

KEEP THE KIDS PLAYING GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS AND COACHES

Twenty Million children sign up for youth sports each year, by the age of 13 over 70% of these children quit. Sadly, the research states the majority of these children quit because of parents and coaches, many who are well intentioned. Many well intentioned parents and coaches have driven children to drop out of sports because of their behavior on the sideline and/or field of play. The mission of the recreation program of Cherry Hill FC Soccer is to have as many children playing soccer as possible. To that end, the following guidelines will be followed.

- 1. A successful soccer game for a child is one in which they had fun, did not embarrass themselves and had a good snack afterward. Emphasis will be placed on fun and not winning. Ask the children “did they have fun?” and did they “learn something?” do not ask if they won or lost.**
- 2. The research on youth sports clearly shows that yelling from the sidelines will cause children to become nervous intimidated and to lose interest. There is a difference between cheering and yelling.**
- 3. Cheering should be directed at all the children (even those that are on the opposite team), comments such as “great kick”, “nice play”, “excellent run” are appropriate and non-evaluative, comments such as “take it from them”, “get it, get it” are intimidating and can be viewed as mean spirited.**
- 4. Yelling only for your child, such as “go Joseph, get it Joseph”, although not mean spirited and meant to be encouraging has been shown by researchers to be intimidating and a leading reason for children to drop out of sport.**
- 5. Do not critique the children following a game or practice. Children do not need a verbal list of errors they made or what they were not good at.**
- 6. Feedback that is descriptive and not evaluative is appreciated by a child. Comments such as “your energy really helped your team, or “you made a great kick in the game” helps the child to reach their own conclusion of how they played. Children that conclude for themselves that they were successful will play soccer for a lifetime. Those that rely on others for evaluative feedback will probably quit.**
- 7. Practices should be fun, age appropriate in length, and based on fun games “games based approach to practice”. Practices that are unimaginative and filled with straightforward drilling will be boring and will not be motivating for the child.**