

# Responsibilities of a Skating Parent

Parents of young skaters need to remember is that their skater is growing physically and socially. Sometimes they seem very mature that we assume they can easily handle stressful situations.

The same kids that look grown-up in their competition outfits are really little kids that bring their favorite stuffed animals to the rink for emotional security.

The following suggestions are presented to help you as a parent:

## **Balance -**

Make sure to provide a balance in your skater's life. Allow time for homework and participation in school activities. Skaters need opportunities for personal growth outside of skating as very few skaters make skating a career.

Don't emphasize your child's skating and deemphasize education and social development as these are important traits necessary in becoming a well adjusted and fully functioning adult.

## **Goals -**

Establish a realistic set of goals. With teenagers, involve your child in setting his/her own goals in skating. Balance being realistic, but also strive to challenge the child so they have to work to obtain their goals.

The goals should NOT be your goals. Short and long term goals need target dates to measure progress. Reevaluate the goals as necessary.

## **Become Informed -**

Parents need to learn enough about the sport of figure skating to recognize the elements and be able to recognize when elements are done well or poorly. Be interested and listen to your child when he or she talks about their progress or disappointments.

Sit down and watch televised national and international figure skating competitions with your child. Participate in activities hosted by your figure skating club, and especially attend the club's annual meeting.

## **Listen to your Child's Coach -**

Pay your rink and coaching bills on time. Make sure your skater arrives at the rink early. Cancel lessons in advance. Involve your coach in

discussing short and long term goals. Make sure you, your child, and the coach are all operating on the same page.

Make sure your child follows the coach's instructions concerning practicing on and off-ice activities. Don't second-guess the coach's approach, but do communicate directly with the coach if the general goals are not being addressed after several months.

## **Watch Practice Sessions -**

The rink should not serve as a babysitter. It is especially difficult when a parent has several children they are transporting to different places to participate in different activities, but try and make an effort to stay occasionally to watch your skater practice, and when they take lessons.

Children need to know you're interested in them. Skaters can feel very self-conscious or even "pressured" when a parent who never stays for a practice session finally does show up to watch.

If the only time you watch your child is at a competition, your attendance may hurt more than help.

## **Demonstrate Good Sportsmanship -**

Children learn more from the examples set by their parents than all of the talking about being a good sport. Every skater deserves to be treated fairly and with respect by other parents.

Be gracious and recognize when other skater in an event win. When anyone is performing, be a good spectator and be careful not to be a distraction that can cause the skater to lose his or her concentration. NEVER make negative comments about another skater's performance.

## **Find the Positive in every Situation -**

Be support and offer the appropriate positive comments, but be realistic and don't praise them for a poor performance – they will know you don't mean it.

Don't wait until a test or competition to recognize your child's progress towards achieving established goals; however, be willing to acknowledge that some additional work is required. Be careful when and where you make critical comments.

Never criticize your child in front of their peers. It is not constructive to compare your child

against another, especially a sibling. Each child will learn at their own pace – some things they may learn faster and other things they learn slower.

### **Become a Volunteer**

Help out by volunteering to perform club activities. Figure skating clubs are volunteer organizations and they need your help! Work on committees, or serve as an officer or member of the Board of Directors.

There are many jobs that do not require lots of expertise - “jobs” like ice monitor or music registrar at competitions. There are loads of positions that need to be filled when your club plans an ice show or carnival.