

Dear Mom and Dad,

This weekend I will be participating in a big wrestling tournament. I'm excited and nervous. I know you are, too. I'm excited and grateful for the opportunity, but I'm nervous because there's a lot of pressure on me this weekend.



You're using vacation time at work, I'm getting out of school, the entire family is going...gas, food, hotel, admission, event t-shirt...that is a big financial commitment on my shoulders. Our entire weekend is dependent upon ME.

I understand that's not the intention, but sometimes I feel that unintended pressure to perform. So, please don't get anxious or upset if I make a mistake. I hope you will accept me as I am.

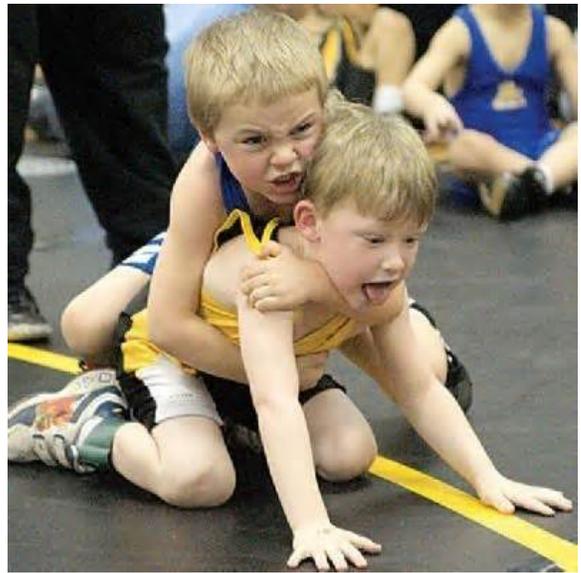
Please understand that my performance this weekend does not define me. Wrestling is a part of my life, but it's not who I am. It's fun, but it can also be difficult and scary at times. Don't be surprised to find that I may respond in a manner that is uncharacteristic.

Sometimes I don't know how to handle my emotions, but don't worry, my misfortunes on the wrestling mat are not a reflection of your ability to be a good parent. I simply ask that you take care to setting a good example for me by handling your own emotions, maintaining a healthy perspective and being there for me no matter what occurs.

Remember that all children do not learn to walk and talk at the same age; nor do they learn wrestling tactics and techniques at the same rate. We're all in development stages and growing and learning. Please do not compare me to my brothers, sisters or friends, because I am unique to this world.



Be realistic in setting my goals. I need to be challenged, but not pushed beyond my ability. I need time to grow into this sport. I need to taste success, learn from failures, and I also need time to "smell the roses" while I am still a child. I enjoy youth wrestling right now, but I want to love the sport if I'm still participating in high school and beyond.



Before I wrestle, the thing I desire most to hear from you is, "Have fun!" Win or lose, when I finish I'd like a high five or a hug and for you to just say, "I love to watch you wrestle." We can figure out ways to improve later.

Sometimes, the things you don't say are much louder than your actual words. I'm pretty smart and I'm not easily fooled. You have to mean it when you say it. Don't assume I automatically know how you feel about me. It's not intuitive for a child and in every situation I'm delicately looking for you to reinforce it.

Do your best as a parent and you'll be sure to see me do my best.

The truth is, at this young age, I'm far more concerned with making you happy than I am with winning any tournament. Being accepted and unconditionally loved by you is the most important thing in my life right now.

I hope I win all of my matches and get to stand on the top of the podium, but I hope you will treat me the same if I don't.

Love,  
Your Youth Wrestler

(The author of this letter is unknown.)