

Enter Dairy Recipe Drawing

Family Living

Focus

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What Kind Of Sports Parent Are You?

'Tis the season to go to youth soccer, baseball, softball, and T-ball games. The children are all excited to be outside playing and getting involved in an organized team sport. Are the parents prepared as well?

The atmosphere set by organizations, parents, and coaches is a major factor in determining whether or not youth will have a positive experience in a sports program.

A "win-at-all-costs" atmosphere can be harmful to a developing youth. The goal should be for parents to foster a positive climate that enables their children involved in sports to enjoy themselves and reach their full potential. Does this mean that all children should be considered potential future professional athletes?

Should we as parents make this our goal and strive to achieve this? I guess you will have to decide what is best for your children, but you may want to consider some things before you make the sport experience a "win-at-all-costs" situation.

Competition in itself is not bad. It can serve as a means of social comparison, necessary for adolescents to see how they are unique from others. Taken to the extreme, however, competition can cause individuals to act in ways that are unacceptable and unsportsmanlike. In other words, the mildest mannered parent can become a screaming demon during a sporting event. We have all witnessed this first hand. Some of us have been guilty as well. We just seem to get caught up in it.

When coaches and parents teach their kids that winning is everything, the ugliness comes out in everyone.

Parents should seek out programs that emphasize cooperation and mastery of skills during childhood and youth. A mastery perspective allows the young athlete to accept failures and learn

from them, as well as to focus on improvement and not just on winning.

Competition should be introduced gradually during this early period. For example, T-ball is often used for this introductory period for Little League beginners. All children get to bat during each inning. Everyone plays in the field. In essence, everyone gets a turn no matter what. There is no fast pitcher, just a ball placed on a batting T.

There is a major attitude difference in the spectators and the youth participating. Spectators smile, talk, and laugh with each other. Children smile, laugh, and have a great time while playing.

We tend to leave the competitive stress factor along the road on the way to the game. But even in this seemingly wonderful environment of playing ball, I still have observed a parent keeping track of all their children's statistics as to where they hit the ball, how many times they caught it, and so forth. I could never understand what the purpose is for this.

Will they go home and review the statistics and try to improve their game? It's only T-ball and no one keeps score or at least they are not supposed to. Can't we as parents just give our young children a small break and let them have fun without being accountable as to how well they may or may not have played the game? At this level, it is supposed to be about learning skills.

Parents are most visibly supportive in their role as spectators on the sidelines for youth sports. As a parent I am very excited and want to see my children play; however, it is important that I keep my emotions under control and set a positive example. Here are some things for all parents to remember:

- Applaud and cheer for everyone on the team, not just your children. The parents sitting beside you appreciate it when you cheer for their children as well. This helps set up a "team" feel-

June Dairy Month is "mooving" into the calendar of events. That means it's time to send in your favorite recipe using dairy products for *Lancaster Farming's* annual dairy recipe drawing.

June Dairy Month salutes dairy farmers everywhere for their hard work in providing milk, which we so often take for granted. *Lancaster Farming's* annual drawing reminds us of all the wonderful dairy products available to produce culinary delights.

To enter the drawing, select your favorite recipe, which must include a substantial amount of at least one dairy product. These ingredients count as a dairy product: milk, cream, sour cream, whipped cream, butter, yogurt, buttermilk, dry milk, ice cream, and all hard and soft cheeses.

Please check your ingredients carefully. Margarine and non-dairy substitutes such as frozen whipped topping do not qualify as dairy products.

Dairy recipes are needed for appetizers, soups, breads, entrees, vegetables, desserts, beverages, snacks, and salads.

Clearly print or type your recipe entry. Be sure to give accurate measurements, temperatures, times, and sizes of baking dishes to use. We reserve the right to disqualify entries if these guidelines are not followed.

With your entry, include a few paragraphs about yourself and your family. Although it is not required, a photograph of you and of your family is preferred. We and our readers love to "see" the people who send in the recip-



Win one of these "cow prizes" offered to readers who participate in Lancaster Farming's June Dairy Month Drawing. Lou Ann Good, food and family features editor, displays some of the prizes totaling \$500.

Photographs will be returned if you write your name and address on the back of the picture.

Only one entry per family allowed. This contest is for adults who are at least 18 years old. We require this because children who send in recipes often inadvertently miss measurements, ingredients or a part of the instructions.

Send your recipe, photo, and accompanying information with your complete address. If we do not have your complete mailing

address, we cannot send your prize if you win.

Send entries immediately. Entries must be postmarked by June 1 to be eligible for the drawing. The state dairy princess and alternates will select the winners. Recipe entries will be printed throughout the month of June. A list of the winners will be printed in the June 30 issue.

Send entries to Lou Ann Good, Lancaster Farming Dairy Drawing, P.O. Box 609, 1 E. Main St., Ephrata, PA 17522.

ing among parents and helps decrease individual competition between parents.

- Avoid insulting other team members and those of the opposing team. This is very upsetting to your children and the parents sitting around you. Do you want other people insulting your children if they are having a bad game?

Think about it; as my children would say to me, "Mom, if you can't say anything nice— 'Zip it!'"

- Talk to the parents of the other team members. You don't have to become best friends, but you will automatically bond one way or another for the next 10 years. The reality is that most of these kids are more than likely

going to be in most of the same sports until they graduate from high school. You will also see the same parents from the opposing teams at each event as well. This is a time for friendly bonding, not an opportunity for long-term alienation. We have to all live together as a team including the parents.

- Be respectful of the officials during the game. After the game, thank the officials. Now this one may be more difficult for a lot of people because emotions do run rampant especially during a close game when the stakes are high. Again use the zip-it approach. Good call or bad, the official has the last word no matter how unfair it may seem. There's nothing more embarrassing to your children, than for you to be told to leave a sporting event by the official.

- Focus on the positive, and compliment players, coaches, and officials. Every player makes mistakes during a game. If your child happens to be the one who

made the last mistake and the game was lost, you know how demoralizing this can be to him or her. It is very important that you as a parent take time to focus on the good plays they had during the game.


No game is ever lost on the play of the last batter. Remember all of the batters before him or her could have hit a home run too.

- Be positive and congratulate the winning team. Do not forget to congratulate the losing team on their efforts as well. Remember that you as parent are the role model for your children. They will emulate your sportsmanship behavior (good and bad) with others. For their sake, set a good example.

- For their sake, set a good example. For more information about making youth sports a positive experience, contact the Penn State Cooperative Extension at (814) 623-4800 and request the free youth sports pamphlets for coaches and parents.

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