

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Communicating With Your Child About Misconduct

Misconduct and abuse are difficult for adults to talk about, so imagine how hard it is for a child to bring up this topic, which they may not even fully understand. Here are some techniques to help make your child more comfortable talking about, and reporting, abuse.

1. TALK ABOUT IT.

Talk to your child. Let him or her know that sport is supposed to be a place where they have fun and never feel uncomfortable. Watch educational materials together to help develop a language around abuse.

2. CREATE A “SAFE WORD.”

When talking to your child about abuse in sport, establish an unusual “safe” word or phrase that’s easy to remember that they can use to tell you something is wrong—like “jellybean” or “upside down.”

3. ESTABLISH OPEN COMMUNICATION.

Let your child know that they can always tell you if something’s wrong, and that you’ll always believe them.

4. ENCOURAGE THEM TO “JUST TELL.”

Let your child know that they can tell anyone they’re comfortable with—like a friend’s parent, teacher or coach—if something bad is happening to them and they don’t want to say anything to you.

5. TELL THEM THEY CAN PLAY SPORT ANYWHERE.

Sometimes, we think the only way an athlete will be successful is if they train with a particular coach or club, and athletes may even be told this by an abuser. It’s important for them to know that they can train anywhere and be successful. Abuse is not a part of being successful in sport.