

Positive Parent Tip : Handling Discouragement



GROWING CHAMPIONS FOR LIFE



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Assignment for the Week:

When young athletes get discouraged over a lack of progress they sometimes think about giving up and quitting their sport. They have difficulty with the concept of a “plateau” in skill development. New skills came quickly and sometimes easily in the early stages of a sport. Progress was very evident and very rewarding. Due to this success an illusion was created that the rate of progress would be sustained indefinitely. However it’s normal for progress to slow as the skills become more complex or advanced. Eventually every athlete reaches some form of a learning plateau and this is when they are most susceptible to discouragement. Sometimes the thought of just giving up seems like the only answer to the frustration.

Your Approach:

Given a more long range perspective on the learning process, you are in an ideal position to help your child grasp the concept of plateaus and obstacles. Your objective is to:

- Help them recognize a flat spot in the learning curve when it occurs as normal and something that can be overcome;
- Give them hope about making a break through by reflecting on similar events in your life;
- Assist them in creating a plan for addressing the obstacles holding them back.
- Remind them that they are the master story teller and movie maker of their success story. Have them choose the ending they desire.

Strategies:

Plateaus are endured most easily when athletes feel as though they are pro-actively working through them. It may begin with accepting the fact that additional experience (time) will be a cure in itself, therefore patience is required. Additionally, here are some possible strategies to suggest. Ask your athlete to identify:

- extra work that needs to be done;
- extra coaching or equipment that might be needed;
- extra sacrifice or changes in habits, routine, or attitudes that must be made.

Progress:

List the situations in which you practiced this strategy during the week. How did it go? Was discouragement decreased?
