

Opportunity Mindset Tips

Transforming Challenges into Possibilities

“My child is very competitive and losing triggers a fit—falling to the ground, screaming, and crying! This happens no matter where we are!”



CHALLENGE

How do I teach my child to be a good sport and accept that losing is a part of life?



CHOICE

You can decide how to think about this moment and how to respond. You can choose to see this challenge as a chance for your child to learn and grow.



OPPORTUNITY

When children learn to handle losing, they build the life skill of **Taking on Challenges** and **Self-Control**.

SKILL-BUILDING STRATEGIES

1 TAKE YOUR CHILD'S VIEW

NOTICE how your child may be feeling. Are there reasons that losing is especially hard for your child? Are they trying to be perfect? Do they feel embarrassed if they lose? Or is it something else? Let your child know that you understand how upsetting it can be to lose. Tell them you know that winning feels very important to them right now.

2 SHARE REASONS

EXPLAIN that everyone loses sometimes, even the best players in the world. Whether we win or lose, we can think about what we can do better the next time. Let your child know it's also normal to feel sad, disappointed, or even angry when they lose. At a calm moment, ask them how it feels to play with someone who does not handle losing well. Remind your child that it's hard to play with someone who loses their temper, so they need to find better ways to manage their feelings. Tell them that when they lose, they have a chance to practice learning from mistakes and how to handle disappointment.

3 PROVIDE CHOICES

SET LIMITS in the moment to help your child manage their frustration. You can offer two choices, such as, they can count to 10 or take three deep breaths. They may want to remember a time when they played a game really well or think of a story of a favorite athlete who faced a challenge and how they managed.

4 PROBLEM-SOLVE TOGETHER

INVITE your child to think of better ways to express their frustration. Take turns coming up with ideas of what they could say instead of having a tantrum. For example, “Oh, well. That was a tough game!” or “There’s always next time!” Help them make a list and post it on the wall.

5 SCAFFOLD

BUILD ON your child's efforts. Prepare for the next time your child feels disappointed, so they have tools and choices when the moment arises. Praise them when they resist an impulse to throw a fit. Ask your child what they learned from this situation. Ask them to be as specific as they can about strategies they can use in the future. This will help your child see losing as an opportunity to learn from mistakes and be a good sport.

An Opportunity Mindset means choosing to see a challenge as a chance to learn and grow.

**SELF-CONTROL
AND TAKING
ON CHALLENGES**

Life is full of stresses and challenges. Avoiding challenges can be tempting, but children who tackle challenges head-on do better in school and in life. Learning to lose takes practice. Team sports and informal games can teach children how to manage disappointment and learn that winning and losing are both a part of life. Source: Child Development Institute.

For more information visit: www.mindinthemaking.org

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