

## Tips for Parents of Young Tournament Tennis Players – Do's and Don'ts

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### DO:

- Treat your child the same whether he or she wins or loses.
- Try to have fun and enjoy the tournaments and the travel. Your unhappiness can breed a child's guilt.
- Look relaxed, calm, positive and energized on the sidelines. Your attitude will help the child play better.
- Make friends with other parents at tournaments. Socializing can make the event more fun.
- Get involved if the child's behavior is unacceptable during a match play. Your child doesn't want to be labeled a jerk.
- Let the coach do the coaching. Too much input can confuse the child.
- Understand that the child needs a break from tennis occasionally. It doesn't mean the child is quitting or burning out; they just need a break.
- Be there when the child loses or gets discouraged. Be an understanding listener, not a fixer.
- At the same time, give the child some space when he or she loses. Your youngster will want to be alone for a while, then he or she will be OK. Don't press the conversation; they will talk about it when they are ready.
- Keep your sense of humor. When you laugh and have fun, your child's stress level takes a big drop.

### DON'T:

- Say, "We're playing today." Instead, say, "You're playing today."
- Get too pushy. Having them fulfill their obligations (pre-paid clinics or playing the consolation draw) is different than forcing them to play.
- Turn away when the child behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner on the court.
- Tell the child what he or she did wrong after a tough match. The last thing they want is your criticism immediately off the court. Be a source of strength to them, not someone they wish to avoid.
- Ask the child to talk with you immediately after a loss.
- Make enemies with your child's opponent's parents during a match.

- Act negatively or angrily (verbal or non-verbal) on the sidelines unless your child is acting in an unsportsmanlike manner.
- Your child is watching more than you think. Their winning or losing cannot determine your approval of them.
- Make your life your child's tennis.
- Make your child feel guilty for all the time, money and sacrifices you're making for his or her tennis.
- Think of your child's tennis as an investment for which you expect a return.
- Live out your own dreams through your child's tennis.
- Try to take the coach's job away. Be the parent.
- Compare your child's progress with that of other children, especially siblings.
- Badger, harass, or use sarcasm to motivate your child. It may work in the short term, but they will rebel to your threats or mistreatment.
- Threaten or use fear to improve your child's tennis discipline.