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**Children Patriots**

**By Rexanne Mancini**

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This year will be an especially poignant Independence Day for the United States on July 4. While there has been a surge in patriotism since September 11, we all need to maintain a sense of pride and love for our country whether we are at war or living in peace.

Children need to feel a sense of belonging, in their family, their classrooms and their country. They thrive in an environment of respect, compassion and stability. If we teach our kids love, honor, compassion and respect for their country as well as for their fellow man, they will not only be graced by a sense of patriotism, they will become better citizens.

One of our greatest challenges as parents is to raise our children to be healthy, honorable adults. A sense of patriotism is a good reinforcement of honor and ethics.

Our babies learn kindness from our gentle touch; they learn healthy self-esteem by our praise and respect; they learn to maintain their precious bodies with good food and regular exercise. They learn these living examples from their caretakers and schools. We are also responsible for teaching them to respect and be kind to others, to keep their community clean and to trust that their country will defend and protect them as best it can. I firmly believe they should be taught to revere their country's flag and all it stands for.

My children have already been told that, while it might be "legal" to burn the stars and stripes as an expression of individual freedom, they would be hard-pressed to get past Mom if they ever entertained the idea!

Children need to know they are a very large and integral part of their country's make up. They are the future parents and government that will uphold the morals and ethics inherited from these same entities.

Is it too much to ask that our children be patriotic, honor their flag and stand up for what's right and good about their country? I don't think so.

It is our job to instill a sense of patriotism in their young hearts, offering them the opportunity to love and honor their country and its flag. In doing so, these same feelings will transfer to mankind and the world.

As much as we want our children to love their country, we also need to recognize the importance of global relationships. Setting good examples of patriotism should, in turn, teach our kids that every person counts, no matter where they live or who they might be.

Rexanne Mancini is the mother of two daughters. She maintains an extensive yet informal parenting

and family web site, Rexanne.com - <http://www.rexanne.com> –Visit her site for good advice, award-winning Internet holiday pages and some humor to help you cope. Subscribe to her free newsletter, Rexanne's Web Review, for a monthly dose of Rexanne: <http://www.rexanne.com/rwr-archives.html>

### **How Can I Throw An Awesome Game Day Party?**

**By Joshua Miller**

Every sports fan loves a game day party—especially football fans. So, how can you make your game day party as memorable as the game itself? It is easy with the help of sports team merchandise.

The key is in decoration with your favorite sports memorabilia. During game breaks or before the game, it is always good to have some cool team logo merchandise for your friends to look at and talk about. This season, NFL merchandise is popular with football fans all over the country.

Patriots fans did the same. They got ready for the big game in style, because in their hearts, they knew the Patriots would win. For their Super Bowl party, they found New England Patriots snack helmets, Patriots helmet plaques, and flags. Fans even dressed their children in NFL youth uniforms of their favorite team.

But, wait! There were other contenders in the race to the Super Bowl. The Pittsburgh Steelers had a fantastic season with their new and talented quarterback. Patriots fans thought that they would have to beat the Steelers in the Super Bowl, but they dropped out in the Championship game. This was, as expected, a major disappointment for the Steelers fans. They are hard core fans, and are dedicated NFL memorabilia collectors. They await patiently for their team to rise again, but in the meantime, they wear their Steelers hard hats with pride.

The other team that was a direct threat was the Atlanta Falcons. Not only did they have awesome defense, but they had great receivers to take them to victory. No one expected the Falcons to go as far as they did, even their fans. As the NFC Championship game drew nearer, Falcons fans did everything they could to support their team. They snapped up any NFL apparel they could find and found football fan faces to use instead of messy paint to cheer on their team. They made everything with the Falcons name or team logo into a treasured sports collectible. But, the Falcons fell in the Championship game.

When it came down to the two best teams in the NFL, the fans cheered and the football flew but only one team could take it all. Patriots fans left the game happy, but the Eagles fans were plotting their revenge for the next season. In the end, the players in the NFL are important, but the fans are what carry the power and support for their team. Fans show their support in many ways, but most treasure their NFL Sports Memorabilia above all.

Joshua Miller is a sports columnist who has a true passion for sports. You can check out more of his articles at the Sports Collectibles Store.



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