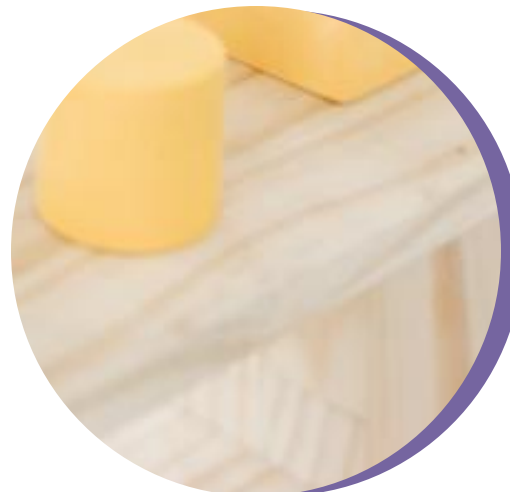




## **Teaching Kids How to Be Good Winners and Losers**

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The Hangout Spot | April 2023



**You don't win silver. You lose gold.**



# A Parent's Role in Good Sportsmanship

- Children are growing up in a world where the pervasive message is “winning is everything”
- A rise in poor sportsmanship in the professional arena has correlated with an increase in “trash talking” and violence in youth sports
- Children learn from the adults in their lives, including parents and coaches
- Parents and coaches who teach good sportsmanship are more likely to help children develop into mature, successful, and respectful young adults

# What Is Good Sportsmanship?

When people who are participating in or watching a competitive activity treat each other with respect



*“Sometimes when people win games, they get really excited, and they gloat. They might jump up and down, cheer for themselves, and do ‘the end zone dance.’ That’s being a bad winner.”*

The Peers Curriculum for  
School-Based Professionals

# GAME OVER

*“Another rule for being a good sport is to avoid sulking or getting angry if you lose. That’s being a sore loser.”*

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# Be Specific

- Saying “be a good sport” doesn’t mean a whole lot to a child just learning these skills
- Tell your child exactly what you mean
- Outline exactly what they should say and do
  - Praise your friends
  - Play by the rules
  - Don’t be a referee
  - Don’t be a coach
  - Share and take turns
  - Don’t be competitive
  - Help and show concern if someone is interested (outdoor sports)
  - Suggest a change if you’re bored
  - Don’t be a bad winner
  - Don’t be a sore loser

# Be a Role Model

- Offer praise and encouragement for all players, including your child's opponents
- Never openly tease, berate, or demean a player, coach, or referee
- Refrain from criticizing the pros when watching sporting events with your child on television or in real-life
- Model the philosophy that you don't always need to win or be the best to have fun



# Find a Good Fit For a Coach

- Look for coaching training and certification
  - Positive Coaching Alliance
  - National Alliance for Youth Sports
  - American Coaching Academy
- Background checks can help screen

# Recognize Your Hidden Agenda

- Reflect critically on why you want your child to participate in competitive activities
  - Pleasurable, social activity that will teach new skills and offer a community
  - Dreams of turning talent into a college scholarship or lucrative career
- Self-awareness is the first step in changing your parenting behaviors

# Set the Rules

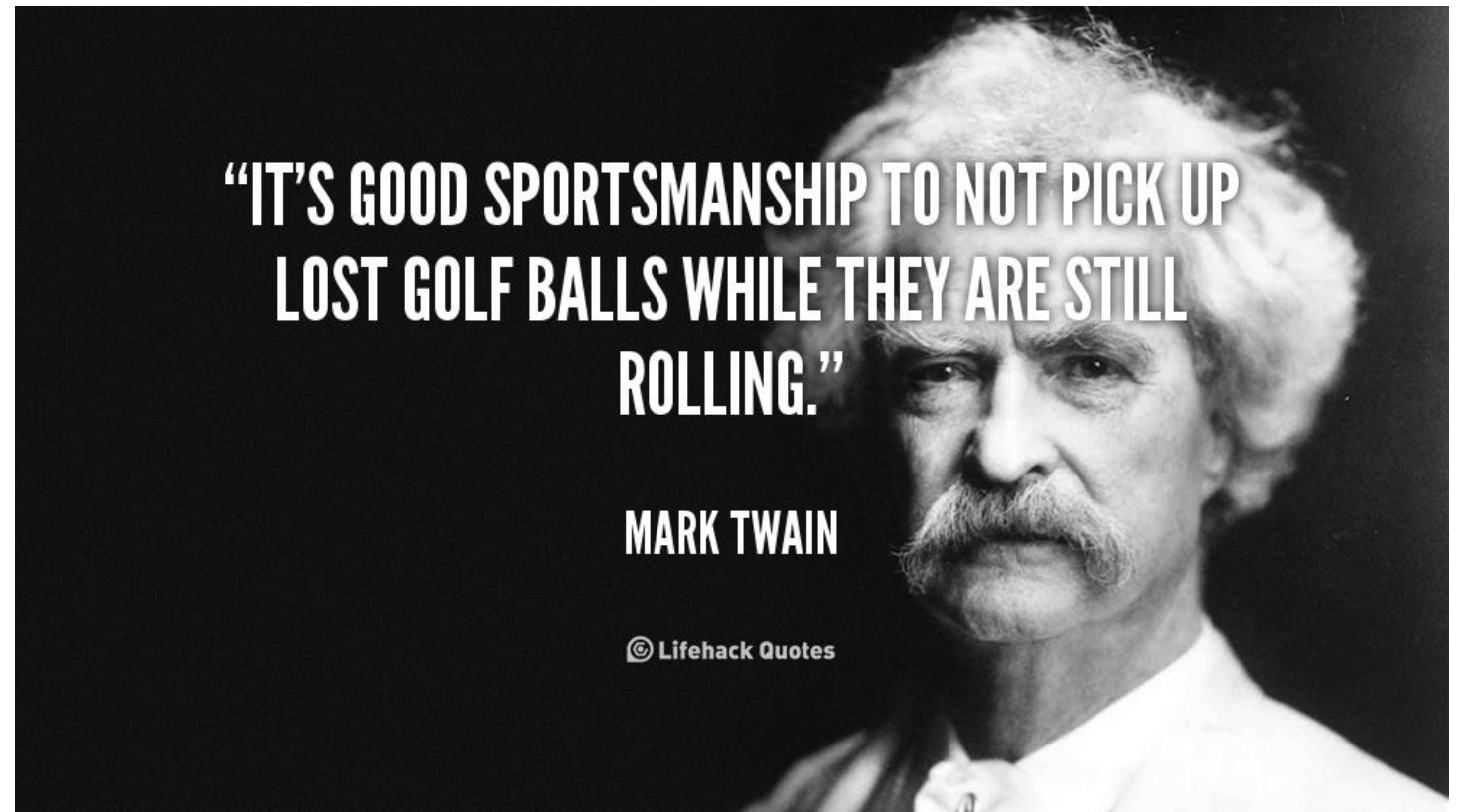
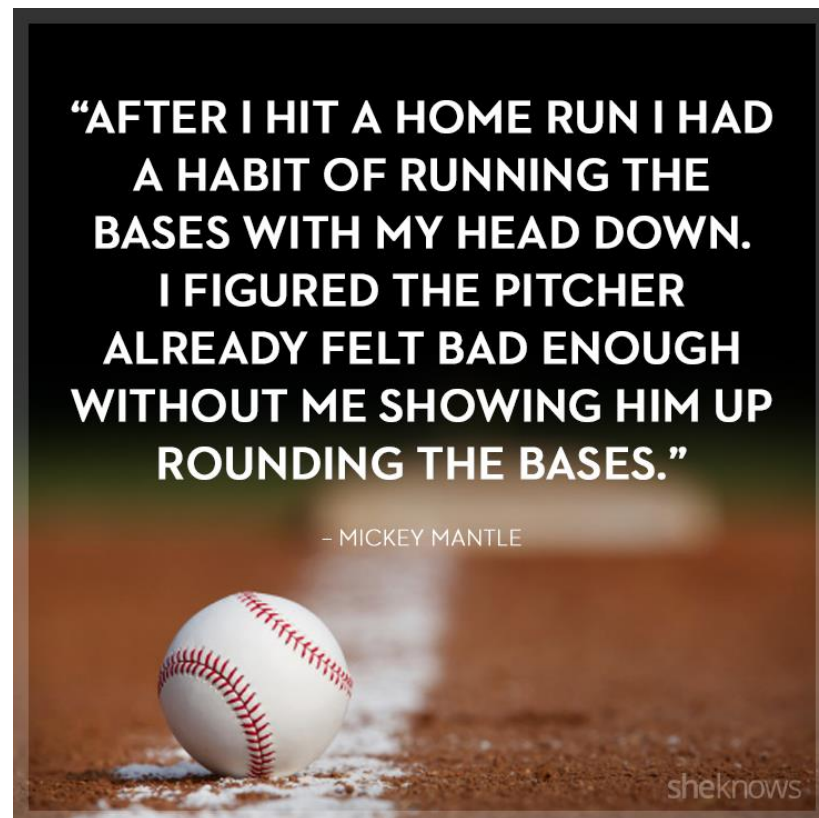
- Establish sportsmanship expectations in your home
  - During family game night, it's OK to feel disappointed if you don't win. But, you must use kind words and a safe body. Feel free to take a break if you need one.
  - When we play video games, it's important to be kind even if you win. Making good sports comments, like "Good game," makes us want to keep playing.
- If your child engages in poor sportsmanship, you must address the behavior- even if others don't
- Have discussions with coaches as needed

# Find Teachable Moments

- Players who taunt their opponents
- Being ejected from a game
- The cost to a team of a technical foul
- Appropriate behaviors when interacting with the opposing team



# Use Visual Supports





# Execute a Behavioral Contract

- Can be signed with your child at the start of a season, before a play date/hangout, or at home
- Should include a detailed description of good sportsmanship expectations
  - Cheating
  - Losing one's temper
  - Negative criticism
  - Blaming
  - Trash talk
  - Showboating
  - Arguing
  - Treatment of opponents at the end of a game
- Outline reinforcers, should goals be met
- Outline consequences, should goals not be met

# Reward Good Sportsmanship

- Identify moments of success
- Identify reinforcers for your specific child
  - Ice cream with a teammate after the game
  - Staying up a half hour later
  - Extra screen time
  - Going first in the next game
  - Getting a bonus spin
  - Picking their game piece
- Provide reinforcers contingent on good sportsmanship
- Use behavior-specific praise as well
  - “Good job shaking hands with the other team after the game.”
  - “I love how you kept your cool when your piece got sent back to home.”

# Remind Your Child of Expectations at the Start of Competition

- Point out the stressors that might arise during the competition
- Normalize feelings your child may experience
- Remind them what they can say and do when they experience big feelings
- Role-play possible stressors before you get started

# Remind Your Child of Expectations at the Start of Competition

“I’m so excited to play Trouble! Remember, when we are playing trouble, you might get sent back to home. It’s OK to feel disappointed or frustrated if you get sent back to home. I feel bummed when I have a setback too. If you feel disappointed or frustrated when you get sent back to home, you could always ask for a break until you are ready to keep playing! Let’s practice...”

# Use Nonverbal Communication When Your Child Is On the Field

- Thumbs up, smiles, and cheering when your child demonstrates good sportsmanship
- Develop a gesture prompt that is code for “remember to be a good sport”
- Review the prompt with your child before the big game
- Use it as needed when situations arise

# Every Player Needs Practice

- Not just with the game, but with good sportsmanship too
- Provide frequent opportunities to practice being a good sports during competitive games
- Start with quick, easy winning/losing games
  - Coin Toss
  - Rock, Paper, Scissors, Shoot
  - Higher or Lower
- Increase intensity to slightly longer and more complex winning/losing games as your child progresses
  - Uno
  - Connect Four
- Save games that have a long build up to an ultimate win or loss for the end
  - Monopoly
- If your child struggles with technology, save video games for the last step of instruction



# What do you think about our spot?



Before we wrap up, let's do a quick survey!  
Scan to share your thoughts!



Got  
Questions?  
We've got  
Answers.

