
For Immediate Release

August 15, 2023

Contact: media@safesport.org

SafeSport Releases Abuse Prevention Courses for Kids & Teens

New athlete safety education announced in time for back-to-school

DENVER, CO - The U.S. Center for SafeSport (The Center) today announced [two new abuse prevention courses](#) designed for young athletes. The online courses, tailored to ages 5-12 and 13-17, respectively, include video, interactive modules, age-specific activities, and age-relevant examples. The courses are designed for parents and guardians to co-view and discuss with their young athlete. The Center's new courses for children and youth are free and available to the public.

"Youth sports should be fun above all else, but they can't be fun unless kids are safe," Ju'Riese Colón, CEO, U.S. Center for SafeSport said. **"Our new courses empower young athletes with knowledge and prepare them to set boundaries for their safety."**

Course themes include:

- Right to body safety
- Boundaries and consent
- Bullying and hazing
- Fostering respect among teammates
- Identifying and reporting abuse

There is a need for abuse prevention education in youth sports. More than half of children ages 6-17 in the United States participate in sport, according to [research](#) by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). The CDC also [estimates](#) that overall 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys in the U.S. will experience sexual abuse. The vast majority of this abuse is perpetrated by someone known and trusted to the child or their family.

"Research tells us that engaging kids in conversations about abuse early and often helps them better understand inappropriate behaviors and how to speak up for themselves and others," Monica Rivera, Vice President of Prevention Education, U.S. Center for SafeSport said. **"We want to build awareness and foster trust among young athletes and their parents by demonstrating that our courses are grounded in prevention education practices that work."**

The children and youth courses are grounded in the following best-practice principles:

- Emphasizing positive social norms
- Dispelling myths; stating facts
- Avoiding scare tactics
- Messages that give hope or spur positive action
- Empowering bystanders to speak up

- Data-driven, rooted in prevention education theory

In addition to the youth safety courses, the Center offers numerous educational resources to prevent, recognize, and respond to abuse and misconduct in sport. For example, the [Center's Parent & Guardian's Handbook for Safer Sport](#) is:

- designed for parents of athletes of all ages
- explains issues surrounding misconduct in sport
- offers parents suggestions on how to have conversations with their athletes about safety
- provides strategies for setting up young athletes for a positive sport experience

Need for Abuse Prevention in Sport

The U.S. Center for SafeSport is the nation's only independent organization dedicated to ending sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in U.S. Olympic and Paralympic sport. The Center emerged in response to high profile cases of sexual abuse of minor athletes within Olympic and Paralympic sport in the mid-2010s. With the mission of making athlete wellbeing the centerpiece of the nation's sport culture, the Center has since been setting safety policies and receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints of abuse and misconduct. The Center also serves as an educational resource for sports organizations at all levels, from recreational sports to professional leagues.

With the goal of ensuring athletes within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement are safe, supported, and strengthened, the Center:

- Establishes and audits against safety policies, including the [SafeSport Code](#) and the [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies](#) (MAAPP);
- investigates and resolves allegations of abuse and misconduct in a neutral manner, and levies sanctions, including temporary and permanent bans from sport; and
- delivers comprehensive abuse prevention education within and outside of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement.

About the U.S. Center for SafeSport:

The Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 codified the U.S. Center for SafeSport (the Center), a Denver, Colorado based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, as the nation's safe sport organization. It gave the Center the scope and authority to resolve abuse and misconduct reports for more than 11 million individuals affiliated with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (Movement). It also charged the Center with developing and enforcing policies, procedures, and training to prevent abuse and misconduct. The SafeSport Code governs all participants in the Movement, and its independent oversight authority helps us ensure all Olympic and Paralympic national governing bodies (NGBs) adhere to Minor Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) that support athlete safety.

In October of 2020, the Empowering Olympic, Paralympic, and Amateur Athletes Act of 2020 became law, which strengthened the Center's oversight functions and mandates a reliable annual funding stream from the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee.

The Center opened its doors in March of 2017.

Reporting Abuse

[Report here](#) to the U.S. Center for SafeSport if you have experienced abuse or misconduct—or if you

have reasonable suspicion of abuse or misconduct inflicted on, or by, someone in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. You can also call 833-587-7233 to make a report.

If a situation does not involve sport or anyone within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement, you can contact [RAINN's 24/7 online hotline](#) or call 800-656-HOPE (4673).

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