

PARENT ZONE

Pre-match

You should never place demands on your kid prior to a match like “score me a goal” or “get stuck in”. Instead send them off with “have fun” or “enjoy yourself”. That way they go into the match in a relaxed state of mind and with zero expectations placed on their young shoulders – which is very important.

Post-match

When a match has finished tell your child how well they played and that you are very proud of them. Never be critical or offer analysis. Sometimes kids will know exactly how well they did or how well they didn't do and don't need you to remind them of a poor performance or equally to indulge them if they had a great game.

Kids have naturally high expectations of themselves and can be their own worst critics. If your child comes off the pitch critical of their performance and upset you must LISTEN first and foremost.

Kids know when they are being lied to so it would be wrong of you to tell them they played great when they know themselves that they didn't. Instead, again tell them how proud you are and try explain to them that everyone has good days and bad days, that they can't always be the best player on the pitch every week and that you have every confidence in them.

When this happens it is vital to NOT allow your child or the child to dwell on such matters. If your child or the child has had a great game, it is just as important that you don't indulge them. Simple praise and acknowledgment will suffice.

Many parents or guardians often go over the top with praise and can indeed get caught up themselves and the last thing any kid needs regardless of their ability is to be told that they are going to be a star – or worse – a professional footballer!



Click the image to hear US National Team player Sydney Leroux's views on pushy parents.

Back to the game

During the match every kid looks out to see a familiar face if their parent, guardian or someone they know is in attendance and therefore a little smile, a nod, a wink or a thumbs up is all that is needed instead of shouts of “well done” which can distract a kid and make them very self-conscious of themselves and that you are somewhere in the crowd watching their every move.

That can, believe it or not, have a negative impact on their game and attitude during the game.

Via subtle encouragement and recognition your child will eventually stop looking for you in the crowd safe in the knowledge that you are there and they don't need to impress you or look for your approval.

This will allow them to concentrate on the game and play an unpressurized match, free to express and to enjoy themselves, to have fun. And for kids, fun is the name of the game, always remember that!



Don't be this guy (Click Image)