



Positive Sideline Behaviour

As parents your behaviour on the sideline, during the car ride home and throughout any interaction you have with your child regarding rugby is really important to the positive development of rugby for children & young people. Children learn through the behaviour of the adults around them.

We all know the 'pushy parents', the ones who embarrass their children by yelling on the sidelines, calling out the referee and generally making a nuisance of themselves. However, there are other types of sports parents who also put pressure on their children & make them anxious about their performance.

Age grade rugby should be where children first learn to live the values of [Irish Rugby – Respect, Integrity, Inclusivity, Fun & Excellence](#).

To find out what type of sports parent you are go to our fact sheet '[Supporting Your Age Grade Player](#)'.

How can you positively contribute to your child's development as a player?



Respect their choices. It's their right to play rugby, or not.



Focus on what is going well in training & matches, not just results.



Try not to show your disappointment when things go wrong.



Help them to learn from their mistakes rather than criticising.



Don't look for someone else to blame e.g. referee, coaches, players.



Keep your child's rugby in balance with other activities.

Irish Rugby Football Union

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Help build self-confidence, independence & problem solving skills.



Focus on your child's skills & goals, not those of their peers.



Recognise that not every player will make the Irish team.



Encourage them to review their own performance. Actively listen to them.



Support them to ask coaches for help with diet, gym, routine etc.



Ensure that they work hard rather than look for shortcuts to success.

For top tips on listening to your child about their rugby experience go to our fact sheet '[Top Tips for Talking to your Age Grade Player](#)'.

Think about how you behave around your child with regards to their rugby:

Do you plan the season for your child without consulting them?

Do you put your child & their rugby ahead of other family activities?

Do you make decisions about their rugby without consulting their coaches etc?

Do you use rugby performance to motivate them to achieve in other areas?

If the answer is yes, you may be over-emphasising your child's rugby rather than seeing it as a tool to develop their sporting abilities.

Remember they are a child first and not a 'rugby robot'!

The focus should be on fun & enjoyment. Balance with other aspects of their lives is vital.

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Self Reflection

- Who is your child playing rugby for? You or them? Are their needs the same as yours?
- Are your demands appropriate to their age & stage of development?

Children & young people have the right to choose whether or not they want to play rugby, they need to know you will support them either way.

If choosing to play, they need to be empowered to develop at their own pace. You should discuss this with trained specialists as over-training can lead to injury & burn-out.

Safeguarding

All clubs offering rugby to children & young people have a responsibility to safeguard them against harm. Even when you are vigilant & the club operates to a high standard, situations can arise that cause concern. If you are worried about anything you can:



Talk to the Club Welfare Officer



Follow the [Safeguarding Policy](#)

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