

To: Parents of Students participating in Odyssey of the Mind
From: Mrs. Lauterman
Re: How to support your child and avoid “outside assistance”

Dear Parents of Children participating in Odyssey of the Mind,

Thanks, you for allowing your child to participate in this great experience! I am so excited about the enriching challenges that this experience will give us all. I recently attended training for coaches and learned some additional information that I want to share with you.

The students will be working in long-term projects for the competition. We will group of students will form a team of 5-7 children. The competition **requires** that all work be done by the students. That’s right- we can’t even help them with it! As a coach, I will provide background that may be useful – such as creative thinking training, understanding the concepts of plot and storyline, how to produce a play, how electricity and batteries work, etc., but I cannot provide any advice or guidance on the specific project they are working on. Parents, friends, family members, teachers—anyone not on the team – who provides any kind of information, suggestions, input, must be reported as ‘outside assistant’ resulting in points deducted from our competition score. I expect that there will be some points deducted for outside assistance- it happens, and I won’t punish anyone for it- but I would like to decrease its likelihood. Further, and more important, is we want to teach and model integrity- being honest and ethical. Obviously, I don’t want a situation where a child feels they shouldn’t report outside assistance.

Here are some examples of good support and some examples of illegal assistance:

Let’s say you start with “What do you think you’ll be doing for your project?”
Your child responds, “We’re building an airplane.”

Good Support examples	Illegal Outside Assistance
“ That’s very interesting! How fun!”	“Your team should build a car instead”
“What do you think you’re going to need?” (without evaluation, judgment or suggestions)	“Are you going to build it with lightweight materials so it will fly?”
“Are you excited about that?”	“Here’s a book I got from the library on airplanes.”
“Tell me what you know about airplanes.” (without correction, evaluation, judgment)	“Let’s go talk to Uncle Joe, he’s a pilot”

Please sign below indicating your understanding of the outside assistance rules, and return next with your child’s application. Please discuss this rule with other family members.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print child’s name: _____

Odyssey of the Mind
Application- Due December 1, 2011

Student Name _____

Teacher _____

Address _____

Home telephone _____ Cell _____

I am available to practice:

Mon _____ Tues _____ Wed _____ Thurs _____ Friday _____ Sat _____

My parent or grandparent is available to Coach or Judge? _____

Please list your affinities, which you are the things you love to do or you think you are good at doing: _____

Please list your strengths: _____

Please list areas where you struggle: _____

Consider the long term problems. Which one would you choose and why? How would your strengths and struggles add to this problem? _____
