

Play Like a Champion Today Educational Initiative

Exceptionalities Pre-Season Meeting



PRE-SEASON MEETING WITH A PARENT OF AN ATHLETE WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES

At the start of a season, it is a good decision to meet with the parents of a child with an exceptionality. No two children are alike, so your best resource as a coach is to meet with the person who knows your athlete the best—a parent or guardian. The meeting shouldn't be long, and doesn't have to be formal. A phone call or a brief chat at practice works well. If you have assistant coaches, maybe invite the parent to meet while the assistants are organizing some drills. The goal of the meeting should be to get a sense of your athlete, specifically his/her personality, strengths and weaknesses, and any relevant personal history.

Parents are typically very happy to share advice with you about their children, and will be glad you have reached out to them. Parents can also tend to talk a lot about their children, so try to stay on topic! Below are some suggestions of questions to ask. You don't need to ask all or even any of them, but the list functions as a guide to getting some information about your athlete, communicating with parents about your and their expectations for the season, and getting to know the player a little better.

- Tell me a little about your child. What are his/her likes and dislikes?
- Is there anything that makes your child happy or upset?
- What is your child's history with sports? Has he/she ever played this sport?
- What physical strengths (speed/strength/agility) have you observed in your child? Mental strengths (good listener, grasps concepts easily)?
- What physical challenges (poor vision, lack of hand-eye coordination, asthma) might affect your child's ability to play this sport? What mental challenges (Lack of focus, trouble communicating, being nervous)?
- Have you ever noticed any emotional or physical "breaking points," where your child becomes overwhelmed by physical or emotional stress?
- How does your child usually interact with his/her peers?
- How does your child usually interact with authority figures?
- Is there anything that I should know about your child, especially any aspects of his/her medical history that might be pertinent to coaching? Is he/she on any medications that might affect his/her behavior when (not) taken?
- What advice would you give me, as a coach, to most effectively work with your child?
- What role, as a parent, would you like to play? Is there anything I can do to support you in this role?

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