

4. IN THE ZONE: CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT GROWTH

BACKGROUND

“Challenge growth” could be interpreted as relentlessly pushing a teen to everything to get a scholarship, award, or job. “Providing support” could be interpreted as the opposite: Doing everything for them.

The goal, the place that is most motivating and helps them grow the best is in the “Growth Zone,” which is the right mix of challenge and support. Finding that balance is the focus of this session.

WATCH these videos on [challenging growth](#) and [providing support](#) (1.2 minutes) and which focuses encouraging each other to push toward goals and supporting them as they do so.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIGS

As a Big, you want your Little to do well. That may be one of the main reasons you got involved. So when you don’t see as much progress as quickly as you’d like, you may be tempted to push, push, push . . . or to start doing things for them, which moves beyond “helping” to “doing for.”

How do you both challenge them to grow by expecting their best and holding them accountable, while also providing them with enough guidance and encouragement that they don’t get discouraged? Finding that right balance—which can change from day to day and from situation to situation—requires ongoing listening, adjusting, and letting your Little know that you’re on their team.

REFLECT ON IT

- How were you challenged to grow when you were growing up?
- What kinds of challenges from others are most motivating to you? What kinds are not motivating? What’s different about each?
- Where do you see areas where your Little could use some extra challenge to grow? What kinds of things might best motivate them?

TALK ABOUT IT

Remember to respond to the questions, too, so it becomes a conversation.

>> With your Little

- What’s a time someone has really pushed you to be or do your best that really motivated you?
- What are ways people try to support you that really help? What ways don’t really help?

>> With your Little’s parent or guardian

- What are things that really seem to motivate [Little’s name] to work hard to achieve a goal?
- What makes it hard for [Little’s name] to stay motivated to work toward goals?
- How do you find the “Challenge Zone” for them?

TRY IT

- **Challenge Zone:** The “Challenge Zone” is when something is hard to do, but not so hard that you give up quickly. Pick a physical activity that you both enjoy. It could be running, basketball—almost anything. Play a little without trying at all. Next, try it really hard for a short time. Finally, find an in-between pace where you can do it for a while, but still get a good workout. Afterwards, talk about which one would benefit you most?
- **Coaching Styles:** Talk together about coaches you’ve seen (in school, in community sports, or on TV). How do they challenge growth while also supporting players? Do they have different styles? Do they all work?



WHAT FAMILIES EXPERIENCE

Relationships are stronger when family members both challenge and support each other. In this session, families explore ways they inspire each other to work toward goals and how they support each other on that journey.

KEY IDEAS

- We push each other to grow in different parts of life so that we can each be and become our best selves.
- Challenging growth is best when it focuses on someone’s own goals or priorities.
- Provide support focuses on how we give practical help to each other in solving problems and achieving goals.
- We grow most in the “Growth Zone,” where we are stretched to grow, but also guided and supported so we can succeed.