



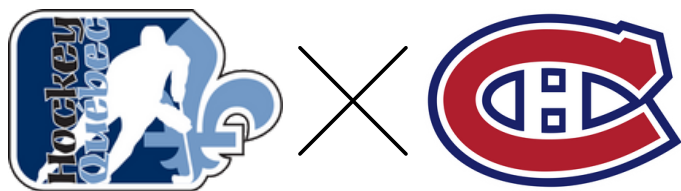
A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

IN BETWEEN 2 PLAYS:
OVERVIEW OF BEST
PRACTICES AND PITFALLS TO
AVOID AS PARENTS IN SPORTS

HOCKEY Edition

This document is intended for any parent or person responsible for a child playing hockey who wishes to support their child in a positive way in the practice of their sport.

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INTRODUCTION



01

As a parent, your behaviours and attitudes affect your child's enjoyment, motivation, and performance.



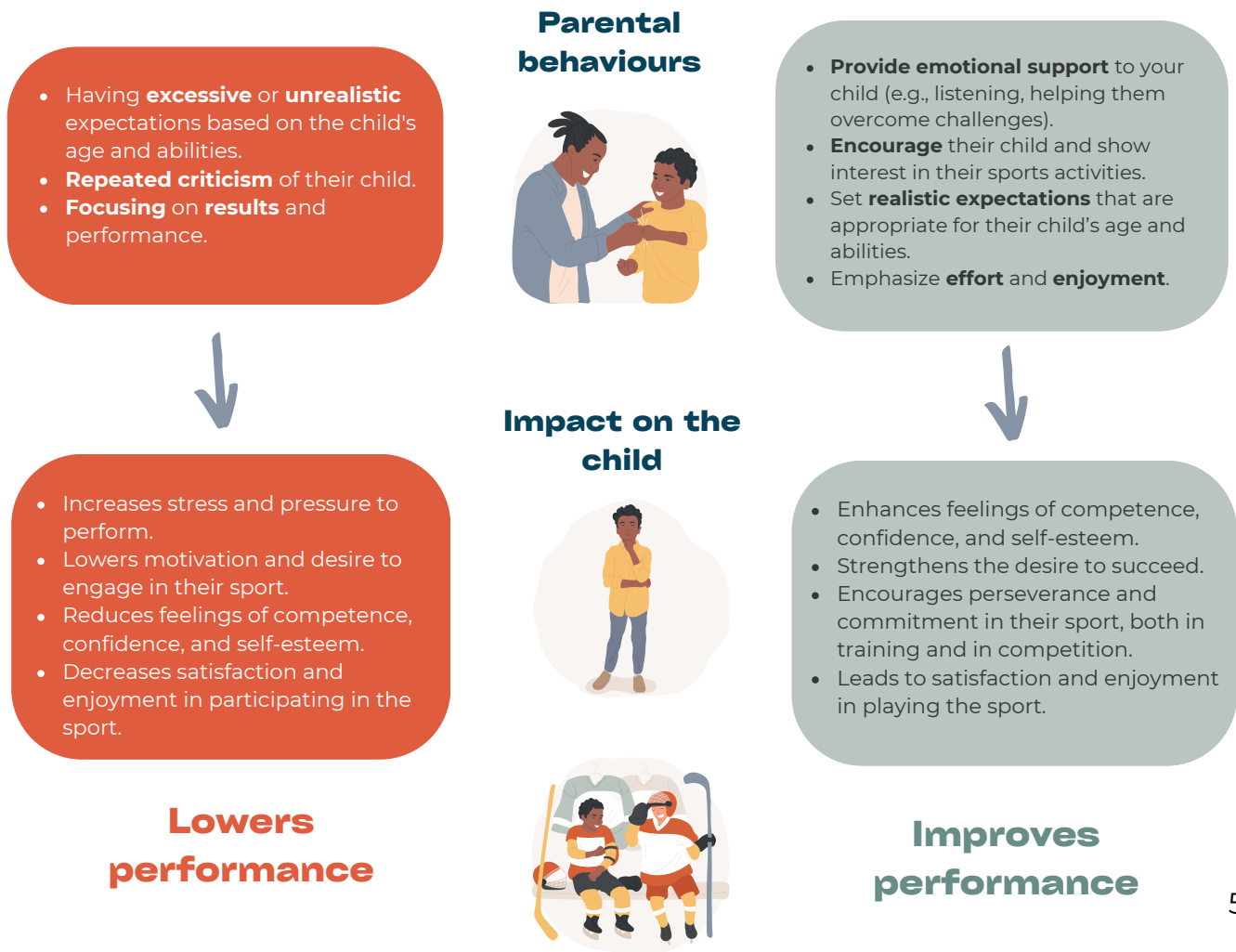
Often, these parents want their kids to succeed in hockey, to make it to the NHL, and these expectations start early—often way too early. The surest way for your kids to quit hockey is by being too demanding and having expectations that are too high. Let them play, let them have fun. That's how they'll improve—by enjoying themselves out on the ice.



Rafaël Harvey-Pinard, winger for the Montreal Canadiens



Figure - Parenting Practices, Player's Performance and Well-Being



If there's one key takeaway, it is that **you are a role model for your child**. This doesn't mean being perfect, but rather using their natural tendency to imitate you as an opportunity to set a positive example every day.

The following pages offer an **overview of the “In Between 2 Plays: Best Practices and Pitfalls to Avoid as Parents in Sports” guide**. It provides ideas for positive behaviours and common pitfalls to help you support your child effectively in their sports experience.

To consult the complete guide, **[visit the Sport'Aide website.](#)**



Note

The term parent includes all persons who act as guardians for the child.

OVERVIEW OF IDEAS FOR BEST PRACTICES TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



02

Best Practices Ideas for Supporting Your Child in Hockey



Keep in mind that your main role as a parent is to support your child and help them keep their motivation and enjoyment in sports.



One thing you can always say to your child, whether they win or lose:

I loved watching you play today!!!

Examples of Positive Comments to Encourage and Uplift Your Child

- I loved your attitude with the referee today; you stayed respectful even if you didn't agree with the call.
- I'm proud of you for asking your coach for help. It's important to express your needs to grow and take care of your well-being.
- I love seeing you cheer on your teammates, even when the game isn't going as planned.

Best Practices Ideas for Supporting Your Child in Hockey (continued)

✔ Be open to sharing authority with the coach by avoiding constant questioning of their leadership and decisions.

✔ Use language that shows adversity as a learning opportunity.



Explain to your child that a loss **isn't the end** but **a step in their progress**.

✔ Give your child space to process setbacks or challenges independently.

It can be tempting to try to speed up their learning by pointing out what they should improve or do, or by lecturing them on certain situations. However, it's better to let them think things through at their own pace to develop autonomy and the ability to handle different situations.

Give your child the chance to self-assess by asking, for example:

Did things go as you hoped?

This helps build their autonomy and resilience.

Best Practices Ideas for Supporting Your Child in Hockey (continued)

- ✔ Allow your child to make mistakes; that's how they learn and improve.
- ✔ Teach your child to embrace constructive feedback as helpful advice, not as harsh criticism.
- ✔ Be a role model through your own behavior and attitude.
 - Are your responses to situations consistent with how you'd like your child to act in similar scenarios?



Best Practices Ideas for Supporting Your Child in Hockey (continued)



Tips to Manage the Intensity of Your Emotions

➤ Learn to recognize the early signs of anger and aggression in yourself to avoid automatic, aggressive reactions (verbal or physical).

➤ Practice deep breathing to quickly lower your stress levels and regain calm.

Laval University Resource:
[Emotional Regulation: Enhancing Your Toolkit](#) (available in French only)



➤ Learn to step away from situations that make you emotional to find calm.

➤ Intentionally focus on neutral or positive elements instead of dwelling on what's causing the unpleasant emotion.



The “**5-Senses Anchoring**” technique can be especially helpful for redirecting your focus and calming down (available in French only).

OVERVIEW OF COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



03

Pitfalls to Avoid to Positively Support Your Child in Hockey

PITFALL 01

Making comments focused solely on the importance of results.



Examples

Winning, personal stats, rankings.

Instead, give feedback based on your child's effort. Highlight their good plays, learning, and improvements, regardless of the game outcome.



Examples

Good passes, a good move to get past an opponent (even if it didn't lead to a goal), effective zone exit, positive attitude, good sportsmanship



PITFALL 02

Making repetitive, non-constructive comparisons between your child and other players (e.g., opponents, teammates). This sends the message that others are better than your child.

Your child might believe their worth is based on performance, which is not the message you want to convey.



Pitfalls to Avoid to Positively Support Your Child in Hockey (continued)

PITFALL 03

Giving instructions to your child that contradict the coach's directions (before, during, or after a game). It's hard for your child to focus when receiving multiple, conflicting messages.



They may also develop loyalty conflicts – whom should they listen to and aim to please: their parent or their coach?

PITFALL 04

Frequently criticizing your child in a negative, non-constructive way, without acknowledging their strengths, qualities, good plays, and improvements. Such criticism is even more harmful when delivered in anger or in front of others.

PITFALL 05

Using violent or derogatory language (e.g., threats, insults, sarcasm) toward your child, other players, coaches, or referees.



Remember, your child imitates the behaviors they see.

Pitfalls to Avoid to Positively Support Your Child in Hockey (continued)



Tips



Reflect honestly on your words to gradually remove violent or demeaning language from your vocabulary. It can be challenging to engage in honest self-reflection, but it's a valuable skill for personal growth and to be a positive role model for your child.

In another context, would you make the same comments?

- Would you ask a teacher if they got their diploma from a cereal box after a grading mistake?
- Would you insult a young grocery clerk for not bagging an item?
- Would you tell a colleague or supervisor they're terrible for a poor project decision?



Pitfalls to Avoid to Positively Support Your Child in Hockey (continued)



Tips (continued)



Reflect on the culture of your child's sport and how it might unconsciously influence your attitudes and behaviors (e.g., a 'win at all costs' mentality).

It's important to **stop justifying or excusing unacceptable behaviors** simply because 'it's always been done that way,' everyone else is doing it, or because you went experienced it yourself.

Your child needs you and appreciates your involvement in their sports experience.

This brief overview of the guide "In Between 2: Best Practices and Pitfalls to Avoid in Sports" outlines key do's and don'ts to help you reflect on your role in your child's sports experience.

Check out the full guide (see the guide on the [Sport'Aide](#) website) for **deeper insights** and to further your understanding of effective parenting practices in sports!



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