**Navigating the Role of a Special**

**Olympics Sports Family Member**

**A Guide to Positive Involvement**

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|  |  | **Special Olympics sports family member:**A parent, caregiver, or sibling whose family member is involved in Special Olympics sports as an athlete. |  |
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|  | This role involves different responsibilities, behaviors, and attitudes aimed at supporting and nurturing the athlete’s sports participation, development, and overall well-being. Being a sports family member involves adapting to your athlete’s individual personality and supporting their journey in a way that nurtures their physical, emotional, and personal development. |

**Sports Parent or Caregiver Key Roles**

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|  | **1** | **Supportive****Attitude** | A sports parent should be encouraging and supportive of their athlete’s participation in sports, regardless of the athlete’s skill level or achievements. The focus should be on enjoying the experience, learning, and personal growth rather than solely on winning. |
|  | **2** | **Emotional****Support** | Being there for your athlete emotionally is crucial. Whether they win or lose, showing that you're proud of their efforts and improvement is important for their self-esteem and motivation. |
|  | **3** | **Logistical****Support** | Parents often play a key role in organizing and managing their athlete’s sports commitments. This might involve arranging transportation, ensuring they have the necessary equipment, and managing scheduling conflicts. |
|  | **4** | **Attending****Events** | Attending your athlete’s games, matches, or competitions shows your interest and dedication to their pursuits. Your presence can have a positive impact on their confidence and performance. |
|  | **5** | **Respect for Coaches and Officials** | Demonstrating respect for coaches, officials, and other participants is essential. Avoid undermining coaches' decisions, even if you disagree, and show sportsmanship by adhering to rules and maintaining a positive attitude. |
|  | **6** | **Balancing****Priorities** | Sports parents should help their athletes strike a balance between sports and other life commitments. Encouraging time management and open communication is important. |
|  | **7** | **Setting Realistic****Expectations** | It's important to set realistic expectations for your athlete’s performance and progress. Unrealistic pressure to excel can lead to stress and burnout |
|  | **8** | **Empowerment and Independence** | While support is vital, allowing your athlete to take ownership of their sports journey fosters independence, decision-making skills, and a stronger sense of accomplishment. |

**Sports Sibling Key Roles**

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|  | **1** | **Cheerleader and Supporter** | Sports siblings often become the biggest fans of their athletic brother or sister. They attend games, matches, and competitions to show support and cheer for their siblings’ team. |
|  | **2** | **Emotional****Support** | Sports siblings can provide emotional support to their athlete sibling by being there to celebrate victories, console after losses, and offer encouragement during challenging times. |
|  | **3** | **Logistical****Support** | Depending on their age and ability, sports siblings might assist with transportation, helping with equipment, or even participating in pre-game rituals that contribute to their sibling's routine. |
|  | **4** | **Sharing Experiences** | Sports can become a common ground for bonding. Sharing stories, experiences, and even practicing together can strengthen sibling relationships. |
|  | **5** | **Learning Life****Skills** | Being a sports sibling offers the opportunity to learn important life skills such as empathy, teamwork, and the ability to celebrate others' achievements. |
|  | **6** | **Dealing with Rivalries** | Sibling rivalries in sports can be both fun and challenging. It's important to strike a balance between friendly competition and supporting each other. |
|  | **7** | **Managing****Time** | If both siblings are involved in various activities, they may learn how to manage time effectively and respect each other's commitments. |
|  | **8** | **Building Connections** | Interacting with teammates, coaches, and other sports families can expand a sports sibling's social circle and create lasting connections. |
|  | **9** | **Showing Sportsmanship** | Being gracious in victory and supportive in defeat, even when not directly competing, demonstrates good sportsmanship to others. |