
For Immediate Release

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Contact: media@safesport.org**SafeSport Issues Guide for Watching the Paris Games with Young Athletes***Do's for championing respect and safe sport from your living room*

DENVER—The U.S. Center for SafeSport (the Center) today issued a resource with tangible ways to positively engage children during the Summer Olympics and Paralympics. The six do's describe actions adults can take to open dialogue and reinforce respectful and safe sport environments with the young athletes in their lives.

"As we cheer on athletes at the Olympics and Paralympics, it's important to remember that respect starts at home—on the practice fields and while watching athletic events," Ju'Riese Colón, CEO of the U.S. Center for SafeSport said. **"What happens at the Games, reverberates across all levels of sport. Set an example for the young athletes in your life by finding opportunities like watching the Olympics and Paralympics to champion respect and safety."**

Six Ways to Reinforce Respectful and Safe Sport Environments During the Paris Games and Beyond

- DO talk about the time, dedication and persistence it takes to prepare for and compete in the Olympics and Paralympics. To open lines of communication, encourage your child to talk about their own training. Ask: What do you enjoy about it? What do you find challenging?
- DO speak up if inappropriate comments are made about athletes, especially remarks that are discriminatory, sexualized or otherwise offensive. Make it clear that all bodies are different and no one shape is better than another.
- DO talk about the diversity of different skills and talents that exist across Olympic and Paralympic events. You can use descriptions like fast, strong, strategic, great endurance, excellent coordination, accurate aim, phenomenal team player, etc.
- DO pay attention to any potential instances of emotional or physical misconduct (which could include throwing things in anger, yelling at and/or pressuring an athlete to continue despite injury). Use the opportunity to discuss better choices and emphasize the importance of supportive and safe athletic environments. For example, "That athlete seems upset. Do you think throwing that racquet makes other people feel safe or unsafe? Can you think of other ways to express frustration without making others feel unsafe?"

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- **DO** celebrate moments of good sportsmanship and teamwork. Use instances where athletes are being supportive of one another to reinforce that sports are about so much more than winning. For example, “Did you notice how that athlete encouraged their teammate even when they missed the goal?”
 - **DO** listen when a child talks about their experiences in sports, positive and negative. If a child in your life shares that they have experienced or witnessed abuse or misconduct inflicted by someone in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement (or if you suspect something has happened), you can [make a report](#). Here are [tips for responding to abuse disclosures](#).

“As spectators and fans of sport, we are responsible for confronting how sport culture can be harmful by calling attention to problematic behaviors. But, it’s also important to celebrate the good when we see it—like athletes advocating for their own mental health or engaging with sportsmanship despite the extreme pressure of elite competition. Shining a light on both the negative and the positive can have ripple effects,” stated Monica Rivera, Vice President of Prevention Education at the Center.

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 well-being 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 organizations 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 safety policies, including the [SafeSport Code](#) and the [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies](#) (MAAPP).
- Investigates and resolves allegations of abuse and misconduct and levies sanctions, including temporary and permanent bans from sport.
- 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), as the nation’s safe sport organization. It furthered the Center’s independence while underscoring its authority to hold individuals accountable. It also charged the Center with developing policies, procedures, and training to prevent abuse and misconduct in sport.

In October of 2020, the Empowering Olympic, Paralympic, and Amateur Athletes Act of 2020 became law, even further strengthening the Center’s independence and oversight functions while mandating minimum funding requirements for the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee.

The Center opened its doors in March of 2017.

Reporting and Resources

[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 by someone in the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement. You can also call the Center at: 833-587-7233.

[RAINN's 24/7 online hotline](#) is available for crisis intervention, referrals, or emotional support at any time. You can also call RAINN at: 800-656-HOPE (4673).

The [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) provides 24/7 free and confidential support at 988lifeline.org or by calling 988.

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