



Who Is This Great Game of Hockey Really For?

The game of hockey is for kids. Kids play the game because they love it and because it is fun. As parents we must all realize, that for kids, positive participation is always more important than excellence. The personal and social development that comes from being part of a team is one of the most enriching experiences offered by the game. We must continue to live the values of fun and fair play, respect, integrity, and teamwork with a balanced perspective of expectations and definition of success. We must celebrate our good experiences with this great game.

Our volunteers, our coaches, our referees, our parents and our children are all critical partners in ensuring the game sustains these high values. No one, however, is more critical than our parents. We must particularly assist our parents in setting reasonable expectations while understanding the game, its process and its administration.

Being a hockey parent is no easy task. Often hockey parents are called upon to wear many different volunteer hats, some of which result in conflicting roles. A hockey parent may be a coach, an evaluator, a director or a referee - any of whom is required to make decisions in everyone's best interest while still being a mom or dad wanting what's best for his or her own child. Parents wrestle with reconciling their roles and controlling their passion as fans while being faced with the constant challenge of "doing the right thing". Hockey Canada is committed to helping those parents meet these challenges to ensure they continue to enjoy the game and have as much fun as their kids.

As a hockey parent myself for many years I have experienced and continue to experience this passion and these challenges, while at the same time learning what really is important. I have learned what success truly is. I found it is not necessarily making a number one team, or making AA or AAA, or winning championships. Instead I found that success is all about participation and being a part of a team. It is about treating all players on the team at any level of the game equally without compromise, even though their roles might be different.

That means equal ice time, equal treatment, equal rights and equal participation. Success is also about relationships and making friends, and about seeing young people develop self-confidence with high self-esteem. It is about children remembering their coach as a fair and respectful role model and it is about seeing these same children happy and laughing.

I can only say that I sincerely hope all hockey parents come to this realization much sooner than I did so you can be fully enriched by your participation at the earliest possible time.

Remember, it's about fairness and respect!
It's about play!
It's all about family!
It's about us all having fun and being kids!
What else could really be more important?