

# SUPPORTING PARENTS/CAREGIVERS WHO CAN'T ATTEND GAMES

A positive sports parent/caregiver can contribute to the team community by fostering a sense of belonging amongst their peers. When all parents/caregivers feel engaged in the team, they'll be able to best support their athlete in gaining the benefits of a positive sports experience. Unfortunately, not all parents/caregivers are able to attend games due to outside circumstances - such as availability, work, distance, lack of child care, or other commitments. The strategies below will help positive sports parents support their peers and, ultimately, help create a positive experience for all athletes involved on the team.

## SPORTS PARENTS/CAREGIVERS CAN:

### APPROACH PARENTS WHO ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND GAMES WITH EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING

- ✓ Parents/caregivers can start by recognizing that each family experiences their own set of circumstances and avoiding judgement of their ability to attend games.
- ✓ Recognize that they may experience feelings of guilt or exclusion from the team community that can affect their mental well-being.<sup>1</sup>

### ADVOCATE FOR AND ACTIVELY USE A COMMUNICATION PLATFORM

- ✓ Connect with other parents/caregivers and determine an accessible, effective method to communicate amongst the team community. Actively use this communication platform to coordinate transportation, provide game updates, and keep all parents/caregivers connected to the team.
- ✓ Apps like [TeamSnap](#) can be used to provide roster information, game and practice schedules, custom parent/caregiver chat groups, and score and stat updates.

### IMPLEMENT PARENT/CAREGIVER PARTNERSHIPS

- ✓ Pair up parents/caregivers into partnerships that aim to provide each other any support they may need. For instance, if one pair of the partnership is unable to attend a game, the other can:
  - Provide updates on the game and how their athlete is doing.
  - Actively cheer and encourage the athlete whose parent/caregiver couldn't attend.
  - Send pictures/videos of plays by their athlete

### SHARE TOOLS WITH THE TEAM COMMUNITY

- ✓ The [Parent/Caregiver 100-Point Exercise](#) can help parents/caregivers collaborate with their athletes on their goals and give them an opportunity to set expectations and determine the best ways to provide support.
- ✓ The Jr. NBA resource, [The Right Questions Parents Should Ask After A Game - and The Ones to Avoid](#) provides useful tips for parents/caregivers to navigate post game discussions - whether they were able to attend the game or not.

### START A 'TEAM PARENT/CAREGIVER' PROGRAM

- ✓ A [team parent/caregiver](#) can be a volunteer or committee of volunteer parents/caregivers who:
  - Survey parents/caregivers on the challenges they may need support in overcoming.
  - Lead communication with parents/caregivers on team activities, game updates, and scheduling.
  - Organize and manages travel (i.e. carpools, public transportation groups, walking groups, etc.)
  - Bring new families into the fold by connecting them with other parents/caregivers

1. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9512965/>