

# Parent Guidelines

Shared by Virginia Odyssey of the Mind

## PSSST... ODYSSEY OF THE MIND TEAM PARENTS AND GUARDIANS!

(Yes, you, the ones who are driving the carpools, forking out money for pizza, opening closets for major scavenging, waiting while the team cleans up after a meeting, postponing dinner because one more prop needs finished, and generally watching from the sidelines while the team "gets creative!")

### DID YOU KNOW?

You are the team's secret weapon for success??

You are the "wind beneath the wings" of the team and the coach??

You are a vital part of Odyssey of the Mind??

### DID YOUR CHILD TELL YOU THAT YOU MAY NOT HELP??

That is absolutely wrong!

That is absolutely right!

(Well...which is it???)

BOTH! You may do many things to help the team, but there are also things you might want to do that would cost the team penalty points. So... how do you know the difference? Here is your own handy, dandy, just-for-parents guidelines!

<u>WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:</u>	<u>WHAT PARENTS CANNOT DO:</u>
Transport the team to buy things	Suggest what to buy
Transport the props	Repair props if broken in shipping
Teach the team members a skill IF the team asks, such as: Sewing                      Engineering Woodworking              Principals of simple Calligraphy                machines Art                            Welding Electronics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggest to the team which skills to use to solve a problem</li><li>• Suggest to the team which skills would result in a better-looking or better functioning solution</li><li>• Give the teams any ideas for their problem solution</li><li>• Sew anything, paint anything, do anything to contribute to the team's problem solution</li></ul>
Help provide snacks	Analyze why something failed
Bring spontaneous problem supplies	Expect perfection from a solution not done by adults (or from a solution done by adults, for that matter!)
Help get props into the building for the Tournament, even to the staging area	
Open attics, closets, basements for "garage sale value" materials	Suggest what materials to get from the attic, closet or basement
Provide lots of encouragement	
Provide a place to meet/store props	Fix anything that breaks
Get everyone and everything to the Tournament	Criticize any part of a team's solution
Applaud A LOT and help get props offstage afterwards	Put emphasis on scores instead of fun

As you can tell, parents ARE important, as resources for leaning skills, helping get materials, providing moral support, supplementing working brains with nourishment, and generally facilitating the logistics of a working team. Without your encouragement, your child will not develop the self confidence that Odyssey of the Mind promotes.

## OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

What parents may not do is provide the dreaded "Outside Assistance", for which the team will receive penalties at the tournament. Just remember that all ideas for the long term problem solution, as well as all of the implementation of those ideas, must come from a team member. However, there is NO "Outside Assistance" in Spontaneous Problem Solving, so feel free to assist the coach, practice at home around the dinner table, and have fun with your family doing spontaneous problems with your child and/or other children. (Everyone loves spontaneous!)

## PARENT OR GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES ON TOURNAMENT DAY

Your Odyssey of the Mind Regional Board also relies on parents and guardians for help. We welcome friends, relative, and office associates, too!

Here are the opportunities for parents, friends, and relatives to help make the regional tournament possible. We feel certain you will enjoy helping, and few volunteer opportunities directly benefit so many children in an educational program!

### **WE NEED YOUR HELP on Tournament Day to:**

- Be an official (This involves a training in January or February on a Saturday to learn to be a judge.)
- Be a volunteer (Each team must provide a volunteer to work at registration, concessions or in the spontaneous holding area for approximately two hours on Tournament Day.)

We also ask you to fill out an emergency care form for the coach to have on hand, to help the team get props in and out of the building, to move your car from loading and unloading areas as quickly as possible, and to bring a sense of humor to the tournament (because Murphy's law is an Odyssey of the Mind condition!)

We all believe that this program offers something unique for your children. We believe that they will learn teamwork, creative problem solving, divergent thinking, persistence, practical skills, and many other abilities through Odyssey of the Mind. Please remember we are all volunteers working together to make this happen.

THANK YOU for your support, for your child, for his or her coach, and for the regional and state volunteers!!

We wish you creativity in your own life, and fun watching these wonderful problem solvers at work!!