

The Caddie's Playbook

A short guide for golf parents

Your kid is the golfer. You're the caddie. Here's how to keep it fun, keep it memorable, and give them something more valuable than a lower score.

The most important moment of a tournament day isn't a shot your child hits — it's the car ride home, and what you ask about first. This little guide is your job description as a caddie: calm, supportive, and focused on the things your kid can actually control.

Your job: caddie, not coach

A great caddie keeps the player calm, carries the bag, reads the yardage, and believes in them — and does NOT hit the shots or own the score. That's your role. It gives you an honorable, contained job that isn't critic, swing coach, or scorekeeper.

When your own competitiveness flares — and it will — come back to one question: What does my player need from me right now? Almost always, the answer is calm and belief, not instruction.

What we chase: fun, memorable, process

A score is mostly out of a young player's control — the bounces, the wind, the lie. Stake a kid's worth on it and you get pressure and burnout. So we point them somewhere better:

- Fun & memorable first — joy is the soil everything grows in. When the round becomes a story worth keeping instead of a report card, the score matters less.
- Process over score — we celebrate the reps a player controls: routine, committing to a target, resetting after a mistake. A kid can shoot their worst score ever and still have a great process round.
- Distance from the number — lower scores follow as a byproduct, never as the thing your child's worth rides on.

The car ride home

Swap the opener. Before the score ever comes up, ask:

- "What's a shot you're proud of — not for where it ended up, but for how you handled it?"

- "What made today memorable?"

Then just listen. The score will come up on its own — and when it does, treat it like weather: information, not a verdict.

Words that help, words that hurt

Helps:

- "I loved watching you compete."
- "You stayed so calm after that double."
- "What did you learn out there?"

Hurts:

- "What did you shoot?" — as the first question
- "Why did you...?" / "If you'd just..."
- Silence that clearly means disappointment.

Kids read your face and tone long before your words. The goal isn't to fake enthusiasm over a bad round — it's to genuinely care about the right things, so your reactions reinforce them.

Control what you can

Teach your golfer the difference — it drains the pressure out of the game:

- You control: your routine, your target, your commitment, your reset, your attitude.
- You don't control: the bounce, the lie, the wind, the pin, what other kids shoot.

Staking happiness on the uncontrollable stuff IS the pressure. Move attention to the controllables and the win is always available.

Pressure is the fun part

If your kid gets nervous, don't talk them out of it — reframe it: nervous means you care, and that's the good stuff. The best competitors feel it too; they've just learned it's a sign they're in a moment worth showing up for. Model calm, and they'll borrow it from you.

A 30-second habit, win or lose

Before the round: help them pick ONE process goal — "commit to every shot" or "reset after mistakes." One, not five.

After the round: one memorable moment, and one thing (or person) to be grateful for. Gratitude keeps the whole thing in proportion — golf is a privilege and a game.

The bottom line

You don't need a better swing tip. Be the caddie: calm, supportive, and focused on what your kid controls. Change what you ask about first, praise the process, and protect the fun — and you'll give your young golfer a reason to love this game for life.