

## Pass It On®...

### To the Coaches of Pint-sized Athletes.

*All year round, you'll find brave dads and moms standing in the rink, on the field and in the gymnasium — surrounded by eager eyes and short attention spans. Here's to the volunteers in our communities who teach our kids life lessons and never forget the orange slices.*

From New England's cloudy skies to the parched fields in Arizona; from the early morning ice rinks in Minnesota to the sandy pitches along the Oregon coast, a myriad of sun-screened, whistle-blowing, down-parka-wearing, sore-footed coaches brave the weather and sacrifice their afternoons to tribes of budding athletes.

At a time when uncertainty is sure to swirl around our children's heads, they find reassurance on the fields of play. Teamwork is the lesson we hope they learn. When a coach encourages a player, she finds courage to participate in the game of life. She learns how to overcome the voices of self-doubt, step back into the mud and find the meaning of camaraderie. Win or lose, there will be friends made and the victory of finishing a hard task.

Our growing ones need mentors and friends, teammates and coaches, opponents and opportunities. Youth sports is the place where small risks can be taken and lessons learned. If we expect our children to take over for us when we are finally sidelined, we must begin now to prepare them for the role. Give an honest effort. Play well with others. Come prepared. Adapt to the weather. Accept defeat graciously. Champion the team because a team is more than a championship.

The right coach makes all the difference to a child. As Hall of Fame Coach Pat Summit says, "Handle success like you handle failure. You can't always control what happens, but you can control how you handle it."

Such direction is the foundation our children need. So, as another season begins, and pint-sized kids trundle like bobblehead dolls in their new football helmets or zip past in bright-colored soccer uniforms with ponytails afloat like windsocks, may we all remember that letting kids be kids means letting them play.

Here's to the enduring patience of coaches, parent volunteers and youth sports referees. Thanks for building a world where our kids can try out for real life before they are thrown into the game for real.

Coaching...[PassItOn.com](https://www.passiton.com)

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

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