

## **The Journey is the Reward!**

We all want our children to succeed and strive to be their best, but we also must step back and look at the bigger picture of enjoying the journey along the way. Help your kids enjoy daily living and daily tasks. As a parent don't focus solely on grades, scoring or other typical measurements of your child's success. Look for opportunities to praise your child for sportsmanship, civic duties, community involvement and family support. These are life skills that will really pay off in their future.

It is easy for a parent to get hung up on hard results, as they are indicators of how their child is doing, but what is more important is what type of child are they becoming? A thoughtful child who cares about other people, about their community about others less fortunate than themselves and may not excel to the top of their class or sport or a child who does excel but is self-centered, manipulative or uncaring for those less fortunate. My pick would be the former.

So often in school or sports, parents are focused on individual one time results, instead of the bigger picture of their child's overall development. For example, one parent at a recent competition focused entirely on how their child placed. She performed very well and got 9<sup>th</sup> overall and this parent was extremely negative saying, "9<sup>th</sup> place sucks". Well this child should be taught by the parent and coach that placing is not in your control, scoring is not always in your control and who your competition is and what they do is not in your control. So focusing on placing is the wrong approach. Instead the focus should be on attitude, effort, the improvements they've made, what they can improve upon etc.

I often hold parents meetings before competitions to help parents focus on the big picture and step away from an emotionally charged situation. But sometimes when a parent sees something they don't like, they just can't help but react negatively. Be disciplined, do the right thing, step back and take a deep breath. Avoid reacting negatively when this reaction will only do more harm than good. Not to mention that parent behavior is the most influential factor in kids' lives.

When you're getting stressed remember to enjoy your journey and be proud of the example you are setting for your kids to follow.