



CEP MINDSET

Achieve Consistent Elite Performance

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Parent Mental Game Guidebook

7 Biggest Mistakes Parents Make in Youth Sport

1

Lose Sight of Why

Instead: Stay Connected To the Real Why, Rise Above the Noise, & Be Patient

2

Screw Up the Car Ride Home

Instead: Reflect Consistently, Child Owns Reflection Process, Prioritize Accurate Reflections

3

Shoulds and Expectations

Instead: Let Them Define Their Process, Accept a Range of Results, Practice = Games

4

Not Managing Your Emotions

Instead: Mistakes = Learning Opportunities, Cheer and Encourage, Show Up as Best Self

5

Blaming Coaches

Instead: Praise Effective Coaching, Help Chil Process Feedback, Healthy Communication

6

Tolerating a Toxic Culture

Instead: Spread Love of the Game, Promote Growth & Joy, Be a Leader, Protect the Culture

7

Neglecting Mental Skills

Instead: Make It Real, Normalize It, Get Educated

Mistake 1: Losing Sight of Why

It can be easy to disconnect from your why. If you can stay connected to what you really want for your child out of the sporting experience (i.e., life skills, growth, and enjoyment), then supporting their mental game comes a lot easier.

Don't	Do
<p>The Wrong Why</p> <p>Lose perspective of what you want your child to gain from the sporting experience</p>	<p>Stay Connected to Real Why</p> <p>Focus on growth, life skills, and enjoyment of the game</p>
<p>Fall into the Results Trap</p> <p>Chase "shiny objects" such as results, status, and being the best</p>	<p>Rise Above the Noise</p> <p>Find the love of the game despite the doubt, results, culture, environment, etc.</p>
<p>Short-Term Focus</p> <p>Feel the need to get results now and try to remove all challenges for your child</p>	<p>Be Patient</p> <p>Focus on long-term development and view challenges as learning opportunities</p>

Action Item:

To help you stay connected to the real why, rise above the noise, and be patient with the process go and create your own **Alter Ego** as a sports parent.

Mistake 2: Screw Up the Car Ride Home

Ask your child how and when they want to have post practice and game reflections.
There is no RIGHT way, but there is a wrong way.

Don't	Do
Only Reflect After Games Miss learning opportunities after practice and the extra repetitions it provides	Consistent Reflection Process Build a similar process for after games and practices (i.e., same questions, timing, process)
Share First or Most Sharing your opinion first or letting them share first, then dumping your thoughts on them	Child Owns Reflection Process Make sure your child shares first, and don't settle for your child giving short or vague answers
Overcompensate or Polarize Provide feedback that is too harsh or too positive, rather than accurate	Prioritize Accurate Reflections Help them accurately reflect. Help separate the process from results and avoid judgmental language

Action Item:

Set a clear reflection process & expectations with your child - identify 1) the when, 2) the what (i.e., mental state and process), and 3) the how (i.e., athlete talks first and most).

Mistake 3: Shoulds and Expectations

Your child is the one playing, so they need to take ownership of their game-plan and how they mentally prepare to play at their best.

Don't	Do
<p>Use SHOULD, NEED, HAVE to</p> <p>Sharing expectations of how they should play and how the team should perform</p>	<p>Let Them Define Their Process</p> <p>Have your child share and take the lead in deciding their game-plan, process or definition of success</p>
<p>High Expectations for Results</p> <p>Predicting outcomes (e.g., you should win, you should score, this should be your best game, etc.)</p>	<p>Accept a Range of Results</p> <p>Encourage high standards for their process and accept the range of possible results</p>
<p>Games > Practices</p> <p>Overhyping games (e.g., this is a must-win game) and downplaying importance of practices</p>	<p>Practice = Game</p> <p>Their job is the same regardless of context: do their best, enjoy, and perform. Prepare equally</p>

Action Item:

Help your child create their own **Mental Preparation** plan - this should include the use of coping planning and imagery.

Mistake 4: Not Managing Your Emotions

If you want your child to go out there and be relaxed yet focused and having fun – then be a role model and have the right mindset yourself. You can use the alter ego exercise for yourself.

Don't	Do
Be Attached to Results Nervous and worried about your child making mistakes or intensely picking apart your child's or team's play	Mistakes = Learning Opportunities Relax - mistakes will happen. They are learning opportunities. Sport is meant to be fun, so enjoy the game
Yell or Lose Composure Yelling instructions like a puppet master means you are not trusting your child to perform. Screaming at refs is a hard no	Cheer and Encourage Honor great plays, sportsmanship, and respect by opponents. Offer words of encouragement during adversity
Unaware of Your Behaviors So caught up in the game that you become unaware of how you are showing up	Show Up as Your Best Self Self-reflect on your own mindset and behaviours. How you show up matters and will affect your child and the team

Action Item:

To help you manage your emotions, go and create your own **Alter Ego** as a sports parent.

Mistake 5: Blaming Coaches

There has been a pretty big buildup of tension between coaches and parents but we are all on the same team here and all want what's best for the kids and the team.

Don't	Do
<p>Judge Coach as Bad</p> <p>Complain and blame behind the coaches back. If you have real concerns, then respectfully bring it to the coach</p>	<p>Praise Effective Coaching</p> <p>Know what effective coaching is, catch the little things that your coach does well and express your appreciation</p>
<p>Undercut the Coach</p> <p>Your coach is not perfect, but they are the leader of the team. Working within a team dynamic is an important life skill</p>	<p>Help Them Process Feedback</p> <p>Encourage them to respect the coach's feedback and take ownership for their performance and development</p>
<p>Unhealthy Communication</p> <p>Avoid speaking to coach, poor use of texts/emails/phone calls, speak on behalf of child, take argumentative approach</p>	<p>Healthy Communication</p> <p>Schedule meetings to express concerns or ask questions, encourage child to take the lead, seek to gain clarity</p>

Action Item:

View your coach as someone to work with. Teaching your child how to respectfully communicate and ask questions to authority figures is an important life skills. Note the intent to work with coaches does not mean you need to tolerate toxic coaching behaviours.

Mistake 6: Tolerating a Toxic Culture

The bottom line is, as a youth sport parent, you are part of the team and you contribute to the culture of the team. The question is: Are you helping or hurting the culture?

Don't	Do
Bring Negative Energy Even without saying anything, negative, pessimistic, or deflated energy can infect your child and the team	Spread the Love of the Game If you want to spread the fire, then you need to be the fire. Show up with the right energy to both games and practices
Gossip with Other Parents Try to predict results or talk negatively about other players, opponents, or coaches	Plant Seeds of Growth and Joy Highlight with other parents the growth and joy that the kids are experiencing. Frame adversity as learning opportunities
Tolerate Negative Parents or Coaches No one is perfect, but if you just mind your own business and don't speak up, then you will get what you tolerate	Be a Leader. Protect the Culture Willing to respectfully speak up and set a high-standard for yourself and the parent group

Action Items:

First, make sure to self-reflect on whether you are helping or hurting the culture. Second, be willing to speak up, be a leader and have a crucial conversation when needed.

Mistake 7: Neglecting Mental Skills

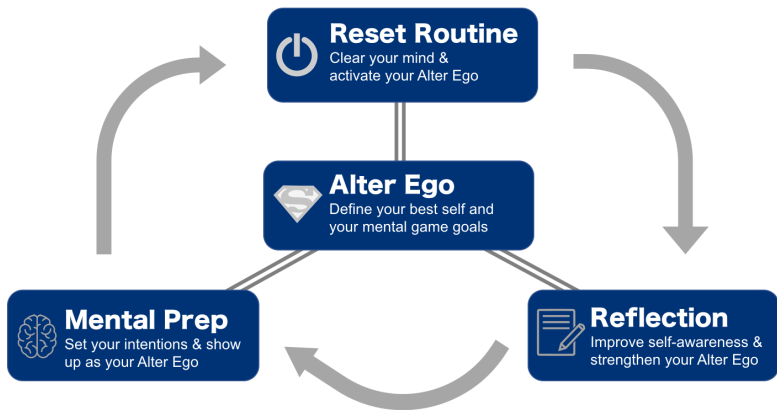
If you want to help your kid with the mental game – then you need to encourage it, highlight why it is important and understand the nuances of it.

Don't	Do
Ignore the Mental Game Consider it a bunch of fluff, smoke, or nonsense	Make It Real The mental game has a huge impact on performance
Treat It as Fixed and Label Others Label athletes as mentally weak or lacking confidence and not as something they can work on	Normalize It Everyone experiences feelings of worry & doubt – talk about your experiences & how it is a skill everyone can work on
Provide a Mix of Strategies An uncoordinated plan with mix and match strategies can overcomplicate things and do more harm than good	Get Educated Know the 4 fundamental exercises - keep it simple and make sure they apply the exercises consistently

Action Items:

Get comfortable with the 4 fundamentals on the next page. Then help your child integrate them.

4 Fundamental Strategies



Action Items:

Help your child get in the zone on game day using these 4 Fundamentals. The Alter Ego is at the core, and the other 3 strategies create a continuous Prepare-Play-Reflect Process that maximizes your ability to show up as your best self. Mental Preparation is used before games and practices, the Reset Routine is used during, and the Reflection Process is used after. When you consistently implement these cyclical strategies, it results in an upward spiral in mindset and performance.