

Kid Zone History

Kids Zone® was the "brainchild" of then Region 234 Commissioner Steve Hamann in 2000. Steve sensed during his field "walkarounds" that the environment was changing. There was more tension, more shouting (definitely more attitude) and less fun than the Region's parents and volunteers had come to expect.

A man of action, Steve came up with a plan that he believed would remind parents that their behavior at games is crucial to setting a good example. His plan included three-inch Kids Zone buttons distributed to parents and coaches and field signs to remind visitors of appropriate conduct. In Region 234 it quickly became obvious to parents that it was up to them to ensure good sideline behavior or suffer the consequences.

Steve approached staff members at the AYSO National Office to help him get his plan under way. The National Board of Directors (NBOD) and National Office staff members provided partial funding and support to implement the plan and that, as we say, was the beginning. The plan was for Region 234 to pilot the program that fall and then make the project ready for national implementation the following year. Steve and Region 234 did an exemplary job and provided the NBOD and National Office staff with reports, ideas and help to launch the new program.

Since its inception, we have added a Kids Zone Parent Pledge and other assorted materials and paraphernalia. Currently the Kids Zone program is being used in nearly 50 percent of our AYSO Regions. Kids Zone does help in controlling negative sideline behavior, but it is not a magic potion, it takes continual reinforcement and commitment to the ideals of good sportsmanship and the AYSO philosophies.