

## Parentally Speaking February 2008

**As a parent, what should you do if your child comes to you and complains that a coach yells at him or her too much during practices or games?**

Coming from a child, this feedback is valuable to you as a parent. It also is valuable to the coach. Sometimes kids can overreact to passion, emotion and frustration, and more times than not, coaches can deliver frustration in a way that is unfair to the kids on a team. It is important for you to approach the coach right away and express your concerns. Tell him or her what your child told you and start to probe. Try to find out exactly what happened so that you can assess the situation better.

In the end you want to provide a good, nurturing environment for young athletes. In many cases kids are just being introduced to competitive team sports. You want to tap into their love of games and competition and create an atmosphere that is fun. You don't want to make it too structured too soon and take the joy out of the game, because that's what brings them back. It may not be an easy conversation to have, but don't brush this under the rug. Find a quiet spot away from the field or court to discuss your concerns. You will be doing your child, and the other kids on the team, a great service.

**By Cal Ripken, Jr.**