

The Ten Commandments for Figure Skating Parents



I. Thou shalt not impose your ambitions on thy child. Remember that figure skating is your child's activity. Improvement and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of other athletes, and don't push them based on what you think they should be doing.

II. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what. There is only one question to ask your child - "Did you have fun?" If competitions, shows, and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

III. Thou shalt not coach your child. You have taken your child to a professional coach - do not undermine that performance by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to support and love your child no matter what, and the coach is responsible for the technical part of the job.

IV. Thou shalt only have positive things to say at a competition. If you are going to show up at a competition, you should cheer and applaud, but never criticize your child, other children, the judges, coaches, or officials. Always strive to set a good example for your child.

V. Thou shalt acknowledge thy child's fears. A first competition (or every competition) can be a stressful situation. It is totally appropriate for your child to be anxious. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child they are ready for it.

VI. Thou shalt not criticize the judges. If you complain about the judging or results, don't be surprised when your child models your behavior and acts out against other authority figures in his life. He learned it from you.

VII. Honor thy child's coach. The bond between coach and skater is a special one and one that contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child.

VIII. The child shall have goals besides winning. Giving an honest effort, regardless of the outcome, is much more important than winning. An Olympic swimmer once said, "My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that but someone did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal and lost. That does not make me a failure. In fact, I am very proud of that race."

IX. Thou shalt place your child first above everything. Ask yourself this question - Are your child's goals more important to you than they are to your child? Remember that the focus of youth sports should be fun. Children are constantly changing, and their goals, interests and participation in activities will change as well. Parents should remain flexible, patient and always supportive while their children strive to find their niche in life.

X. Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian. There are more than 100,000 skaters registered with ISI and US Figure Skating. The odds of your child making the Olympic team are less than one in 33,000. Figure Skating is much more than just the Olympics. Ask your coach why he coaches. Chances are he or she was not an Olympic skater but still got enough out of skating that they want to pass that love for the sport on to others. Figure Skating teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship. It builds self-esteem and fitness. It provides lifelong friendships and much more. Figure Skating builds good people and you should be happy that your child wants to participate.