

Parents Etiquette and Responsibilities

The most important thing for a parent to remember is that their skater is a person first and a skater second. And in all probability the "person" in the skater is a young one, still growing, still maturing. Sometimes skaters seem so grown up, so easily able to handle pressure situations, that we forget they are still kids. —DON'T! The same kids that we see looking so grown up on the competition ice, probably still cuddles with their favorite stuffed animal when they go to bed at night. Let them be kids and support them as they grow.

Some other things for parents to think about:

- **BALANCE:** make sure there is balance in your skater's life. Allow time for school and personal growth. Very few skaters make skating their life career. Don't put so much focus on your child's skating that you forget they will have to function in a "normal world" when they grow up. School is important. Social development is important. Being a kid is important.
- **HELP TO SET GOALS:** Help your child to set his/her goals in skating. Help him or her be realistic about those goals, but also to make them challenging enough to make the sport fulfilling. Make sure that the goals are your SKATER'S goals, not yours. Help to achieve these goals by setting targets, plotting progress, etc. Be willing to reevaluate when necessary.
- **LEARN ABOUT THE SPORT:** Learn enough about skating to recognize the elements. Know enough to know when something is done well, and when it needs improvement. Recognize progress. Be interested and listen when your skater talks about progress or problems.
- **SUPPORT YOUR COACH:** Pay your bills on time, get your skater to the rink on time. When you can't be there make sure to tell your coach in advance. Let your coach sit in on goal setting sessions of possible. If not, please ensure your coach knows your skater's goals. Listen to your coach's advice and instructions, and help to ensure your skater follows those instructions when practicing and in off-ice activities. Once your coach understands your skater's goals, let the coach have the freedom to design a program to achieve them - - don't try to second guess the approach. On the other hand, responsibly watch to make sure the general goals are being met over time.
- **WATCH:** Don't use the rink as a babysitter. Stay and watch your skater practice, and in lessons – at least sometimes. They need to know you're interested. Often skaters whose parents never watch in practice feel very self-conscious or "pressured" when their parents finally do show up to watch. If competition events are the only time you watch you may be hurting them, not helping.
- **BE A GOOD SPORT:** Remember that every skater is someone's child, and that they ALL deserve to be treated with respect. Never scold or reprimand another skater. If there is an issue please kindly talk to the parent or coach. Be willing to recognize other skaters graciously. When someone else is skating in competition, don't walk back and forth on the bleachers, don't be noisy or disruptive.
- **SUPPORT YOUR SKATER:** Remember your skater is still maturing. Offer praise when appropriate, but be realistic with that praise. Recognize progress towards goals, but be willing to acknowledge when more work is needed without making it a "bad thing". Never destructively criticize, especially in front of others. Resist the urge to compare your child to another skater. We all learn in different ways and in different times. Some people learn faster, some learn slower.
- **SUPPORT YOUR CLUB:** Pay your bills on time. Help with club activities. Most clubs run by volunteers, and they need all the help they can get. Be willing to serve in committees or on the Board of Directors if needed. Be willing to do "jobs". Help out with ice shows or competitions. Get your US Figure Skating Safe Sport training done.