

TrueSportPARENT Preparation



Teaching your athlete how to prepare to play their sport involves more than just having them tie their shoes and do a brief warm-up (though those are certainly important, too).

Good preparation for a big game or competition starts from the inside out, and teaching these three things can help calm your athlete's nerves and prepare them to play their best, every time:

1. **Develop and commit to a plan:** *A consistent pregame routine gives familiarity to an athlete in an otherwise intimidating situation. In the next section, you'll find some examples of good things to include in a pregame routine*
2. **Build confidence:** *Getting your athlete to practice positive self-talk and visualize themselves doing well ensures their mind is in a good place and ready to focus on the game*
3. **Simplify:** *Preparation should calm an athlete, not overwhelm them. Emphasize not focusing on the outcome, but instead only on the game's next moment*

These principles are useful in sports but also in life, and can be used by your child to improve in a tough school subject, get better at a new hobby, or overcome any other kind of challenge or task.

The Pieces Of A Great Pregame Plan

No two pregame routines are exactly alike, and what works well for one athlete may not for yours. Figuring out what relaxes and focuses your athlete best is a matter of trial and error, but some of the most popular and effective methods include:



a good night's sleep



packing a bag



deep breathing



running drills



healthy snack



listening to music



doing yoga



visualization

An effective pregame routine your child likes to do will probably be a combination of some of the above methods. It may take some trial and error, but their specific pregame routine will ultimately be determined by their unique personality.

To learn more about hydration for youth athletes, check out:

- [Learn.TrueSport.org](https://www.TrueSport.org) for insightful articles and videos full of valuable prepping advice
- [Teach.TrueSport.org](https://www.Teach.TrueSport.org) for an entire lesson plan surrounding physical and mental preparation
- [Play.TrueSport.org](https://www.Play.TrueSport.org) (app available on the App Store and Google Play) for fun preparation-focused games you can play with your athletes