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Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

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We're
not playing
for
Sheep Stations!



AFL & parents
combining
for our kids



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WHAT IS AFL KIDS FIRST?

Today's parents have an important role in the delivery and support of sporting activities for their own and other children. With it comes a clear responsibility to act in a constructive and encouraging manner at all times.

Barracking and wanting your child to perform well is human nature, but it is critical that this should be done in a responsible manner avoiding the ugly parent syndrome at all times.

The AFL invests more than \$40 million annually in strategies that support the participation of 550,000 players throughout Australia. AFL Kids First is a program that has been designed for leagues and associations to guide parents so that both they and their children obtain the maximum benefit and enjoyment from their participation in junior programs and matches.

AFL Kids First includes recommendations for leagues, associations and their clubs to manage situations where parents become over-enthusiastic and risk having a negative impact on their children's activities.

The basic principles of AFL Kids First are to remind parents that:

- Sport for children is a vital part of their growing up.
- Children like to win, but more importantly, they want to have fun.
- Parents need to set the right example at the sports ground, not just at home.
- Parents should be proud of their child's efforts irrespective of the result.
- Sport is important to children's self-esteem.

The AFL has produced an operational manual for leagues, associations and clubs to drive these principles, and to remind parents of the vital responsibilities and to outline appropriate procedures in the event problems arise.

The manual outlines the program's objectives, presents the code of conduct appropriate to all parents, describes the education process for junior leagues and associations, and the conduct of an information session, the appointment of a coordinator to manage process, and the role and duties of the coordinator, parents, and administrators.

We are proud of the work we have done to develop this program, and we are confident that working together – leagues, clubs, communities, and parents – we can be sure that our common objective will be met: to put our kids first.

This brochure has been distributed nationwide to parents of junior footballers. It has been distributed to introduce you to our policy, and to provide a first view of our preferred code of conduct (opposite). I commend the program to you, and urge your support, and cooperation for the good of all our children.

Andrew Demetriou
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Football League

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Provide a formal framework in which leagues, associations and clubs can encourage constructive parent behaviour.
2. Develop parental understanding of the importance of setting the right example in junior sport.
3. Increase parent/guardian ownership in providing a quality sporting environment.
4. Promote good social behaviour in junior sport.
5. Promote appreciation and foster increased respect for the role of the umpire.
6. Promote encouragement of all children in both teams.
7. Decrease the number of conflict situations at junior matches.

CODE OF CONDUCT



THE AFL ASKS PARENTS TO OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING CODE OF CONDUCT:

- 1 Remember that children play sport for their enjoyment, not yours.
- 2 Encourage children to participate – do not force participation upon them.
- 3 Focus on the child's efforts and self-esteem rather than whether they win or lose.
- 4 Encourage children to always participate according to the rules.
- 5 Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or for the team losing a game.
- 6 Remember that children learn best by example – applaud the efforts of all players in both teams.
- 7 Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from sporting activities.
- 8 Show appreciation of volunteer coaches, officials and administrators, without whom your child could not participate.
- 9 Respect umpires' decisions and teach children to do likewise.
- 10 Remember that smoking and the consumption of alcohol is unacceptable at junior sport.