

MARIN MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC LEAGUE

Parent Involvement Guide

Parents play a vital role in the success of youth athletics. As supporters, role models, and fans, your influence on a student-athlete's experience is significant — research shows that family involvement can have an even greater impact on a young athlete's development and enjoyment of sports than coaches.

MMAL encourages all parents to help build a positive environment that promotes sportsmanship, personal growth, teamwork, and a genuine love of the game. The guidelines below are here to support you and your child throughout their athletic journey.

TOP 10 THINGS PARENTS SHOULD DO

- 1 Make Your Support Unconditional**
Your love and support should never depend on wins, losses, playing time, or performance. Let your child know they have your full support — always.
- 2 Support, Encourage, and Listen**
Celebrate their successes, help them through challenges, and be there to listen when they need to talk.
- 3 Remain Calm and Positive**
Model good sportsmanship by staying composed and respectful during games and competitions. Your demeanor sets the tone.
- 4 Let Them Play for Their Reasons**
Allow your child to pursue sports because they enjoy it — not because of your own expectations or aspirations.
- 5 Encourage Commitment and Character**
Reinforce the value of hard work, responsibility, teamwork, and following through on commitments.
- 6 Keep Sports Fun**
Athletics should be an enjoyable, rewarding experience. When it stops being fun, it's time to check in.
- 7 Support the Coaches**
Let coaches do their job. Sideline instructions may confuse your child and undermine the coaching staff.
- 8 Have Realistic Expectations**
Student-athletes are still learning and growing. Development takes time — on and off the field.
- 9 Keep Sports in Perspective**
Show interest in your child's athletic life while also supporting their academics, friendships, and other interests.
- 10 Promote Good Sportsmanship**
Encourage respect for teammates, opponents, officials, and the game itself — win or lose.

TOP 10 THINGS PARENTS SHOULD AVOID

- 1 Put Your Interests Ahead of Your Child's**
Your child's experience belongs to them. Let them pursue sports for their own enjoyment and personal goals.
- 2 Pressure Your Child to Win**
Focus on effort, growth, and sportsmanship rather than outcomes. Winning isn't everything at this level.
- 3 Treat Sports as an Investment**
Avoid making your child feel responsible for the time, money, or energy you've invested in their participation.
- 4 Control Every Decision**
Give your child space to make their own choices and take ownership of their athletic journey.
- 5 Allow Sports to Dominate Their Life**
Encourage balance. Athletics, academics, family, and personal interests all deserve space.
- 6 React Differently After Wins and Losses**
Maintain consistent support regardless of the scoreboard. Your child needs stability, not conditional approval.
- 7 Criticize Performances After Games**
Allow time for reflection. Let coaches address athletic performance — your role is to be supportive, not analytical.
- 8 Coach from the Sidelines**
Mixed messages from the stands are confusing and counterproductive. Leave coaching to the coaches.
- 9 Set Unrealistic Expectations**
Telling your child they "should" win or dominate puts unfair pressure on young athletes who are still developing.
- 10 Make Every Conversation About Sports**
Show up for all of who your child is — not just the athlete.

Together We Create a Positive Experience

When parents, coaches, officials, and athletes work together, youth sports become a powerful tool for teaching leadership, responsibility, teamwork, perseverance, and sportsmanship. Thank you for helping us create a positive and rewarding experience for every student-athletes in the Marin Middle School Athletic League.