

You're Out!

Boys and girls all over the United States play baseball. Many parents attend their children's games to cheer their kids on.

Some parents, however, are not good sports. They shout at their kids. Others make fun of **umpires**¹ and kids on the field. A few even run onto the field during games. Those parents are spoiling the game.

Mike Blackwell decided to do something about the problem. He is a city official in New Brunswick, New Jersey. About one year ago [2001], city officials got together and came up with a solution—baseball fields that separate parents from the players.

Kids in New Brunswick now have three new baseball fields. Two of the fields are built on **mounds**² that are 6 feet high. Parents cannot see over the mounds. "The only location for parents to watch their kids play is in the **bleachers**³," said Blackwell. The bleachers separate parents from the **dugouts**⁴. There are also fences that keep parents off the fields.

New Sports Center

The fields are part of a new sports center for kids. The center cost more than 2 million dollars to build! The grand opening is planned for October 19, [2002].

Blackwell is very excited about the new sports center. He told Weekly Reader, "We have more kids that want to play now.

We have more volunteer coaches now."

Why does Mike Blackwell care so much about baseball? He used to play when he was a kid. "When I was a kid in New York state, we lived for baseball. I want kids to enjoy the game," he said.

1 **umpire**: an official in a sport who makes decisions on plays

2 **mound**: a small hill or heap of dirt or stones

3 **bleachers**: an open stand of benches arranged like steps from which people can watch a sports event

4 **dugout**: a low shelter facing a baseball diamond containing a bench where players sit when not playing

Be a Good Sport

Both parents and kids need to be good sports. Here are some tips from Mike Blackwell to keep the game fun:

- Follow the rules.
- Cheer for your teammates.
- Learn from your coach.
- Treat others with respect.