



Child Protection Procedures

What is Child Protection?

The term child protection is a broad term that defines the guidelines, procedures, and policies that provide protection for children from both intentional and un-intentional harm.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is any action, or series of actions that lead to harm, the potential for harm, or any threat of harm to a child. Abuse may take several forms. Abuse includes physical harm, emotional or psychological harm or sexual molestation or exploitation. We must begin to realize that even though some practices are culturally acceptable, they may still be harmful to children.

What is Your Responsibility as a Coach?

Your first job as a coach is to ensure the safety of those children in your care. As a coach, the welfare of the child is paramount. It is your responsibility, to create an environment where children will be safe, protected from harm, discrimination and any treatment that is degrading. The rights and wishes of children must be respected while under your care. For you to meet these responsibilities, there are some things that you need to know.

- You must be able to recognize child abuse when it occurs or is reported to you.
- You must be able to recognize the signs of child abuse and to respond with appropriate procedures and actions.
- You must observe and promote sound practices when working with children.

What are the different forms of Child Abuse?

There are four major categories of child abuse:

- Neglect - includes such acts as the failure to provide a child or children with their basic physical and emotional necessities, harming them or putting them at risk of harm.
- Emotional abuse - includes any behavior that has the effect of psychologically harming children or young persons.
- Physical abuse - occurs when there is non-accidental injury and/or harm to a child or young person, caused by another person such as a parent, care-giver, coach or even an older child.
- Sexual abuse - includes any sexual act or sexual threat, intimidation or coercion imposed on a child.

WHAT ARE SOME "DO'S" AND "DONT'S" OF COACHING TO ENSURE CHILDREN ARE PROTECTED

THE "DO'S" OF COACHING CHILDREN

There are a series of good practices that, as a coach, you should use to ensure that children have a safe environment to play the sport. As a coach, you are responsible for making sure that the sport is fun and enjoyable and you must, at all times, promote fair play.

- DO put the welfare of each child ahead of "winning".
- DO give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- DO avoid pushing children against their will and putting undue pressure on them.
- DO take into account the environmental condition of the grounds and the pitch, including weather.
- DO avoid being with a child (male or female) in an isolated or unobserved situation.
- DO set boundaries between coaches and children that may not be crossed.
- DO recognize the different developmental needs and the capacity of children.
- DO ascertain whether children you are coaching have any medical conditions that might impact on their play

THE "DONT'S" OF COACHING CHILDREN

Watch Your Communication Coaches, as a rule, should never contact a child without the knowledge or presence of the child's parent(s) or guardian(s). This includes inappropriate telephone calls, text messages, internet communication (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) or meetings with children away from the grounds. Whenever possible, you must involve parents or caregivers in the design and execution of your sports programs.

- Do not tolerate any acts of aggression
- Do not put yourself in situations where you are vulnerable to accusations of abuse
- Do not spend an excessive amount of time with children away from other children or adults
- Do not put yourself in situations where you are vulnerable to accusations of abuse
- Do not become involved in physically or sexually provocative games with a child
- Do not embarrass or frighten a child
- Do not allow children to curse or use abusive language or making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even if it is done as "a joke" or "in fun".
- Do not try to make any child cry as a way to exercise control over them.

Bullying

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggressive behavior with the intention of hurting another person either physically or emotionally.

TYPES OF BULLYING

- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors and teasing
- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (for example: hiding kit, or making threatening gestures).

- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist: racial taunts or gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Cyber-bullying: All areas of the internet, such as email and internet chatrooms; mobile threats by text message and/or calls or the misuse of associated technology, such as cameras – both still and videos.

LISTENING TO CHILDREN

One of your most important roles as a coach is listening to the children with whom you work. This is never truer than when a child claims that they have been abused either physically, emotionally, sexually or that they have been neglected.

LISTENING "DO'S"

- DO be accessible and receptive.
- DO listen carefully and uncritically, at the child's pace.
- DO take what is said seriously.
- DO reassure children that they are right to tell.
- DO tell the child that you must pass this information on.
- DO make sure that the child is ok.
- DO make a careful record of what was said.

LISTENING "DONT'S"

- DON'T investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse.
- DON'T make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets' to children.
- DON'T assume that someone else will take the necessary action.
- DON'T jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc.
- DON'T speculate or accuse anybody.
- DON'T investigate, suggest or probe for information.
- DON'T confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved.
- DON'T offer opinions about what is being said or the persons allegedly involved.
- DON'T forget to record what you have been told.
- DON'T fail to pass this information on to the correct person (the Child Protection Officer or other designated person).

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM BEING ACCUSED OF ABUSE

- Always work in an Open environment
- One of the most important things that you as a coach can do to ensure that you are protected from the suspicion or allegations of child abuse is to always work in an open environment, wherever possible.
- Avoid being with a child (male or female) in an isolated or unobserved situation.
- Set Boundaries - must be set between coaches and children that may not be crossed.
- Recognize children develop at different rates