

Questions Parents Should Ask Before Their Child Joins A Youth Sports Organization



The sheer amount of information is overwhelming to parents when they are looking for an organization for their child to join. There tend to be many aspects that parents aren't even aware of during their information-gathering process. Below are some guidelines that will help you get the answers you need to protect your child.

- Does the organization conduct a comprehensive background check on coaches and others who supervise and have access to the children? How deep does this background screen go – is it a general database search or does it entail more?
- Are there other adults present, besides the coach, to assist in supervising children during team events and practices, including any off-site travel?
- Does the team use a locker room for children to dress, and, if so, is there more than one adult present in the locker room when children are using it?
- Does the team or organization communicate with and notify parents and guardians of the activity schedule? Or does this communication go to the child only? What is the form of communication most often utilized (websites, emails, text messages, social media)?
- Ask whether the organization has written policies that clearly define coach misconduct, prohibit romantic or other nonprofessional relationships between coaches and athletes, define and prohibit emotional, verbal, and physical abuse, bullying, hazing, initiation rituals, harassment, and physical punishment by staff or athletes.
- Ask whether the organization has educational sessions or other avenues for athletes to help them identify inappropriate behaviors, and a process to report such behaviors.
- Ask if the organization has an independent athlete protection contact who athletes know they can go to in complete confidence to help them address concerns. If not a specific person, does the organization have another way for an athlete to address their concerns of abuse or misconduct in confidence?
- Ask whether the organization conducts education sessions for coaches, staff and volunteers regarding professional behavior and behaviors that they must stop if observed.
- Talk to your children regarding all inappropriate or abusive behaviors and what they should do if they observe or are subjected to such behaviors. Click here for definitions and examples of abuse and misconduct. LINK TO ANOTHER DOCUMENT/WEBSITE DEPENDING ON DESIGN.

USA Volleyball SafeSport Program

http://www.volleyballreftraining.com/SafeSport/safesport_home.html