



## Parent/Guardian Guidelines

Pssst.....Odyssey of the Mind



**Team Parents / 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 to be finished, and generally watching from the sidelines while the team “gets creative!”)

### **DID YOU KNOW THAT EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT COACHING THE TEAM...**

- ...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 but can’t because that would cost the team penalty points. So... how do you know the difference?

Here is your own handy, dandy, just-for-parents/guardians guidelines!



## What Parents/Guardians

### CAN Do:

- Transport the team to buy things
- Transport the props
- Teach the team members a skill IF the team asks, such as
  - Sewing
  - Woodworking
  - Carving
  - Art
  - Electronics
  - Engineering
  - Principals of simple machines
  - Welding
- Help find “experts” to teach skills
- Help provide snacks
- Bring spontaneous problem supplies
- Help get props into the building for the tournament, even to the staging area
- Open attics, closets, basements for “garage sale value” materials
- Provide lots of encouragement
- Provide a place to meet/store props
- Get everyone and everything to the tournament
- Applaud A LOT and help get props offstage afterwards
- Practice spontaneous problems
- Ask questions
- Be a judge or volunteer at a tournament

### CAN'T Do:

- Suggest what to buy
- Repair props if broken in shipping
- Suggest to the team which skills to use to solve a problem
- Suggest to the team which skills would result in a better-looking or better functioning solution
- Give the teams any ideas for their problem solution
- Sew anything, paint anything, do anything to contribute to the team’s problem solution
- Analyze why something failed
- Expect perfection from a solution not done by adults (or from a solution done by adults, for that matter!)
- Suggest what materials to get from the attic, closet or basement
- Pack props for the team for easier use on stage
- Fix anything that breaks
- Criticize any part of a team’s solution
- Ask leading questions
- Put emphasis on scores instead of fun



As you can tell, parents/guardians ARE important, as resources for learning 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 / Guardian RESPONSIBILITIES on the Tournament Day

The NorCal Odyssey of the Mind Board relies on parents/guardians for help at tournaments. We welcome friends, relatives, and office associates, too!

Here are the opportunities for parents/guardians, friends, and relatives to help make the qualifying tournament possible. We feel certain you will enjoy helping!

**Be an official** This involves an online training in January or February to learn to be a judge. Each team must provide a judge for the tournament. The judge will need to be available all day on tournament day and judge again at the state tournament, if the team advances.

**Be a volunteer** Each team must provide a volunteer to work at registration, concessions, as a door monitor, or in the spontaneous area for approximately two hours on Tournament Day. A different person can be the volunteer at the state tournament, if the team advances.

**Be on time and considerate** Offer to help the team get props in and out of the building. Move your car from loading and unloading areas as quickly as possible. Bring a sense of humor and patience to the tournament (because Murphy’s law is an Odyssey of the Mind condition!).

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

**We wish you creativity in your own life.**

**Have fun watching these wonderful problem solvers at work!**

*Adapted from L. Love & R. Tennant copyright 1999*