

# Respect in Sport Starts at Home

We expect our kids to behave their best while on the ice – not only giving their all as players and teammates but as human beings who cooperate and play fair.

Children learn their cues from their peers, but also from the adults in their lives. These messages can come from their coaches, other bench volunteers, and, in particular, their parents.

If they get reinforcing messages to pass the puck without hogging it, they will keep that in mind while on the ice. If they take responsibility for a bad pass, rather than blaming a teammate, that builds character.

All those conversations in the car to and from the rink, at the dinner table, and while debriefing the game anywhere really add up.

This is why your Board of Directors is committed to ensuring a safe and positive environment for our children, thanks to a partnership with Hockey Canada, OMHA and Respect in Sport. Together, they provide access to an online training program designed specifically for parents and guardians.

Consider it your invitation to be part of the team supporting your child in the beloved sport of hockey.

[Respect in Sport](#) is about empowering parents to ensure the safety of their children, encouraging positive and effective communication, and enhancing a child's fun and camaraderie of the activity. If you haven't played sports with much interest or dedication, you may not feel confident to respond when your child tells you what happened at practice or in a key game.

## What the research tells us

This program generates better behaviours at all levels the longer it runs, according to a 2020 report, entitled, [Examining the impact of the Respect in Sport Parent Program on the psychosocial experiences of minor hockey athletes](#), by Katherine A. Tamminen, Carolyn E. McEwen, Gretchen Kerr, and Peter Donnelly.

We all know that most people in the rink are there for the right reasons, cheering on the teams and the players. This report reinforces that athletes have largely good experiences in hockey, in terms of enjoying the sport and committing to their teams. Most players say their parents support them and don't pressure them.

That's exactly what we are trying to foster.

Negative experiences were reported as being minimal or low at all time points, according to the researchers. Yet, we all know how one negative incident can sour a tournament and leave a black eye on the sport. That's why being proactive helps us all have better days and nights on or near the ice.

In hockey, children learn to socialize better the longer they play hockey. This doesn't just occur in the dressing room but in how they deal with opponents. They also get better at setting goals and finding opportunities to build up their skills and initiative to reach their goals.

When Tamminen, McEwen, Kerr, and Donnelly looked at data specifically related to the parental version of the Respect in Sport program, the trends echoed the findings listed above. Additionally, prosocial behaviours towards teammates and opponents improved. Kids also said they found more opportunities to develop their personal and social skills within the context of their sports.

"In general, the messages in the program seem to 'trickle down' from parents to athletes over time, and it appears to have its strongest impacts on interpersonal skills and experiences among athletes, such as improved behaviours with teammates and opponents," the report concludes.

## Why this matters

The goal is to ensure that everyone gets the most fun and experience out of our league. Taking this training makes good parents better.

Unacceptable parent behaviour is the number-one reason that coaches, managers and officials of all ages leave a sport. Yet, parents play a crucial role in the development of athletes. This one-hour course shows you how to support your child in becoming a great teammate while providing insight into the various roles other individuals (such as coaches and officials) play in their development as a player and community members.

The course covers:

- Parental influence over a child
- Coach and leader roles in sport
- Role of the parent and coach in ensuring a child's enjoyment of a sport
- Protecting your child when outside of your immediate control
- Concussion awareness and Return to Play guidelines
- Long-Term Player Development

This training is not a reaction to media reports or a tool for discipline. We ask everyone to learn the lessons, so we are working from the same playbook. It is a significant recruitment and retention tool that helps us all take a united step toward the long-term goal of social and cultural change.

By teaching role models how to be more proactive in children's sports, we all ensure your child is not involved in any way with abuse, neglect, bullying and harassment. That way, we all win.

## How we make it easy

We've made this program mandatory for all parents/guardians of players under the age of 18 years when they register. No player will be rostered to any team at the rep or house league level until the parents take this course.

Only one parent needs to take the course, but all parents, stepparents and other guardians are welcome to log in and learn from it. You can do it all in one sitting or over a handful of sessions. The flexibility makes it accessible. Once you're done, you get a certificate that you can print off. There is no quiz to test your knowledge.

For those who are not tech-savvy, there is support to get you through it. You can use a computer or tablet at home, work, or even the public library – or a mix of all three.

You simply take it once and you're all set. The \$12 fee per family goes largely to supporting the creation of materials, hosting the platform, and administering the fees via PayPal. A small portion left over goes to the Canadian Red Cross.

It's a small price to pay for our kids to come home smiling and eager to learn from the dynamics of a hockey team. Thank you for being part of our success.