

# **Working With Today's Parents**

## **(Parents Build Successful Athletes)**

Do you remember hot afternoons, when, as kids, we would spend hours playing with our friends in whatever game we could all get going and then would come home late on a hot afternoon late and exhausted? No organized teams, no coaches, no referees, no wins or losses, no standings – just lots and lots of play. Today, kids play in organized sports with teams, coaches, referees and wins/losses. AYSO is part of this organized sport system.

In this workshop, we are not going to debate the merits of organized sports. Instead, we will look at some practical things that we, as parents, can do to help our kids achieve as athletes within the organized sport structure.

### **Performance follows attitude**

To help our children perform at their highest level, we must understand the personality traits of a successful athlete. Following are three key characteristics used by many sport psychologists.

#### **Self-Confidence**

Successful athletes are positive about themselves. They believe that ultimately they will succeed. Difficult situations are seen as a challenge rather than a problem. Self-confident athletes accept responsibility for situations rather than blaming others.

To help develop their child's soccer self-confidence, parents need to believe in their child and praise their child.

#### **Self Competition**

Successful athletes measure their success by the degree to which they perform to their potential rather than whether or not they defeat an opponent. They derive no satisfaction from playing poorly even if they are better than their opponent.

To help their child develop in this area, parents should focus on their child's own improvement rather than comparing their child to others.

#### **Maximum Effort**

Successful athletes work hard to improve. When you work hard for something it is very difficult to give up.

If a child does not go to practice, it is impossible to make a maximum effort there. Parents are central in helping the child understand the importance of practice by making sure that they get to practices.