



Enhancing Club Engagement Practices With Parents In Youth Sport



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PROJECT AIMS

This project aimed to (a) explore how organised youth sporting clubs engage parents from the beginning of the sporting season and (b) develop a conceptual model for enhancing engagement practices with parents.

METHODS

280
HOURS
COVERT FIELD OBSERVATIONS

8
CLUBS

>40
COLLABORATIVE
INTERVIEWS
WITH PARENTS & COACHES



FOOTBALL



TENNIS



NETBALL



SWIMMING

KEY FINDINGS

- Regular, face-to-face communication between parents and coaches is rare
- The predominant form of engagement with parents is based on requests for time, money or information.
- Parents can feel undervalued, dismissed, and unsupported in relation to the sporting journey
- Clubs and coaches can do much more to build relationships with families (see below)

STRATEGIES TO ONBOARD PARENTS FOR THE SPORTING JOURNEY

Enhancing relationships with parents improves psychosocial and developmental outcomes for players and strengthens club culture. To positively build relationships with parents, clubs can make a range of 'deposits' into the relationship 'bank' from day one of the sporting season to set up families for a successful journey.

From day one of the journey



SHARE YOUR STORY

- Parents want knowledge, not numbers.
- Share a story about what makes your club great.
- Share club values and vision.



PERSONALISE

- Learn the names of the players and parents.
- Actively work to understand the family dynamic (e.g. skills, experiences, expectations).



THANKYOU

- Recognise parents efforts to support their child's attendance at games and training
- Thank parents for trusting your club with their child's development.



Across the sporting journey



CHECK-IN

- Prioritise well-being of players, parents, volunteers and the broader club community.
- 'Check-in' with families (and not just players or coaches).



CELEBRATE THE 3-FOR-1

- Parents do not always understand the benefits of sport.
- Communicate the physical, social and psychological benefits of being a participant or volunteer.



PERIODIC EXCHANGE

- Create regular opportunities to communicate with coaches and club leaders to share ideas, discuss concerns and gain clarity about their child's involvement in sport.

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