

The ride home after a tough baseball game

Some days they want to talk. Some days they just want a snack and the radio. There is room for both.

Start small

I loved watching you play.

Let that be enough for a minute. You do not need to review every inning before you leave the parking lot.

Ask before you coach

Want to talk about the game, or take a break?

If they want a break, give them one. Save the ground-ball lesson for a time when they want your help.

Notice something specific

- "You kept going after that tough inning."
- "I saw you pick your teammate up."
- "You looked like you were having fun out there."

Use a detail you actually saw. Encouragement lands better when it is real.

When they are disappointed

That was a tough one. I'm glad I got to be there with you.

You can care about competing and still give your kid a place to land after a hard game.

Keep the bigger picture

A new friend. A little more confidence. Trying again. Those things count, too.

These are conversation ideas, not a script every child needs. Follow your kid's lead.