



Sportsmanship

SPORTSMANSHIP means to play fair, show respect for opponents, and behave courteously whether winning or losing.

Activity 1

Teach your child that **SPORTSMANSHIP** means to play fair, show respect for opponents, and behave courteously whether winning or losing. Tell your child about the Special Olympics motto: ***"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."*** Explain that the motto means that even when you don't win, you can be proud of giving your best effort. Encourage your child to be a good sport by having fun and trying his or her best.

Activity 2

Help your child to identify ways to be a good sport in the following situations:

1. You are excited because you just won the game. (Cheer and be happy, but be considerate of the other team; don't gloat or brag.)
 2. You are disappointed because you just lost the game. (Don't make excuses, criticize, or blame others. Shake your opponent's hands and say "good game".)
 3. Your teammate is discouraged and wants to quit. (Give your teammate a pat on the back and encourage him or her to keep trying.)
- Watch a sport's game or event with your child and point out examples of good sportsmanship.

Activity 3

Help your child understand that the first rule in sports is to have fun participating in the game. Ask him or her to imagine being on a team where the members criticize each other, refuse to play by the rules, or will not let everyone participate. Discuss how it feels to sit on the bench, and never get a chance to play. Ask your child how to: 1) encourage teammates (pat on the back, tell them "good job"), 2) respect the rules (accept the official's call, even if you disagree), and 3) let everyone participate (take turns playing, share responsibilities of the team). Encourage your child to practice good sportsmanship and make "FUN" the first rule of the game.

Activity 4

Tell your child that "respect" (treating others with consideration and kindness) is the foundation of good sportsmanship. Ask your child how to show respect for:

- 1) Opponents (play fairly, follow rules, shake hands at end of the game)
- 2) Teammates (sympathize with their mistakes, cheer for a good play)
- 3) Coaches (listen and follow their direction, work hard to give your best)
- 4) Referees (don't argue or grumble about their calls)

Discuss ways your child can strengthen his or her sportsmanship by respecting others.

Activity 5

Teach your child that "trash talk" is bragging or insulting others to make them lose confidence and play poorly. Explain that "trash talk" is a form of bad sportsmanship and does not belong in games or competitions. Tell your child the opposite of "trash talk" could be called "treasure talk". Brainstorm together some comments that might be considered as "treasure talk". ("Good job." "That's okay, keep trying." "Great effort!" "Give it your best shot.") Encourage your child to practice "treasure talk" by supporting others.