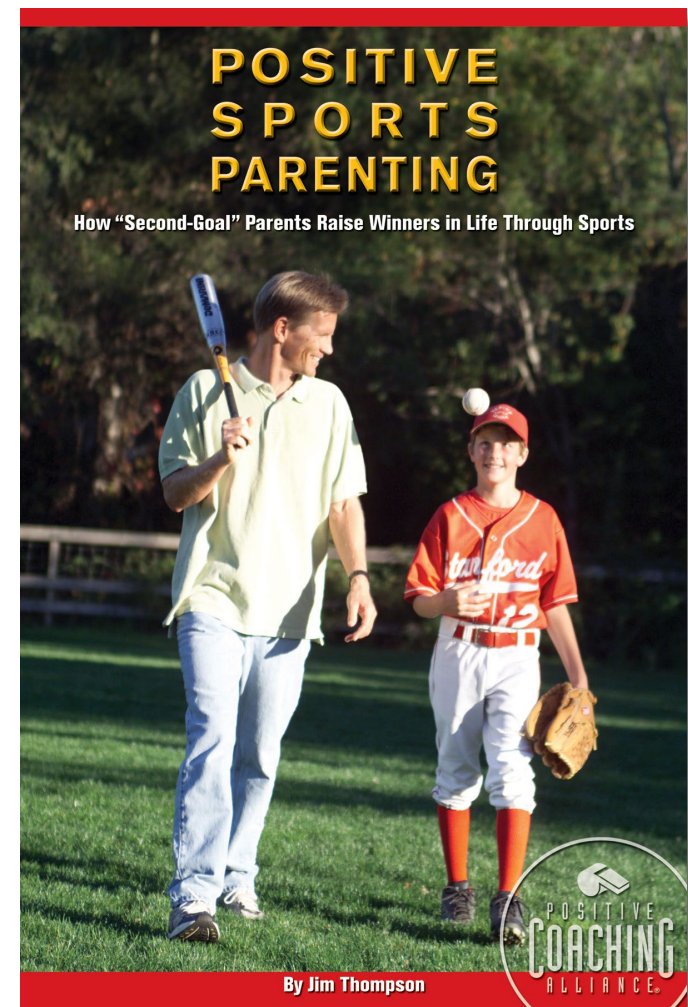


**Case Study 1: Your child is about to play in an important game. In the hours leading up to the game, you notice your child seems particularly nervous. As a Second-Goal Parent, what should you do?**

Recognize that nervousness and fear are a part of sports. Particularly as kids get older, knowing that their performance matters can cause anxiety. The objective is to help your child learn to deal with the fear that often accompanies performances – in sports or any activity. This is much more important than how well he performs in this particular situation.

Here's what you can do:

- Make sure your child knows that he doesn't have to perform well to please you. This may seem silly, but children often get confused about this. "Enrique, I want to make sure you understand that I love you no matter how you perform today. You don't have to do anything to make me proud of you. So go out there and have fun." Then act the part. If he does well, don't go overboard in showing your delight. If he doesn't do well, maintain an even keel about that as well.
- Acknowledge nervousness and fear directly. Refusing to acknowledge fear of failure doesn't make it go away; it goes underground where it can do real damage. "Just about all great athletes get nervous before a big competition. Remember, nervous is normal." If you have a good story about a time when you were nervous before a game, you might share that story with your child, especially if it has a positive ending.
- Reinforce the elements of the ELM Tree (Effort, Learning, bouncing back from Mistakes). Because the elements of ELM are more under your child's control than results on the scoreboard, encouraging her to focus on giving her best effort can reduce her anxiety. "Katie, I know you want to win today, but if you give your best effort, you'll be a winner in my book no matter what the outcome."
- If you (or your child's coach) have introduced a mistake ritual to your child (as discussed in Chapter 5), this is a good time to refer to it. "I hope you remember to use your mistake ritual to flush away any mistakes so you can focus on the next play."



To learn more about *Positive Sports Parenting* and other PCA books visit [www.positivecoach.org/our-work/our-books](http://www.positivecoach.org/our-work/our-books)

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