

Parents: When should you step in and approach the coach?

I think nowadays we have a tendency to be helicopter parents that hover over our children because we do not want them to struggle or be in adverse situations. Parents too often bail their kids out when they should actually teach them how to conquer these situations on their own.

When your child isn't getting enough playing time for whatever reason, they need to learn to use sitting on the bench as motivation to work a little harder. If they're not the best or most talented player on the team, they should put in that extra effort not only on the field during practice, but off the field as well. **We all have special gifts and some players have more abilities than others but baseball and softball are team sports, and the best teams win. Learning to help the team no matter your role is important and every player on the bench has some role, learning to embrace that role is a very important lesson for both athletes and parents.**

One thing that should be instilled in young athletes is that taking initiative and going out and practicing on your own is necessary to become a great player. You can practice every aspect of the sport on your own. Skills such as body mechanics, hitting and throwing mechanics, fielding, etc., can all be worked on outside of an organized practice. All of the little things athletes do their own are what **help them develop** into great players, not just the things they do during a game or at practice with a coach.

My parents taught me to respect my coaches and respect their decisions. Instead of giving me an out, they challenged me to work harder and really earn every minute of playing time I got. If I was not playing for whatever reason, they challenged me to be better, to work harder.

There is a fine line between what we need to do as parents to protect our children and what we need to do to inspire them to work harder and be tougher both mentally

and emotionally. It's important to sometimes step back, and not be so reactionary. Parents really need to analyze the situation first and understand why these decisions are being made before they jump into the situation. **I learned to work through many adverse game situations and because of that, because I was not rescued at the first sight of trouble, I learned to become stronger—in mentality, confidence, and ability. I learned to believe in myself no matter the situation. Trusting yourself as an athlete is a must for success.**

For parents, stepping back and taking a quick assessment before being reactionary is really important. Step back and look at the team and look at the coach. Figure out what is going on first before you swoop in to protect your child. A lot of times when we step back, we get a clearer picture of what is truly going on. Once we have taken everything into account, from there we can then figure out the best way to approach the situation before getting defensive or overprotective.