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“Who’s Your Daddy” guidelines for the pitcher’s father

1. **When you’re deciding what to do for your son...** think of getting him some training to develop his general athletic skills. A pitcher’s performance and mechanics are usually only limited by his strength and physical capabilities.
2. **When you’re out in the yard playing catch with your son,** make sure he takes it seriously. Don’t let him be sloppy, on his warm-ups, his tosses, his throws, or his pitching.
3. **Pay him a dollar, bribe him with food,** or threaten him with video-game cut-off...but make him do a tubing warm-up every time he pitches.
4. **I know you want to help,** but refrain from correcting him on every pitch. Once he receives a correction, it takes about 3 to 5 trials before his insides (which hear you) and his outsides (which do it) actually make the change. Hold your next moment of feedback until he and his body have had a chance to process it.
5. **If you’re coaching his team,** don’t yell-out mechanical corrections to him when he’s pitching. Think about it...do you like when that happens? Don’t forget...he’s a smaller male version of you!
6. **Don’t wait for your son to admit that he’s in pain** if you get an intuition that something is wrong. Particularly between the ages of 11 and 13, they do not admit that something hurts. But if you get the feeling that something is bothering him (elbow or shoulder), trust yourself and get it checked out!
7. **Respect the pitcher, no matter his age.** After all, anyone who is willing to take the hill and have everything depend on him is something special.
8. **Familiarize yourself with the ABA guidelines** for pitch count and recovery. There is a direct connection between pitch count and innings pitched as a predictor of elbow injuries. Don’t leave this responsibility up to the coach.
9. **Make sure your son** takes an off-season. Plan this at the beginning of each year. Pitcher’s perfect their skills during the months when they’re not concerned with winning.
10. **Watch your son carefully** when he pitches and start to help him understand his patterns. When does he start to fatigue? How does he show signs of fatigue? Does he shorten his stride? Does he drop his arm? Does he start missing his spots? Is there a pattern to his misses? The answers can give you a heads-up on conditioning issues as well as mechanical issues that may need some attention.