

Strive for Progress not perfection

Perfection sounds like a worthy goal for parents or kids to work towards or try to achieve, but in reality, it can sometimes do more harm than good. This doesn't mean you shouldn't strive to improve, strive to better yourself, strive to be smarter, more efficient, stronger, healthier etc. But perfection is usually an unattainable goal that can put a quick halt to progress.

Kids are works in progress and our society tends to idolize and admire the best in sports, arts or professionals, which can put an overly strong importance on reaching the very top. This, along with the inevitable mistakes that are made in learning, can lead to making perfection the enemy of progress, making the goal of perfection too difficult so why try at all?

Some kids and parents in an effort to strive towards perfection will focus on the problems or mistakes and making these a negative. It is so important that kids and parents understand that mistakes are the best way to learn, improve or progress and **MUST** occur. Allow yourself mistakes and help your child accept and embrace mistakes as a necessary part of learning.

Several athletes I coach focus on what they have done wrong and not on the progress being made and a lot of parents watch their child in a competition and focus on what went wrong. This puts an emphasis on results instead of progress. In school, sports, or in your job, you should focus on the progress you or others make and not just the results at any particular time. There will be ups and downs in life and sometimes you cannot see far enough ahead to predict how much progress you or your child will make, so incremental progress and short term smaller goals are necessary. If a child or parent has the overzealous goal of perfection, they will impinge progress by focusing too much on not reaching the perfection instead of the incremental progress, which will get you a lot closer to your goals.

I urge parents to look for signs of perfectionism in your young children and do everything you can to teach your child that mistakes are great learning experiences, are necessary and **WILL** happen. If you don't deal well with things going wrong, then your kids will have a hard time dealing with mistakes. If you lose it when things are not going the way you want them to, they will learn this behavior as well. Help your child re-focus their perfectionism towards incremental progress and small improvements instead of just their ultimate goal because with this life skill they **WILL** do great things in life.