

# How Parents Can Play a Role in a Child Injury

October 29 2009, by Erin Hawes

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(PhysOrg.com) -- When a teenager suffers a sports-related injury, many times their agony is more mental than physical.

Les Podlog, expert in Health, [Exercise](#) and Sport Sciences, said it is not uncommon for injured teens to feel like their peers might view them as “weak” or “soft.” He said parents must expect this sort of mentality if their child experiences an injury.

Podlog, who recently wrote “What Can I Do to Help My Child? The Injured Adolescent Athlete and the Role of Parental Support,” said the most imperative help parents can give is to listen to their child. He presented on Sept. 16. at the Annual Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology.

After researching, Podlog compiled suggestions for parents that offer tangible forms of support to maintain a positive outlook.

## What Parents May Not Know

Parents of athletes said one of the main concerns their children brought to attention was missing the social aspect of their sport as well as the involvement with their team.

“They felt a sense of isolation from their peers in their sport and that they were missing opportunities with their teammates,” he said.

Many parents claimed their children were eager to perform and show they had not lost their talent. This is due to “self-presentation” concerns, he said, which are very common amongst [adolescents](#).

“People differ in terms of their motivations. When you’re a kid, your social image is more important to you than when you’re older,” he said. “Because we’re aware that people make judgments on who we are, we do things to monitor or control the impressions that we make of ourselves.”

One mother claimed her daughter felt pressure to participate just from watching her peers practice. She reported her daughter was having difficulty performing her separate exercises on her own time without having any team interaction.

## Parental Aid

This is where the parental support really comes into play, Podlog said.

“A lot of what the parents focused on was simply talking to their kids, providing them with reassurance,” he said.

Podlog said one of the most important things is for parents to understand their child’s concerns and the pressure they are facing. Offering tangible forms of support was another advised idea by parents, like taking the children to the doctor or physiologist, or as simple as serving as a counselor while they deal with mental battles.

“If they can’t get to where they need to be, it’s hard for them to recover effectively,” he said.

Other parents said they sat down and actually performed the rehabilitation exercises with their kids because they knew their kids would not be inclined to continue unless someone else was there doing it

with them.

Above all, Podlog said [parents](#) need to maintain a positive frame of mind in order to help their children keep up progress and also maintain a positive mentality.

“It seems like there are a lot of adolescents who get hurt playing sports,” he said. “If there are simple things that can be done to enhance that process, or make it easier, then it’s worth knowing.”

Provided by Texas Tech University

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