his/her child and the child's team.

The following **CODE OF ETHICS AND BEHAVIOR** describes the type of conduct by parents and spectators that will help make their children's soccer season a more positive and rewarding experience.

Remember SAY's motto: "KIDS HAVING FUN!" If they're not having fun, find out why and seek to change it and make it happen.

Everyone should be having fun. That includes players, coaches, parents/spectators, officials and PAL Board Members. If we're not having fun and enjoying the PAL Soccer experience, we need to figure out why and remedy it.

Learn the game. Play soccer with your kids at home, even if it's just for five minutes a day. Take a referee or coaching course. Read about soccer and watch soccer matches on TV with your kids.

Promote fair play. Teach your child the "Golden Rule" - "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." - and apply it to all games and practices. Support and follow the rules.

Be supportive of all activities. Bring your child to games and practices on time and ready to play. Have him/her bring a ball, water, shinguards and appropriate footwear.

Refrain from using drug, alcohol and tobacco products at all youth events. Request other adults present to refrain from their use as well.

Communicate any safety concerns. Inform the coach, officials or PAL Board Members of anything you feel is, or may create, a dangerous situation for anyone attending games or practices.

Be positive or be quiet. Encouraging words and actions make soccer more fun. The best sound a child can hear is his/her parent's encouraging voice.

Let the coaches coach. Coaches coach; parents cheer. Directing or instructing the players during a game is the job of the coaches, not the parents or spectators. Leave coaching to the coaches. Let the players make their own decisions; if they make a mistake, that's part of learning. Sit back, relax and enjoy the game.

Let the referees call the game. Parents who "make calls" can confuse or distract players, especially when their calls are wrong. Parents who dispute the referee's calls undermine the referee's authority. Again, sit back, relax and enjoy the game.

Support the coach's and referee's decisions. They are both doing a difficult job to the best of their abilities. If you have real concerns, speak with the coach or a PAL Board Member in private.

Be respectful and expect your children to do the same. This pertains not just to the coaches and referees but also to other players and parents. Be mature and do not create or cause an incident.

Promote good nutrition. Before each game and practice, ensure that your child has had something nutritious to eat, but not so much he/she will feel weighed down. Have your child pre-hydrate by drinking water before he/she arrives, as well as during the activities.

Volunteer to assist the coach or team. Be a “team player”! If you have soccer skills or knowledge, or are just good at working with kids, offer to help at practice. If not, make calls, bring snacks, collect paperwork or do anything that needs doing. The coach is busy coaching; don’t make him/her do all the management and administration as well.

Communicate with your child’s coach. Let your coach know about any medical conditions that may affect your child during soccer activities. Keep your coach apprised if your child will be late to or absent from practices or games.

Communicate with your child. Recognize your child’s individual performance. Ask, “How did you do?” not “Did you win?” Then listen to the reply. Be honest; don’t use flattery. Be sure to address any concerns your child may have. Do not belittle his/her fears or opinions.

Give praise freely. When someone, anyone, is doing a good job, don’t be afraid to let him/her know! Whether it’s your child, another child on the team, a child on the opposing team, the coach or, yes, even the referee!

Remind others, when necessary, of the Parent’s Code of Ethics and Behavior. Do so gently, politely and with respect. Report any problems you cannot resolve to your coach and, if necessary, to a PAL Board Member.