

Respect in Sports

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A monthly newsletter for everyone interested in supporting a positive youth sports experience.



The Sports Alliance of Minnesota is a coalition of sports organizations whose mission is to provide tools for creating a positive sports environment.

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Importance of Communication

Beyond Who, What, When & Where!

By: Mary Jo Knudson, Waseca Community Education

Communication is important in any program, but many times we focus on communicating messages to parents and participants. Usually, this happens at the beginning of the program to get out the “who, what, when & where” messages that are essential to the schedule ahead.

When you want to offer quality experiences for participants every year, it is just as important to allow for communication in different ways. Most significantly:

- Evaluations from participants and parents regarding the program.
- Evaluations of your staff from you and others.
- Evaluations of the program from you and your staff.

Break out of the boring! Get rid of paper! Get rid of “rate these items on a scale of 1-10”! The use of technology is becoming more common when gathering information and is usually convenient for families. Sites like Survey Monkey and Zoomerang offer basic surveys for free.

A few tips regarding evaluations from participants and parents:

- Keep surveys short & let them know upfront how many questions you have or how long it should take them to complete.
- Keep questions simple & easy to understand.
- Always leave one of your questions for open ended comments. They may have something to say that you didn’t address.
- Ask how they would make the program better.
- Ask if they would participate again, then why or why not. (What’s the deal-breaker for them?)
- When tailoring an evaluation for kids, be sure to ask them if they had fun, if they were taught good sportsmanship, if they thought they improved through the year, and if they thought they were treated fairly.
- When creating a youth evaluation, if the participants are under a 3rd grade reading level, use smiley faces and sad faces for them to rate items.
- Make sure to have some duplication in questions when giving the survey to both participants and their parents. (Sometimes you get two different answers to the same question!)
- Expect negative comments, you can never make everyone happy.

When interpreting results, have someone else look at the results as well. Take an objective look at constructive criticism. Figure out what things you can feasibly change or improve and then prioritize them.

For the complete article, please [click here](#).

Sports Alliance of Minnesota, PO Box 27031, Golden Valley, MN 55305

