Implementing a Club-Wide Parent Education Program

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The discussion centers around

1. Why...do we need it
2. What....to deliver
3. How/when...to deliver and assess
Goal of today – I want to make you think
Parent education frequently is...

• A Handbook outlining fee structure, games, tourneys and expectations
• Periodic email blasts or face to face about reminders of what to do and not to do
• Sometimes a college program
• ...A this and a that telling them what to do and when to do it and please sign checks
• But is it a well thought out endeavor?

• With goals and outcomes in mind?

• ...should it be?
1. Why?

So...why do we need it?
Why

Because

1. They spend Approximately 93% of the time with your client

2. If not done, or done poorly, parents are left to *their own devices* during that 93%
Why?

So...bigger question is what is a parent that is left to their own devices?

..or what is an uneducated parent?

• Lets get a picture of a parent and what they do..
How can we assess the effectiveness of this un-education process?

• Use a “program analysis” approach
• Lets chat about their
  – Reaction to the education/information
  – Learning based on what they are getting
  – Behaviors as a result of learning

• This will give us a way to frame how parents essentially take the information you provide and use it
Reactions

• How do they react to emails, handbook, etc... telling them what they can do and when they can do it?

• Do they respond?

• What do they say to you?
Learning

• What **knowledge** are they getting?

• What **skills** are they getting?

• What **attitudes** are they adopting?
Behavior

What **behaviors** are they exhibiting?

This is by far the easiest thing to assess....just go to a field
Thoughts

• The goal cannot be to create perfect parents
  – Its impossible
  – like every “-oholic” there is relapse!!

• So what is the goal?
Thoughts

The goal – as I see it – is to create informed and educated parents by

1. Improving self awareness
2. Creating an understanding of what things are going on
3. Creating an understanding of what’s important
Thoughts

• I have come to this realization based on my own development and parenting
  – In school with my sons
  – In soccer with my sons

• So the question remains on what do we educate them?
2. What
What can you give parents?

Information to build behaviors

So goal is to build

– Knowledge
– Skills
– Attitudes
What can you give parents?

This “information” should be about

A. What there kids might be experiencing/feeling
B. What is in store for their kids and when
C. What things they can do to help their kids be successful
A. What there kids might be experiencing/feeling

Provide information on what their kids may be feeling and going through during games, practices, tournaments etc...

• Anxiety when learning something new
• Joy when doing it in front of a peer in this type of game
• Sessions early in the year when just getting their legs
• Etc...
B. What is in store for their kids and when

Provide ideas on what different age group kids may be experiencing/going through relative to their sport and their age

- Youngers
  - base it on things like piagetian stages of development
  - how kids think and solve problems

- Olders – base it on what players are thinking now like
  - planning for hs,
  - ..and college soccer
  - ..and dates
  - etc...

Provide a calendar outlining some of these things over time – short and long
C. What things parents can do to help their kids be successful
POTENTIALING™
YOUR CHILD IN SOCCER

A parent’s guide for helping kids maximize their potential in soccer and in life
The book takes performance psychology concepts like confidence, motivation, etc... and provides parents with a way to assist them in building these at the right times.
Potentialing goes beyond the normal things we may say to parents to be “helpful”
• “Get your kids something to eat after the game”
• “Be positive and cheer”
• “Stop coaching from the sideline”
• “Sit down and shut up” (extreme but it happens)

The ideas in the book provide actual ways that potential and talent can be developed...from a parental perspective...through the BIG 5
Big 5

- The Big 5 are:
  - Play
  - Motivation
  - Persistence
  - Confidence
  - Communication

- These same constructs are used by coaches to improve player performance but when used (differently) by a parent nurture potential as opposed to teach it
As you can see...

The purpose is really two fold

1. To educate parents and give them the “What to do” ...and as a result...

2. ...let you/help you do your job of developing players

Each club, team and player faces unique challenges

So, each club will likely use the book and its ideas a bit differently
3. How...
How...

1. In Context
2. Center it around
   A. Adult learning principles
   B. Adult motivation principles
3. At appropriate times and innovative ways
1. Context

You – club, team, player

Them – player, team, club

The parent will ALWAYS have a different starting point than you and as a result their “context” for hearing is different...so know this
1. Context

You must learn to be aware of

• your self
• their self

Empathy and listening are key
Knowles principles of adult learning

- **Self concept** – strategies to include adults in planning & evaluation of practices/games
- **Experience** – strategies to include more hands on experience
- **Readiness to learn** - strategies to include subjects that are relevant to them
- **Orientation to learning** - strategies to include problem centered vs content oriented
- **Motivation to learn** - strategies to motivate
2B. Add ARCS

ARCS model of motivational instructional design for adults:

- **Attention** – strategies for arousing curiosity and interest
- **Relevance** – strategies that link learners needs interests and motives
- **Confidence** – strategies that help parents develop a positive expectation for successful achievement
- **Satisfaction** – strategies that provide extrinsic and intrinsic motivation for effort
3. At appropriate times and innovative ways

Practical ways to use these ideas

• Before season
• During season
• Conclusion of season
Before season

Use the website
• Up to date info and links
• Create a Parents page
• Add items like
  – Everything you need to know sheet
  – People to contact with issues
  – Costs
  – Education websites
  – Current topics
Before season

Town hall meetings

• About what’s coming and any changes
• Opportunities for parents to express themselves
Before season

At tryouts

• Handout explaining everything that will come in the season
• Explanation by not just the coach
• Be transparent
• Tell them what you are going to do, why you are going to do it and how it will improve their son or daughter
• ...keep in mind its not what you say but how you say it...
Before season

After tryouts

• An email very quickly explaining best place for son or daughter
• Be available for communication
Before season - Once team is selected

• A discussion of goal of the season
• A discussion of ways parents can help and what they can say at games
• An introduction to the “parent education nights”

• A *Potentialing* book in the hands of every parent
During season

- Manage the group and the individual
- Educate
Club wide parent education sessions

• As follow up to support the concepts in book
• And on things kids are feeling/experiencing
• Specific to unique issues of the club
  – as a leading club/ chasing club
  – building/established club
  – low/high SES
  – lots/minimal parental involvement, etc...
• Specific to unique times of the year
  – before pressure tournaments
  – beginning of the season
  – end of season
  – before an extended break
Periodic emails

• To the group communicate certain expectations
• To individuals
• Not just the manager
During season

Club-wide events that

• Involve parents and families
• Are fun and tout successes of teams and players
  – Based on process not product
  – Based on community service
  – Based on long term growth
During season

Evaluations with player and parent
During season

Educate coaches to educate parents

• Ideas for team meetings on certain topics
• Ideas for emails here and there on certain topics/concepts
• Suggestions on ways to deal with problem parents
• Help create expectations vs. rules - documents that aren't contracts for parents but rather development ideas and “this is what you are expected to do” statements
At the end of season

Closing the season is critical

- Individual evaluations
- Team get together
- Club function
Assess the effectiveness of the program
How?

1. Use questions for program analysis as guiders

2. Assess
   1. Informally
   2. Formally
Assessment guides

Reactions

Learning

Behaviors
Reactions

• How do they react to information received?
  – Feel engaged
  – Feel they are receiving value-added information
  – Feel like they are missionaries of the program
  – Feel passionate, motivated and inspired to inspire others?
  – Feel they have the ability to become a good and effective “assistant” in the learning process?
Learning

• What knowledge did you want participants to learn?

• What skills did your participants learn or improve?

• What attitudes did your participants change?
Behavior

• Quality behavior towards their own son or daughter

• Quality behavior towards other children

• ...in times of “crisis”
How to assess?

Informal:
• Coaches and DOCs ask
• Board members ask and chat

Formal
• On-line survey with questions (I have some of these)
• On-line evaluation sent through email
Conclusion

Ensure you
• think about what happens if you do nothing
• think about what is important to your club
• think about what parents are thinking and where they are coming from
• Create an approach and set of information pieces that can be delivered
  – In different ways
  – And during various phases of your year
• Assess the effectiveness of your program to involve and grow an change

Rinse and repeat