Lakewood Baseball Club

**Ten Tips for Parents**

Perhaps you have heard some horror stories about overbearing "Little League" parents and coaches. A positive baseball experience for your child begins with the parents of each player. It is largely the influence of parents and their attitudes that attribute to the “success” or “failure” of a player’s experience.

LBC would like to share 10 thoughts on how to make little league a positive, shared experience for parents and players. We believe that these ideas will help make the next few months more fun for your child, more enjoyable for you, and a heck of a lot easier on self-less volunteers who dedicate their talents and time:

1. **Get involved with LBC:** The program is run on a volunteer basis, and we can use all the help we can get. There will be many opportunities to volunteer: you can assist at registration or tryouts, keep score, prepare fields or umpire (just to name a few). If your player sees that Pony Baseball is important to you, he will learn the value of that importance. Assess your own skills and resources (not just limited to financial) to see how you can best support the club.

2. **Make/Take time to play:** There’s nothing more enjoyable than going out at least a few evenings a week and playing ball. Play is an opportunity to spend quality time and helps improve skills and level of ability. Seize the moment to play and build fond memories that will last a lifetime.

3. **Attend games and practices:** In today’s busy world, it is sometimes hard to juggle schedules. However, your player’s success is largely dependent on your proactive involvement. Practices and games are scheduled a couple of times a week and the season only lasts approximately 10 weeks. Plan ahead to avoid conflict of schedules and hardship for coaches. Be there to show your support and dedication to their involvement.

4. **Don't create pressure:** Many parents dream of their player becoming a major league star, but he is only a child *and deserves to enjoy the game as a child*. Don’t expect more than he can deliver. Parents who live vicariously through their children often set up a self-fulfilling prophecy: failure. Failure that is perceived by the parent and the child for not meeting unrealistic expectations.

5. **Respect the rules:** This is one of the most important principle/value players should learn. If you don’t agree with an umpires call, keep your opinion to yourself. You did not buy a ticket the right to complain. If there is a team rule that bothers you, address the coach or league official away after the game or practice, not during. A basic rule of thumb is to keep all verbal communication positive and encouraging.

6. **Help your player accept that “winning” and “losing” are natural consequences of “competitive” sports:** No one likes to lose, but the reality of competitive team sports is that one team will win and one will lose (unless, of course, the game ends in a tie). Reinforce the principle that a “winner” is one who offers a one hundred percent individual effort for the benefit of the entire team.

7. **Stress the importance of team:** Pony Baseball should be a positive experience for everyone: kids, coaches, assistants and parents. Winning is nice, but losing is inevitable. Being a star is fun, but being a bench player is just as important.

8. **Don’t panic if your child is injured:** We are all concerned about players’ safety. However, there are those occasions when players collide or non-contact injuries occur. An injured player needs a parent who can maintain emotional composure. The majority of coaches are familiar with the baseball-related injuries. However, be ready to assist coaches in caring for your player.

9. **Speak up if you think you or your player is not being treated fairly**: One of the most frustrating issues for a board member to address is a situation where a parent says: "Great program, but my son’s coach did something all season that really bothered me." A manager/coach cannot address issues if they don’t know they exist.

10. **Offer constructive feedback:** Quality improvement only occurs if you solicit your input. Please refrain from criticism. If you can’t be part of the solution, don’t be a part or create the problem. If you think that something needs to be changed, get involved with the process to effect positive change.