

Parental Involvement Is Key To Teaching Good Sportsmanship

(NAPSA)—With more than 30 million children participating in organized sports each year, teaching good sportsmanship to child athletes is an important parental responsibility.

In fact, more than 86 percent of Americans believe that a parent is the best person to teach sportsmanship, according to a recent survey conducted by the Awards and Recognition Association (ARA) and TNS/NFO Research. Teachers, coaches and friends were also named as the best people to teach sportsmanship to kids.

“There is no doubt that all the rules, coaching and education can’t replace what happens at home,” said LaVell Edwards, former Brigham Young University football coach, parent of three children and chair of a selection panel for the ARA Sportsmanship Award. “Teaching good sportsmanship starts with parents, and they need to model behavior throughout the entire process.”

Americans’ dissatisfaction with the state of sportsmanship is high, as more than 63 percent of Americans believe the current state of sportsmanship is worse than when they were growing up, and just 5 percent report that sportsmanship is better today.

To help teach sportsmanship, Coach Edwards and other former coaches created a list of tips, which include:

- Remind kids of the importance of sportsmanship and model it during all competitive activities,



whether in the backyard or at the kitchen table.

- Do not put pressure on kids to be the best; instead, teach them to enjoy the game.

- Model good sportsmanship and ask others to do the same.

- Discuss the need for good sportsmanship with your child’s teacher or coach and know their action plan.

As a parent coach:

- Establish a sportsmanship award at the start of the season, letting parents and athletes know that good on-field behavior will be recognized. Visit www.ara.org for examples.

- Set an example by treating all athletes, coaches, officials and parents respectfully, and cheer on good plays when you see them, even if they’re by the other team.

- Don’t emphasize winning; rather, emphasize skills and fair play.

- Praise positive and correct negative behavior.

- Demonstrate how to celebrate victory without humiliating competitors, and how to lose with dignity.