

# CHAPTER 6: SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SPORT





## MOOC 1: Developing Effective Environments for Youth Sport

# Study Guide

**An Intellectual Output of iCoachKids:  
*Innovative Education & Training for a Specialist Children & Youth  
Coaching Workforce***

### Acknowledgements

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# iCoachKids MOOC 1 Study Guide

## Introduction

“A coach’s primary mission is to help sport participants develop not only as athletes, but also as people. To fulfil that aim, a coach needs functional and task-related competences that are underpinned by knowledge and reflection.”

*From the European Sports Coach Framework (p. 39)*

Congratulations Coach, by engaging in the iCoachKids MOOC 1, you have demonstrated that you have an open mind to learning more about coaching children and to further developing your own coaching skills.

Improving your coaching takes time and effort. Coach development should proceed in a progressive and sustainable way. Such an approach takes into consideration your stage of development as a coach, how you learn and which participants the coach is working with.

## How Coaches Learn

In this MOOC, we recognise that learning is a lifelong process and that multiple experiences can facilitate the development of your coaching ability. During your progress through MOOC 1 we have included a variety of learning experiences to meet the needs of coaches and how they learn.

A coach is not a blank slate. Whether through personal experiences as participant or spectator, you arrive to coaching with your own conception of what it is and how it should happen. The following task will allow you to consider what you are bringing to your coaching.



### STUDY GUIDE TASK: What Are You Bringing to You Coaching?

(There are no right or wrong replies. This exercise is about you taking stock of your previous experiences.)

<b>Coaches When...</b>	<b>Learn</b>	<b>Best</b>	<b>Your Learning and How you Like to Learn</b>
<b>List Experience</b>	<b>Your</b>	<b>Sports</b>	<b>What Does This Bring to Your Coaching?</b>
<b>Your Education</b>			<b>What Does This Bring to Your Coaching?</b>
<b>Life Experience/Learning</b>			<b>What Does This Bring to Your Coaching?</b>
<b>Other Think/Feel</b>	<b>Things Reflect</b>	<b>You</b>	<b>What Does This Bring to Your Coaching?</b>

## Your Learning

In the early stages of coach development, you may benefit strongly from learning opportunities provided through formal education – in MOOC 1 this is reflected in what you read and the personal tasks that you undertake in applying this knowledge into your coaching. This can be seen as laying a knowledge foundation. These activities challenge or confirm initial personal theories and support the creation of a child-centred framework that helps coaches organise and make sense of their coaching practice.

As you continue to develop as a coach, non-formal learning opportunities become more relevant. Your interaction with the children, other coaches, parents, mentors and open source material provides a chance to check and challenge your emerging philosophy and way of doing things as well as gaining new knowledge. In MOOC 1 this is reflected in activities and tasks you do with others and in your environment.

It is important to note that much of coaches' learning takes place on the job. As a coach, your self-awareness and your ability to reflect on your experiences are essential to this.



## STUDY GUIDE TASK: How Coaches Learn Best and How You Like to Learn

The column on the left is what research says about how coaches learn best. The column on the right is for you to: reflect on these statements; identify whether they may apply to YOU; and if they mean anything for YOUR LEARNING. This will develop you SELF-AWARENESS of how you like to learn:

Coaches Learn Best When...	Your Learning and How you Like to Learn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their prior experiences and abilities are recognised and they are encouraged to reflect and build on them</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They are motivated to take responsibility for learning and are given opportunities to drive it and direct it to their own needs</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The application of what is being learned to the practical context in which they coach is clear and facilitated</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The topics and learning materials are clearly relevant</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The climate is positive and supportive to minimise anxiety, encourage experimentation and challenge them appropriately</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interaction and sharing with other coaches is promoted</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A variety of learning activities is offered</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They experience some success and gain feedback that builds their self-confidence</li></ul>	

If you have completed these two STUDY GUIDE TASKS you will have started to engage in the learning process promoted in the iCoachKids MOOCs. You will have identified what you are bringing to coaching children; and how you learn.

Well done and read on to learn more about how the MOOC 1 Study Guide is laid out to assist you in your learning, how the content can be applied into you coaching and to your growth as a CHILD-CENTRED COACH of children.

# MOOC 1 Study Guide Structure

In MOOC 1, your development as a coach is promoted using a blended learning package composed of various activities to foster learning (for example, reality-based activities, problem-based learning, practical-coaching opportunities and reflection in/on action). This will promote knowledge gains and behavioural change and encourage you to seek additional self-directed learning opportunities.

The following HEADINGS and icons will signify different activities you will undertake in the MOOC 1 Study Guide:



**VIEW** – This is the video track linked to the Chapter and Section of the Study Guide you are considering



**READ** – This is the content knowledge that is outlined in the video track. It gives you the opportunity to examine the content at your own pace and/or to review in writing what is verbally outlined in the video



**STUDY GUIDE TASK** – This is an activity that will get you to consider how the content you have viewed/read may apply during your coaching with the children that you coach, and reflect on how you may change your coaching behaviours



**PERSONAL COACHING TASK:** This is an activity that will get you to apply the content into your coaching, with the children you coach, and to reflect on how it went for the children and for you. You may need to do these tasks a number of times and reflect on them to be able to fully apply the content into your coaching, in line with your coaching philosophy and to the benefit of the children



**COACHING WITH OTHERS** – This is an activity that will get you to engage other coaches you work with to discuss, apply, try, observe, get feedback from and reflect on how they see/feel your coaching is developing, and how the content can be applied by you and the other coaches. It may also encourage you to engage other relevant people, like parents, referees, club officials and even the children you coach!



**COACHING IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT** – This is an activity that will get you to consider how child-centred is the approach of your

club/school/community group. You will then consider/discuss what changes may be made to become a more child-centred coach.



**QUIZ** – At the end of each chapter there will be a quiz for you to complete. This will give you a chance to re-enforce your learning by getting you to re-visit some of the main ideas covered in the chapter and how they can apply to your coaching. Approach the questions in an ‘open-book’ format; which allows you to re-read the sections of the study guide before you write your answer.



**CHAPTER CLOSING TASKS** – Each chapter will end with some tasks that will get you to consider/apply the ideas and coaching tools covered in the chapter into your coaching. The tasks may include:



**PERSONAL COACHING TASKS**



**COACHING WITH OTHERS**



**COACHING IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT**



**FURTHER VIEWING/READING** – By its nature, only a certain amount of content is included in the MOOC. If you want to learn more about a topic, this will direct you to additional materials to view or read

## **YOUR DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY AS A CHILDREN’S COACH**

Working with children can be a very worthwhile and positive experience for people. With the growing knowledge and the approach put forward in the iCoachKids MOOCs, this experience can be positive for each and every child, as well as for each and every coach.

It’s over to you now to take the responsibility to grow your coaching knowledge and ability. Enjoy the journey coach!

# iCoachKids: MOOC 1 Study Guide - Learner Activity Tracker: Chapter No 6

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As you complete each of the activities in each of the sections, please put a tick  in the circle. This will allow you to track what you have completed and where you can restart when you return to the Study Guide after a break.

Study Guide / Chapter Section	VIEW / READ 	PRE-CHAPTER / STUDY GUIDE TASK 	PERSONAL COACHING TASK 	COACHING WITH OTHERS 	COACHING IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT 	QUIZ 	CHAPTER CLOSING TASKS 	FURTHER VIEW / READ 
Introduction	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Section 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 3	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>					
Section 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Section 5	<input type="checkbox"/>							
Summary / Conclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have completed each of the activities in each section and the Learner Activity Grid is complete. **WELL DONE!** You can move to the MOOC End.

### **PLEASE NOTE**

Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport, while important in every country, fits within a different best practice/legislative framework for each country. Because of this, please check the specific laws, policies and procedures that are applied in your country. Also check the information and advice provided by your sports sector and your sport's national governing body/federation.

What is included here are GENERAL GUIDELINES. These are primarily based on UNICEF Safeguarding in Sport Guidelines.

Please see - <https://www.unicef.org.uk/sport-for-development/safeguarding-in-sport/>

The IOC Safeguarding Toolkit can be found here - [https://d2g8uwgn11fzhj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/18105952/IOC\\_Safeguarding\\_Toolkit\\_ENG\\_Screen\\_Full1.pdf](https://d2g8uwgn11fzhj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/18105952/IOC_Safeguarding_Toolkit_ENG_Screen_Full1.pdf)

## Chapter 6 Introduction



### **VIEW AND/OR READ**

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

Welcome back to MOOC 1 of the iCoachKids e-learning programme 'Developing effective environments for children in sport'.

We are going to take you through the last, and perhaps the most important chapter of this course. As coaches, we have a responsibility to make sure that sport is fun and enjoyable and that children learn a variety of personal and physical skills. But more important than all of that, is to ensure that we keep children safe and out of harm's way while they are doing sport. It is also vital that we know what to do if, unfortunately, something bad happens.

We have to emphasise the importance of the whole of the pedagogical climate as outlined In Chapter 5. The emphasis in this Chapter 6 is on Pillar 4.

Chapter 6, '**Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People in Sport**' is all about how we are going to make sure that the sport experience is not only positive, but safe. Specifically, by the end of this chapter you will be able to:

1. Explain what is meant by safeguarding and protecting children in sport
2. Understand the different categories of child abuse
3. Describe signs of child abuse and how to spot them
4. Articulate key strategies to prevent child abuse in sport
5. Explain the actions you should take when abuse is suspected, and
6. Describe how coaches can stay safe while coaching children

When it comes to safeguarding and protecting children, the following English sayings will remain top of our agenda:

**Better Safe than Sorry  
And  
Prevention is Better than Cure**

Bear in mind that this chapter is only an introduction to this very important topic. If you coach kids regularly, you should seek out a specific course. Perhaps your federation or a sporting organisation in your area or country has a course aimed right at this area. Go check them out. We will also signpost you to some very good materials and educational workshops we know of.

Ok, let's keep kids safe in sport!

## Chapter 6, Section 1: What Is Child Abuse In Sport?



### VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

## Introduction

In this section we are going to deal with a very sensitive issue: child abuse in sport. Typically, when we ask coaches and parents about how common they feel child abuse happens in sport, we get answers like “not a lot” or “it’s more likely in some sports but not in mine”. They could not be more wrong.

If you choose, you can read the article **How Prevalent is Sexual Abuse in Sport** at this link: <https://theconversation.com/how-prevalent-is-sexual-abuse-in-sport-69542>.

There are two main reasons for these misconceptions:

First, coaches and parents think that child abuse includes only sexual abuse and corporal punishment. But child abuse, as we will see, involves a much wider range of behaviours, including some that are currently accepted as the norm in certain sports or contexts.

**Abuse is not only about sexual misconduct and corporal punishment.**

Second, a lot of child abuse goes unreported and we never know about it until years have passed and, as adults, abused child-athletes are able to speak up and confront their abusers.

**Most child abuse incidents are unreported.**

## The Reality of the Situation

The reality is very different. Research shows that child abuse in sport is much more prevalent than what people may think. For instance, in a survey of organised sport in the UK in 2011<sup>1</sup>, 75% of children and young people reported emotionally harmful treatment during their participation. Nearly 30% reported different forms of sexual harassment.

In a survey conducted in Germany<sup>2</sup>, up to one third of athletes in elite sport reported having experienced some form of sexualised violence like assault and rape.

More and more studies confirm similar findings across the world and across all sports.

And these studies also confirm that it's not only coaches who are the perpetrators. In fact, research shows that teammates are the most common abusers, particularly when it comes to emotional abuse. And parents have also been shown to play a big part. When we get up-close, children's sport is not always a pretty picture at all.

### **Perpetrators of Child Abuse = Teammates + Parents + Coaches + Other Staff**

Please have a look at this video on the MOOC pages or YouTube Channel (or read the transcript below). Beware that it contains upsetting information and testimonies.

#### **Inside a 'Culture of Abuse' at USA Gymnastics**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mABPTdeFWLU>

Inside a 'Culture of Abuse' at U.S.A. Gymnastics

New York Times, By NEETI UPADHYE. 03 February 2018

"I started gymnastics in 1976. I loved it and I had a certain aptitude for it. I was a national team member for eight years and I was a national champion in 1986. I think it's dangerous to assume that we have a one guy problem with Nassar and that with him gone the sport is now safe and these girls are now safe." Jennifer Sey (National Gymnastics Champion, 1986)

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<sup>1</sup> *1 The Experiences of Children Participating in Organised Sport in the UK (Alexander et al, 2011, NSPCC)*

<sup>2</sup> *2 Sexual Violence in Organised Sport in Germany (Ohiert et al, 2018)*

More than 250 women have come forward to say they were sexually abused by former U.S.A. Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar. The scandal has highlighted what many gymnasts say is a culture of abuse within U.S.A.G.

“The standard and the expectation if you want to win is an environment that is rife with physical and emotional abuse and I think this creates the conditions where sexual abuse can occur.” Jennifer Sey (National Gymnastics Champion, 1986)

U.S.A. Gymnastics has complaint files on 54 coaches from 1996 to 2006, according to documents obtained by The Indianapolis Star.

For decades, U.S.A.G. empowered itself to investigate complaints before deciding whether to contact law enforcement. Former U.S.A.G. president Steve Penny once said in a deposition: “To the best of my knowledge, there is no duty to report if you are a third party to some allegation.” (09 December 2015). These gymnastics coaches were accused of sexual abuse. Here’s how U.S.A. Gymnastics handled their cases.

Don Peters led the U.S. women’s team to a record breaking eight medals at the 1984 Olympics. “The head coach of the American women’s team is Don Peters, one of the most respected men in gymnastics.” In 2011, three gymnasts told The Orange County Register that Peters had sex with them when they were teenagers in the '80s. Peters was banned for life by U.S.A. Gymnastics two months after the report was published. He was also removed from the Sports Hall of Fame.

Marvin Sharpe was the U.S.A. Gymnastics 2010 coach of the year. U.S.A.G. got a detailed account of abuse involving Sharp in 2011, but it wasn’t until a 14-year-old came forward in 2015 that the federation contacted police. Sharpe was arrested in August 2015 and committed suicide in his jail cell one month later.

Stephen Infante was a popular coach in New England gymnastics. In 1997, gymnasts accused Infante of having sex with them when they were teenagers. After an internal investigation U.S.A. Gymnastics barred Infante for life, but the organization didn't go to the police, and Infante continued coaching girls at gymnastics summer camps. Infante was charged with raping one of his former athletes a decade later and was convicted in 2010.

Last year, a non-profit called the U.S. Center for SafeSport was put in charge of preventing and handling abuse in Olympic sports, and in the wake of the Nassar scandal the entire U.S.A. Gymnastics board has been forced to resign.

Many athletes and victims of abuse say these actions are too little, too late. And some wonder if it’s truly enough to transform a culture that failed to protect its young women.

It's heart-breaking to watch videos (read transcripts) like this, but it is important that we remove the taboo and openly face these issues, so they happen less and less until they are completely eradicated.

## What is Child Abuse?

The first thing we need to do to stamp out child abuse is to have clarity about what it is. UNICEF recently led a large working group to develop the International Safeguards for Children in Sport.

([https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/International-Safeguards-for-Children-in-Sport-version-to-view-online.pdf?\\_ga=2.216107222.1763591751.1534154298-947682566.1534154298](https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/International-Safeguards-for-Children-in-Sport-version-to-view-online.pdf?_ga=2.216107222.1763591751.1534154298-947682566.1534154298))

(Reference can also be made to the IOC Safeguarding Toolkit: [https://d2g8uwgn11fzhj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/18105952/IOC\\_Safeguarding\\_Toolkit\\_ENG\\_Screen\\_Full1.pdf](https://d2g8uwgn11fzhj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/18105952/IOC_Safeguarding_Toolkit_ENG_Screen_Full1.pdf))

The UNICEF text contains some very useful definitions. Let's have a look at them:

- Abuse refers to the acts of commission or omission that lead to a child experiencing harm
- Harm refers to the negative impact or consequences of those acts upon the child

These definitions are still quite generic and broad. To fully grasp this issue, we have to understand that there are different categories of child abuse. UK Coaching and the Child Protection in Sport Unit of the NSPCC in the UK have identified four major categories of child abuse: Neglect; Physical Abuse; Sexual Abuse; and Emotional Abuse.

Let's review each category in detail:

**1. NEGLECT:** Neglect takes place when adults do not meet the basic physical and psychological needs of children.

Examples in sport include making kids training in too hot or too cold conditions, not giving them sufficient breaks or failing to provide adequate supervision.

## **NEGLECT = FAILURE TO MEET BASIC NEEDS**

**2. PHYSICAL ABUSE:** Physical Abuse happens when someone causes physical harm or injury to a child.

Examples in sport include hitting, pushing or giving a child performance-enhancing drugs. It's important to know too that some forms of overtraining also count as physical abuse.

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE = CAUSING PHYSICAL HARM OR INJURY**

**3. SEXUAL ABUSE:** Sexual Abuse occurs when adults or other young people use children to meet their own sexual needs.

This could include all types of sexual relationships, grooming, all forms of sexual harassment like inappropriate touching or verbal remarks, involving a child in the production of pornographic materials or showing inappropriate materials to a child.

### **SEXUAL ABUSE = USING CHILDREN TO MEET OWN SEXUAL NEEDS**

**4. EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** Emotional Abuse refers to the ongoing psychological maltreatment of a child and it can have long-lasting negative effects on the child.

In sport, it can take the shape of constant criticism by coaches, teammates and parents, sarcasms, bullying or excessive pressure and expectations to perform.

### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE = ONGOING PSYCHOLOGICAL MALTEATMENT**

Ok, this is a lot to take in, let's take some time to reflect on these ideas. In the next section we will talk about the consequences of child abuse and we will learn to identify the most common signs of abuse.

For now, please complete the STUDY GUIDE TASK.



## ACTIVITY 6.1 - STUDY GUIDE TASK– Reflection on What You Have Observed in Sport

This is a very personal activity and one that may be emotional to complete. We would like you to reflect on the times you observed child abuse in sport either as participants or coaches. Briefly outline where it occurred and what you saw, list who was involved (e.g. children, coach, parents, official, etc – no names), the type(s) of abuse it was.

Outline Where it Occurred and What You Saw	Who was Involved	Type(s) of Abuse



## FURTHER VIEWING/READING

Play by the rules – responding to concerns

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNobocDPXMM>

NSPCC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrAwP79Dmn8>

TRT World Chelsea Scandal

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLFMI-E\\_z6o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLFMI-E_z6o)

Aly Raisman Testimony

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLVfobsoXhl>

Erasmus+ Project VOICE - Combatting sexual violence in European sport  
through the voices of those affected

<https://www.eusa.eu/projects/voice>

## Chapter 6 - Section 2

# The Impact and Signs of Child Abuse



### VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

## Introduction

In this section we are going to spend time looking at the consequences of child abuse. More importantly, we are going to learn to identify some of the most common signs of child abuse, so we can spot it early before it is too late.

Let's start by exploring the impact of child abuse in general. Please have a look at this short video produced by the NSPCC in the UK or read the transcript below):

*Insert video: What can we do about child abuse?*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXC6XOUY70>

What can we do about child abuse?

NSPCC Published on 24 February 2016

We can all work together to make sure every childhood is free from abuse. Right now, on average, two children in every classroom are affected by abuse or neglect. Child abuse can take many forms: emotional, physical or sexual. It can also be neglect, which is a lack of love and attention. Whatever form it takes the damage can be devastating. But, together, we can prevent this from happening.

What surrounds us shapes our behaviour. When parents are overloaded with problems such as money, alcohol or drug addiction, or mental illness ... it can be really difficult for them to give their children the best start in life. Those stresses can lead to a child being abused or neglected and this is never acceptable. But providing the right help at the right time can help a family cope, giving children a more stable platform.

Child abuse can derail a child's development affecting all parts of their life. It stops them doing what children should be doing, like making friends, learning, exploring and playing.

As the child becomes an adult they may struggle with important things like relationships, jobs or mental health. And this causes a ripple effect through the whole of society.

But we also know that when the community comes together, we can help get children back on the right track. Whether it's help from neighbours, extra support at school, good foster care or counselling, we can all play a part.

Abuse robs children of their childhood. Instead of feeling excited about the future it can make them feel worthless, ashamed, frightened and alone.

But it's never too late to make a difference and turn a life around. And that's why we need to come TOGETHER, to create a stable foundation for all children. YOU can make a difference. Each individual act may seem small but, if we all play our part, we can create a safer place for all our children.

That's why we're here, that's what drives all our work. Join us, because every childhood is worth fighting for.

## Child Abuse in Sport

As difficult as it is to watch or read, let's now look at the consequences of child abuse in sport in the next video (description). Again, please beware that it contains upsetting information and testimonies.

*Powerful Testimonies from Larry Nassar's Victims*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHOKNBVoG4M>

Powerful Testimonies from Larry Nassar's Victims

Washington Post, 17 January 2018

Several victims began testifying Jan. 16 at the sentencing hearing of Michigan sports doctor Larry Nassar. Nassar has been accused of sexually abusing more than 140 women.

The evidence is clear; abuse can have long-lasting and broad-ranging effects for a child's development and wellbeing.

**ABUSE CAN HAVE LONG-LASTING AND BROAD-RANGING EFFECTS.**

It can lead to mental disorders, lower self-esteem, disruption to the child's education, create substance addiction, and lead to aggressive and abusive behaviour towards others. But that's not all, adults that were abused as a child are more likely to commit crimes, be institutionalised, and they also have higher suicide rates.

**Effects of child abuse:**

- Mental disorders
- Lower self-esteem
- Disruption to education
- Substance addiction
- Aggressive / abusive behaviour
- Commit crimes
- Be institutionalised
- Higher suicide rates

## Signs of Abuse

The consequences of child abuse are devastating and that's why coaches have to be ready to spot the signs. Although some of the indicators are common to all forms of abuse, others are typically linked to specific types.

### NEGLECT

For instance, children who are neglected may look malnourished, unkempt, may be constantly tired or hungry and may find it difficult to make friends.

**Neglect Signs:**

- Malnourished
- Unkempt
- Tired
- Hungry
- Struggle to make friends

### PHYSICAL ABUSE

In the case of physical abuse, the signs tend to be more obvious. These can include unexplained and recurrent injuries and bruises. Sometimes these are in parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely like cheeks and thighs.

Typically, these children will be reluctant for you to contact their parents and can be prone to aggressive behaviour and uncontrolled emotional outbursts. They

also tend to be uncomfortable when approached or touched and keep their bodies covered even in hot conditions.

**Physical Abuse Signs:**

- Unexplained or Recurrent injuries
- Injuries in unlikely places
- Reluctance to contacts family
- Emotional outbursts
- Uncomfortable with proximity

**SEXUAL ABUSE**

In relation to sexual abuse, some of the physical signs include pain, bleeding, and bruising or itching in the genital area. Stomach pains and discomfort when seating or walking are also common. In extreme cases, children may acquire a sexually transmitted disease, and in the case of girls, they may become pregnant.

**Sexual Abuse – Physical Signs:**

- Pain, Bleeding
- Discomfort about genitals
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort seating
- STDs
- Pregnancy

The **emotional and behavioural signs** of sexual abuse are very wide ranging, but some of the most common ones include: changes in behaviour, becoming fearful or withdrawn, wetting the bed, having sexual knowledge beyond their age, making sexual comments, self-harming and even suicide attempts.

**Sexual Abuse – Emotional and Behavioural Signs:**

- Changes in behaviour
- Fearful
- Withdrawn
- Wetting the bed
- Sexual knowledge beyond age
- Sexualised behaviour
- Self-harm
- Suicide

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Signs of emotional abuse include speech disorders, developmental delays, lack of desire to play, fear of making mistakes, self-harm and fear of parents being contacted.

**Emotional Abuse Signs:**

- Speech disorders
- Developmental delay
- Lack of desire to play
- Fearful of mistakes
- Self-harm
- Fear of contacting parents

It is important that when looking for signs of abuse, we consider them as part of a pattern of indicators, because separately, each sign may well have an alternative explanation.

Spotting signs of abuse is difficult, and we don't expect you to have become an expert after reading this section. Please complete the **STUDY GUIDE TASK** below – seek out additional resources and training in this area from your national governing body or federation or any other relevant organisation. But please be vigilant when working with children.

In the next section we are going to cover the type of structures and protocols we can put in place to minimise the risk of child abuse happening in the sport setting.

Thanks for reading and for caring about children's wellbeing.



## ACTIVITY 6.2 STUDY GUIDE TASK - Safeguarding Children in Your Country/Area

This activity will help you understand your coaching environment from a Safeguarding and Child Protection perspective. We would like you to investigate the existing policies and procedures in place at various levels and who is responsible for safeguarding children in sport.

Geographic Area	Organisation/ Policy (Web-link)	Who is Responsible (Email/ Phone No)	Comment
National - Government level			
National - Sport level			
National Governing Body			
Regional level (as appropriate)			
Club/School/Community Group level			



## FURTHER VIEWING/READING

Other videos:

Childline – It follows me around

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLaHfZgSOYY>

RA Dickey Story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-PuJiPfrJ0>

5 live 'surviving abuse in sport'

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/2016/surviving-abuse-bbc-5-live-broadcast/>

My magic sports kit

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=4&v=Hgi1ole4BB0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=Hgi1ole4BB0)

CPSU Intro to S&P

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/2013/safeguarding-in-sport-is-everybodys-business-an-introduction-to-safeguarding-children-and-young-people-in-sport/>

What can we do about child abuse?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXaC6XOUY70>

## Chapter 6 - Section 3

# Preventing Child Abuse in Sport



### VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

## Introduction

It is impossible to completely prevent child abuse in sport, but coaches and clubs have a duty to put in place systems and mechanisms to minimise the risks. Remember the best way to keep children safe in sport is by creating a quality pedagogical climate.

In this section we are going to explore some of the most common approaches to safeguarding children in sport.

Now, at this point, it is important that we explain the difference between safeguarding and protecting children. Let's go back to the UNICEF International Safeguards for Children in Sport to check the definitions:

### Safeguarding

Safeguarding refers to the actions we take to ensure ALL children are safe from harm when involved in our clubs and activities

### Child Protection

Child protection is a set of activities that are required for SPECIFIC children who are at risk of/or are already suffering harm

In simple terms, safeguarding is about prevention, but protection is about detection and correction. This video will deal with safeguarding. Protecting children in sport will be covered in the next section.

With regards to safeguarding, that is, putting in place all the necessary measures to minimise the risk of harm to children, there are four main things we can do:

1) Education

- 2) Vetting
- 3) Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies
- 4) Risk Assessment

### **1. Education:**

Investing time and resources to make sure that the children themselves, and their parents, coaches and officials are aware of the risks and what to do about them is central to success. For example, the Child Protection in Sport Unit in the UK has put together some great videos. Check out this example aimed at parents and coaches by watching the video (and/or reading the transcript).

*My Magic Sports Kit – It's Our Game Not Yours*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=4&v=Hgi1ole4BB0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=Hgi1ole4BB0)

My Magic Sports Kits – It's Our Game Not Yours

NSPCC – Uploaded on Oct 7, 2013

This video shows several children involved in different sports describing how the behaviour of parents/spectators deteriorates when they wear their 'magic sports kit' -- i.e. when they compete. They talk about a range of bad adult behaviours and how these negatively impact on them. They then describe and promote positive behaviour.

My sports kit is magical and mine is too. In fact we all have magic sports kits. You might think they're ordinary but when we wear them to compete the magic takes over.

But you can tell why they're special. They don't make us run faster, swim better or score more runs. In fact, these kits don't help us at all! So why are they magical? Well when we're not wearing our magic kits the adults that we meet are kind to us. They treat us with respect, like when we are training or before the competition starts. They don't expect too much and if we make a mistake they're okay about it.

But when we're wearing these magic sports kits and start to compete something very different happens. We seem to become older – much, much older. The grown-ups watching shout at us. They swear at us. They call us names. They treat us as if we've been playing for years and get really mad when we make a mistake. Often they get so angry that they shout at the referee and each other, and sometimes things get so bad they end up fighting. Fights between parents, coaches, referees and the even young players like us. At some matches things get so bad that the police get involved. It's frightening. It's embarrassing. It puts

me off my game. It sets a bad example. It makes me feel like quitting. Worst of all most of these grown-ups are parents of the kids playing.

Some young people have given up their sport because of the power of the magic sports kit. Sometimes the magic kit makes parents push us too hard. They expect us to play like sports stars. All they're buzzing about is winning. The magic takes the fun away.

Help us get rid of this bad magic. Remember it's our game not yours. Treat us all with respect. Appreciate we are doing our best. Encourage everyone not just your own kids. Support the coaches and the referees. Have fun when you're watching us and help us to have

## **2. A Robust and Stringent Vetting Process:**

The second vital strategy for sport clubs is to have a robust and stringent vetting process of recruitment and selection for all those that will work closely with the children. This includes coaches, team managers, doctors, drivers, etc. In some countries, this vetting process has become formalised and people that want to work with children have to undergo a police background check. For you it may only mean gaining character references from multiple sources before you bring someone into your club or asking questions related to this area during the selection interview.

## **3. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and protocols:**

The third and very important way of making sport safe for children is by having clear safeguarding and protection policies, structures and protocols at your club. Most federations will now have a National or Regional Child Protection Manager in place who will be keen to talk to you about it. They will also have produced guidelines and templates you can use as a starting point.

Even if that's not the case, organisations like UNICEF or the Child Protection in Sport Unit in the UK will have them. Later in the chapter we will speak about reporting protocols. For now, please check the study guide for links to these resources and have a look at this short video to get a quick overview of your responsibilities as a coach or sports club.

*Club and Organisations Responsibilities*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=18&v=wzP6w03NM\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=18&v=wzP6w03NM_s)

## **Responsibilities of Organisations and Clubs**

### **NSPCC, Published on May 1, 2009**

Narrator: All organizations from local authorities through to smaller sports clubs have a duty to keep children safe in all their activities.

Setting: A meeting with a number of people sitting around a table.

Chairperson: Okay the next item is summer schemes. Everyone got that in front of them.

All: Yeah.

Chairperson: Okay, Tony I see you're suggesting that we undertake a complete overhaul of the safeguarding planning for this year's summer activity programme. Well couldn't we simply go with last year's plan? I think that all went very well.

Man 2: I agree I think everyone was really pleased with how it went last year.

Tony: No, no, we need to make sure that we're fully complying with all the regulations this year.

Man 2: Why?

Tony: We need to put in really robust child protection measures this year.

Man 2: Oh come on, it just sounds like a lot of extra work. It's just more of this health and safety nonsense.

Tony: Remember last year when we find out from one of the parents that one of our section volunteers had a record for sexual offenses.

Man 2: That was just a one-off.

Tony: That could have been a disaster for the kids and for us as an organisation, because we hadn't been checking everyone out effectively. It's really important everybody gets protected by these measures not just the children but the parents the staff the management and us as a local authority.

Man 2: Well I'm just not buying that. I think you're just trying to turn us all into social workers.

Tony: Look we had a presentation last at the sport safeguarding group for the county. Management is now accountable which means that we are now accountable. It's our responsibility to get everything in place.

Man 2: Like I say just a lot of extra work.

Tony: We don't have to start from scratch. The county sports partnership has provided lots of information, templates and guidance that we can use

Chairperson: Actually I agree with Tony, got to get it right this year. Okay Tony can you bring something along to the next meeting. We can consider it then. Yeah? Good.

Narrator: All sports organizations and clubs have a duty of care to children and young people and could be legally responsible for children who attend activities or sports events which they organize. You must ensure there are proper policies and procedures in place for recruiting and training staff and volunteers and reporting any concerns which may arise.

#### **4. Risk Assessment:**

The fourth and final major strategy involves conducting a thorough risk assessment of your sport activities or sessions. As a coach, you should be aware of all the inherent potential risks of your sport. For example, drowning in swimming or concussion in rugby. But you should also be able to identify and minimise other risks that may have more to do with the conditions surrounding your session or the participants themselves. For example, heat or cold exposure if you coach an outdoor sport, a slippery playing surface, or being aware that a child is deaf and requires safety instructions to be provided in a particular way.

All of this should be part of your risk assessment protocol. During the risk assessment you should identify all potential hazards and rate them based on their likelihood and severity. Then you must put plans in place to minimise the risk and to deal with it if it does happen.

## **Keeping Children Safe is Priceless**

You may think this is all too much, but keeping children safe is priceless. We would strongly advise you to go on safeguarding and protection, risk assessment and first aid courses before you start coaching, particularly if you are going to lead sessions on your own.

## Check Your National Governing Body/Federation or Local Authority/Sports Partnership

These courses are normally provided by your national governing body/federation or local authority and you will learn a lot of useful stuff that you will be able to use outside coaching too! Many organisations now have even made attendance to these courses compulsory before a coach can work with children and rightly so!

Ok, so now we have a better idea of some of the things we can do to keep children safe in sport. Please complete the PERSONAL COACHING TASK on checking out your club / school / community group.

In the next section we are going to explore what we can do if, unfortunately, we suspect or we know about a case of child abuse in our context.



## ACTIVITY 6.3 - PERSONAL COACHING TASK – Resources and Training Available to You

Seek out additional resources on Safeguarding and Child Protection and training in your country/area from your national governing body or federation or any other relevant organisation; identify what it says on the type and signs of child abuse; track-down the training available to you and the dates that you may attend.

### Resources

Your country's child protection guidelines and/or your national governing bodies/federations safeguarding guidelines

### Types and Signs of Child Abuse

The information/advice given on the Signs of Child Abuse

### Training

Child Protection/Safeguarding training available in the sport sector in your country/area or from your national governing body/federation

**Dates You Can Attend:**

### Other

## Chapter 6 - Section 4

# Taking Action against Child Abuse in Sport

### PLEASE NOTE

Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport, while important in every country, fits within a different best practice/legislative framework for each country. Because of this, please check the specific laws, policies and procedures that are applied in your country. Also check the information and advice provided by your sports sector and your sport's national governing body/federation.

What is included here are **GENERAL GUIDELINES**. These are based on **UNICEF Safeguarding in Sport Guidelines**.

Please see - <https://www.unicef.org.uk/sport-for-development/safeguarding-in-sport/>.

The IOC Safeguarding Toolkit can be found here - [https://d2g8uwgn11fzhj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/18105952/IOC\\_Safeguarding\\_Toolkit\\_ENG\\_Screen\\_Full1.pdf](https://d2g8uwgn11fzhj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/18105952/IOC_Safeguarding_Toolkit_ENG_Screen_Full1.pdf)



### VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

## Introduction

So far in Chapter 6 we have laid the foundation to create a greater understanding about what safeguarding and protecting is about in sport. Sadly, despite all our efforts, there will come a time when we are faced with a situation where we have to intervene. In this section, we are going to provide an introduction to what to do when this happens. Again, we can't emphasise enough that if you coach children regularly, you should look to complete a full course on this topic.

In relation to taking action on a child protection issue, you may find yourself in two main positions.

**1. Someone confides in you:** A child, another participant or an adult may come to you to either make an allegation against someone or to raise a concern.

**2. You suspect something:** You yourself may suspect that something is not quite right with a child, another coach or a parent.

## Designated Child Protection Officer and Reporting Protocol

Your next step is vital. Each organisation or club, as part of their child protection policy should have **designated child protection officers** in post and a **clear acting and reporting protocol**. Everyone working at the club should have been briefed as to who the officers are and what the protocol is.

If you haven't, **STOP** reading this section **NOW** and phone your club director to find out. If your club hasn't got officers and policies in place, they should get them ASAP!

## What to Do Examples

To get a quick idea of what you should do in these situations please watch these two short videos (and/or read the transcripts below). The first one deals with a situation involving physical abuse and the second one with sexual abuse.

*CPSU – Physical Abuse*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=150&v=SbkkJGNyVwU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=150&v=SbkkJGNyVwU)

**NSPCC – Keeping children safe in sports – Responding to concerns about physical abuse**

**Published on 29 April 2009**

How does your sports team or club handle concerns about physical abuse? This advice should help anyone involved with children and young people in sports activities including coaches, volunteer helpers, activity organisers, management committees, participants and parents. Our aim is to ensure that children and young people take part in sports activities in an environment that makes their welfare the top priority - so they can stay safe, enjoy and achieve.

Narrator: It's important to respond to any concerns you might have about child abuse and to know when to get advice or to report these concerns. Let's take a look at how a concern might arise.

Coach: Okay. Come on. Hurry up. Get changed. That's good. Go. Come here, just a moment Lizzie. Can I have a look at your arm? Is that a bruise?

Lizzie: Yeah.

Coach: That's quite a nasty one how'd you get that?

Lizzie: It was my birthday last week I got these really cool skates. Well, I had a couple of falls a bit. No matter I just love them.

Coach: Maybe need to ask your mommy and daddy for some protective gear.

Lizzie: They're getting me some.

Coach: Oh good because we need you in good shape for the next game. You'd be okay to play.

Lizzie: Yeah.

Coach: Good.

Narrator: It's natural for the coach to be concerned and so are some simple questions such as what happened or how did that happen. Now let's look at a situation that should raise concerns.

Coach: Come on. Hurry up. Get changed. That's good. Lizzie, come here, just a moment. Are you alright?

Lizzie: Yeah.

Coach: You feeling alright? Are you sure? What's that? Is that a bruise? It's pretty nasty. How did you get that?

Lizzie: I ... I fell over at school yesterday.

Coach: And where did it happen?

Lizzie: I don't know.

Coach: You don't know how you got that. You don't want to tell me I mean that's bad. That's pretty bad Lizzie.

Narrator: Factors that should raise concerns include:

- Bruises to the face, back, abdomen, arms, buttocks, ears and hands
- Several bruises in one place
- All bruises that are the same shape or carrying an imprint
- Differing explanations for how an injury occurred
- Changes in a child's usual demeanour
- Not getting along well with others

It's important to remember that it's not your responsibility to investigate or find evidence but it is your responsibility to report any concerns. And of course every club should have a clear procedure for responding to concerns.

*CPSU Sexual Abuse*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pi80plpJyyQ>

## **NSPCC - Keeping children safe in sports - Responding to concerns about sexual abuse**

**Published on 29 April 2009**

How does your sports team or club handle concerns about sexual abuse? This advice should help anyone involved with children and young people in sports activities including coaches, volunteer helpers, activity organisers, management committees, participants and parents. Our aim is to ensure that children and young people take part in sports activities in an environment that makes their welfare the top priority - so they can stay safe, enjoy and achieve.

Narrator: It can be difficult to know how to respond to a report or allegation from a child. But where there's a concern about abuse, there should never be any hesitation or doubt about how to respond.

Coach 1: Good session?

Coach 2: Yeah, not bad actually. You know Janet in the under-15s?

Coach 1: Yeah, good little swimmer.

Coach 2: Couple of the girls had a word with me about her. Janet's told them her mother's new boyfriend is messing around with the younger brother.

Coach 1: What exactly did they say?

Coach 2: He's been trying to touch his bum, kiss him, that sort of things. The girls were pretty angry about it. Want me to do something and I'm not sure what to do. Maybe we should find out more, talk to the Mum. I'm not even sure it's any of our business.

Coach 1: You were right to speak up. We've got procedures for dealing with situations like this.

Coach 2: So, what are we to do?

Coach 1: We need to pass it on to someone who can look into it properly.

Coach 2: Like the police.

Coach 1: Or a social worker. You use the incident report form to write down exactly what happened, who said what and so on. I'll make the call.

Coach 2: Now. Okay. Cheers mate.

Narrator: It's important to respond promptly to any report or allegation. Make sure you keep written records of what was said, preferably using your club or organizations incident report form, and pass details of any concerns to the police or children's social care, social services or equivalent in line with your clubs procedures without delay.

## Summary of What to Do

In summary, this is what you need to do when you are facing a child protection issue (Remember there may be a specific protocol in your country/area):

- 1. Stay Calm:** Stay calm, particularly if a child comes to you with a concern.
- 2. Reassure:** Reassure the person confiding in you that they are doing the right thing by telling you and that you take them seriously
- 3. Be Honest about Confidentiality:** Make sure they understand that you may have to share the information with other people, so you can get help
- 4. Ask, But Don't Overwhelm:** Ask questions if clarification is needed, but do not overwhelm
- 5. Listen and Remember:** Listen and remember as much information as possible. You will have to write a report afterwards
- 6. Do Not Confront:** Do not approach the alleged abuser
- 7. Report:** Report the incident to the club's welfare or child protection officer
- 8. If at Risk, Call the Police:** Only in extreme circumstances when the child is at imminent risk, contact the police or social services and stay with the child until they arrive

Remember, **your job is to listen to the concern as carefully as possible**, so you can relate it to the child protection officer. They will liaise with parents and the relevant authorities. But let me say this again: **your job is not to fix it or to confront the abuser.**

## Other Coaches / Volunteers

A special case is when you have a concern about another coach or volunteer at your club. The reporting process is similar, but what will happen after may vary. In this case you should also report it to the club welfare officer. They will investigate it further and decide if the incident does not warrant further attention, whether it is just a case of mal-practice that can be solved through a warning and further training, or whether they have to contact the relevant authorities to escalate the issue.

We hope this section has given you a much better idea of what to do when faced with a suspected child abuse situation. In the next section we are going to look at another very important topic: how we, as coaches, can stay safe too.

For now, please complete the following STUDY GUIDE TASK.



## ACTIVITY 6.4 – STUDY GUIDE TASK

### Scenarios and Case Studies

- Look over each of the following: Scenario 1 and 2; and Case Studies 1 and 2, taking each at a time
- There is space for you to outline what actions you think you would take
- You can then review the actions against those recommended to be taken for each
- Compare what you outlined with the recommended actions and note what you have learned from the scenario/case study

(These scenarios and case studies are from the Safeguarding training provided by the **Sport Ireland Ethics** unit and are line with legislation in Ireland).

#### **Scenario 1:**

A nine year old boy is in your club. His family is well known in the local area; his father is a bank manager at the local branch and his mother is a personnel manager in a computer company. Both parents are also active in the community and work long hours. You have noticed that the boy over the last month has become very disinterested and appears unhappy.

Today, the father was watching a match and the boy miss-kicked a clear goal chance. As he leaves the pitch, the father verbally abuses him calling him names. As he gets into the car you watch as the father punches the boy with force to the head.

- What would be your response to this situation?
- What would make it easier to deal with this situation?

**Recommended Actions:**

- Speak to the club children's officer/designated person
- Record incident
- Informal consultation may need to pass on concern
- Codes of Behaviour in relation to incident and what is acceptable or not acceptable in club

**Scenario 2:**

A 12 year girl named Mary attends your sports club. You have noticed the child is very pale and tired over the last few training sessions. She appears at times very withdrawn. The child is dressed in light shorts and t-shirt and appears cold. You noticed in the last session that she was being teased by some of the other players, who said she smelled.

- What are your immediate thoughts?
- What action would you take?
- Who might you discuss your concerns with?

**Recommended Actions:**

- Might be neglect but could be anything
- Maybe check in with the child
- Discuss with the parent
- Record what you have noticed

## Case Study 1: Brian's Story

Brian, an 11-year old, had told his mother that all his friends were trying out for a sport, and that he really wanted to make it into the league. Brian's experience playing the sport up until this point had been limited to pick-up games around the neighbourhood. But for several weeks before try-outs he worked hard every day with his father trying to improve his catching, throwing and batting skills. On the day of his try-outs, his hard work paid off and he made the cut. He was ecstatic when the coach called his parents with the news he had made the team. For the next several weeks Brian lived and breathed the sport.

Because of his relative inexperience playing the sport, Brian, like a lot of the other kids on his team, had been deemed second string by the coaches. On Brian's team this meant that he was often neglected while the coach devoted time to working with the more experienced players who would help the team win their games. But in spite of this, Brian's enthusiasm never wavered. He showed up at every practice and gave his all without complaining. And though by the middle of the season he still had not been allowed to play in a single game, his mother said they encouraged him to persevere, instilling the value that just trying your hardest and doing your best was the ultimate goal in sports.

However, eventually Brian began to wonder what the use was of going to practice each day and giving his all when it looked like the entire season was going to pass without his having at least one chance to put his hard work to use. "Why won't the coach give me a chance?" he would ask his mother. But she had no answer for him. She didn't understand how a coach would have children work so hard and then never give them a chance to play. Then one day, she decided to approach the coach in private and ask him why so many of his players never got into the game. "It wouldn't be fair to the other kids," he explained. "They work to be on a winning team. When they're out on the field, it's their job to do what it takes to win and that's my job too. If I didn't play the best players we'd lose, and that would upset everybody. Kids want to play on a winning team."

Towards the end of the season Brian's coach promised him a game on Saturday. The whole family was there to watch him play but in the fifth inning, since the game was tied, it was apparent that he wasn't going to play. Brian's mom confronted the coach, who explained that he had been expecting an easy victory as their opponents had one of the worst records in the league. But because the score was tight he didn't think it would be fair to risk losing the game by having Brian on the field. Brian was very upset after this incident and having not eaten and talked to anyone for days his parents sought help for Brian to deal with the experience. Brian never played again.

### What would you do and Why?

### Discussion and Actions

The coach was like a lot of coaches who want to keep things simple. If it's all about winning they know exactly what to do, they feel competent, like an expert. But if it's about providing a good, positive nurturing experience for all children, it all becomes more complicated. It's easier to revert to the familiar course of guiding their team toward winning and pretending that winning is the only thing that children need or want. Many coaches think that children are happy just to be part of a winning team even if it means sitting on the bench. However, research has shown that 78% of children said they would rather play for a losing team than sit on the bench for a winning team. In addition, many coaches are judged by results and are put under pressure to get results which is often interpreted as 'win the league, gain promotion', rather than how satisfied the athletes are.

Brian's story is similar to many stories we hear about childhood sport. If children are telling us that they have been called names, insulted, abused and pressured to play with injuries, we are developing negative attitudes to sport and physical activity. As a result, children decide to drop out at an age when they most need sports in their lives. If children are treated as worthless by adults because they are not outstanding athletes, or because they made a mistake such as dropping the ball, what message are we giving them? What behaviours can we expect of them in the future?

This case study is going to be looked at from 2 perspectives a) the child b) the adults. It should explore the ways in which the components of the checklist of the code can assist in making sport safe and fun for children.

### **Questions – Adult:**

- *Club Executive – what do we need to do to make sure that someone like Brian does not leave your club?*
- *Parent – what do we want from the club for our child?*
- *Coach – What is the philosophy of the club?*
- *Child – What can I do?*

### **Recruitment:**

- What was the recruitment process?
- Was there a code signed as part of the recruitment process?
- Was there an induction to the club?
- Was the coach given any training?
- Did he always work alone or did he have any assistance?
- What was the supervision policy in the club?

### **Code of Conduct:**

- Did the coach sign a code of conduct?
- Was there anyone there to oversee his adherence to the code of conduct?
- Was there any training given to the coach?
- Was he aware of any disciplinary procedures if he was in breach of the code?

### **General Guidelines:**

- What were the supervision rates?
- What was the parental involvement?

### **Questions - Child:**

- Why did Brian give up the sport?
- Brian never played again do you think this was the right decision?
- The coach said kids 'want to play on a winning team' do you think this is what kids want from sport?
- If you were Brian what would you want to change so you could play the sport again?

## Case Study 2: Sam's Story

Sam is 12 years old. He is an excellent athlete and a regular attendee at his local club. Both Sam's parents are supportive and encourage his sport.

You are one of the coaches at the club. Bob, one of your colleagues, usually coaches Sam. You have known Bob for years. He has a reputation for being one of the lads, and is always joking and teasing the younger athletes, particularly the young boys. Although you feel uncomfortable about this, the younger Athletes seem eager to please Bob to gain his praise.

One Saturday morning, you notice that during a training exercise, Bob puts his arm around Sam's shoulders and then pats his bottom as he goes away. He makes a mistake during the exercise and Bob makes what you consider to be a degrading comment. Later in the day, you hear Bob shouting at Sam, telling him he is rubbish and that there is no hope for him. Sam is clearly distressed by this, but Bob ignores him. This is not the first time you have had concerns about Bob and you decide to challenge his behaviour. He puts you down, says you cannot take a joke and claims Sam enjoys the attention.

- What are the issues arising from these cases?
- How would you respond?

## Discussion and Actions

This is a challenging situation. Although you may or may not think the way Bob is behaving is abusive, it is clearly unethical and reflects extremely poor practice. The feelings you will have probably range from anger at Bob's behaviour to concern for Sam. You may also feel guilty or frustrated because you have not done anything before now, yet confused because you have known Bob for a long time and do not want to risk misconduct proceedings.

There are clearly concerns about Bob's behaviour. It is totally unacceptable to touch Sam in the way he did. Even what some may consider to be a friendly gesture (e.g. putting an arm around the shoulder) may be offensive to children and could be misconstrued. Likewise, comments which belittle children or make them feel worthless. These are behaviours, which initially may seem less serious than overt physical or sexual abuse. However, they are rarely one-off events and this kind of harassment and bullying of children is just as damaging in the long term.

You should report it to the designated liaison officer and ensure the club officially challenge Bob about his practice. Playful pats on the bum and inappropriate teasing of young people have been used as part of the process of grooming children by their coaches in the past. For this reason alone this practice should be challenged. While there is a culture of inappropriate behaviour in an organisation it is at risk of being targeted by those who want to harm children.

## Chapter 6 - Section 5

# Staying Safe as a Coach



### VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

## Introduction

This section is very important for you. Child abuse in sport is a very serious issue. Many sport coaches have in the past gone to prison when found guilty of abusing children. Many others have lost their career, families and livelihood even when they were cleared of any wrongdoing. This section is all about helping you, the coach, stay safe when coaching children.

Staying safe as a coach means three things:

- 1. Sound Practice:** Your practice is based on sound and age-appropriate scientific principles.
- 2. Safety:** You have covered all the safety-related basics before you even stand in front of the children.
- 3. Minimise Risk of Allegations:** You know how to minimise the risk of receiving an allegation against you and what to do if it does happen.

We will cover these three areas in succession.

### 1. Sound Practice

Ensure that your practice is based on sound and age-appropriate scientific principles. This is all about understanding the basic principles of your sport and coaching, and how these principles apply to the age group you are working with. For example, you should be familiar with some key facts about physical and psychological child development. Another example would be having sufficient knowledge of the special physiological characteristics of children compared to adults, so we don't ask them to do things they are not ready for yet.

**Remember:**

- Age appropriate principles
- Physical development
- Psychological development
- Social development
- Principles of skill acquisition

The basics of this knowledge should have been provided to you in your coaching qualifications. The iCoachKids MOOCS 2 and 3 will review all of these again for you. You can also find lots of relevant information around these topics on the iCoachKids website.

**2. Safety**

The second point you need to be mindful of is covering all the safety-related basis before you even stand in front of the kids. For example, gaining the appropriate qualifications as a coach. This is not only about your sport specific qualification, but getting first aid training and attending a safeguarding and protecting children in sport course where available is highly recommended. You should also get a police background check if possible.

Other important elements include performing a thorough risk assessment of your sport and venue, and keeping good records of your participants: emergency contact numbers and relevant medical information are an absolute must. You should also be always within reach of a phone or have a fully charged mobile phone with you. Having a first aid kit with you or knowing where the nearest first aid point is and who the first-aider on duty is are also important.

**Remember:**

- Get qualified
- Get police checked
- Complete Risk Assessments
- Keep participant records
- Be ready for incidents

**3. Minimise Risk of Allegations**

The third and final point relates to the need to minimise the risk of receiving an allegation against you and what to do if it does happen. As a coach you should take the following into account:

**1. Physical Contact Guidelines:** Be familiar with your sport's guidelines on physical contact and coaching. In some sports, a certain level of physical contact with the participant is unavoidable and even desirable to ensure their safety. However, all sports now offer guidance on 'safe physical contact'.

Get them and study them carefully. Sharing these guidelines with participants, and especially with parents so they know what to expect, is very good practice

**2. Kind, Professional and Polite:** Be kind, professional and polite in all your interactions with participants, parents, other coaches and officials. Avoid shouting, heated arguments and the use of inappropriate language like profanity or sexualised expressions.

And coach... everybody knows you are human too. If you ever do or say something that is wrong, please apologise unreservedly as soon as you realise. If you find yourself apologising a lot, it may be time to get some help from a professional like a sport psychologist. Please take action before it is too late.

**3. Avoid Vulnerable Situations:** Don't put yourself in a vulnerable position, even if you mean well. A big, big NO, NO is to never being left alone with a child. If you need to meet with a participant or have a chat with them, always do it where others can see you, never in a separate room, and never with the door closed. If the child demands privacy, then go get another adult that can act as a chaperone and sit in with you.

### **Transport**

The same applies to giving children lifts in the car. You should never give a child a lift on your own. In the extreme case that you are forced to do so because there is no possible alternative, children should always go in the back seat. You should also let someone else at the club know that this is happening, and they should record it and follow up with the child's parents or guardians.

### **Overnight with a Team / Changing Rooms**

Suffice to say that the same policy applies when you are on the road with a team or before and after practice or competitions. You should never enter a child's room and never sleep in the same room with them. And you should never be in the changing rooms when they are showering. Please check your national guidance on the use of changing rooms as this may vary depending on the age of the child.

### **Photography / Video / Social Media**

Finally, please follow your club and federation policies and guidelines regarding the use of photography, video and social media. These should make clear what you are and aren't allowed to do. And while we are on the topic, if you work with children, all your social media content like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram should be appropriate. You can be sure that parents will check you out before they let you take care of their kids.

## An Allegation against You

Okay, so what happens if despite all these precautions, an allegation is made against you?

Well the answer is relatively simple:

- 1. Report it:** You should report it straight away to the club designated safeguarding officer. They will ask you to write a statement and will follow it through with the parents or guardians of the child and decide what to do next.
- 2. Be Proactive:** Do not keep it a secret and hope that it will go away. It won't! Being proactive, open and honest is the best strategy.
- 3. Gather Evidence in Your Defence:** If appropriate, while the club welfare officer is investigating the incident, gather any evidence that could support your defence. Like anyone else, you have the right to defend your innocence until proven guilty.

Okay, so that was chapter 6 “Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People in Sport”. The next section will offer a quick summary of everything we talked about in this very important chapter.

Before reading the summary, please complete all relevant tasks in this chapter of the study guide.

# Chapter 6 - Summary & Conclusions: Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People In Sport



## VIEW AND/OR READ

You can [view this section on the online MOOC](#) or you can read it in the Study Guide. If it re-enforces your learning, you can do both.

## Introduction

Chapter 6 “Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People in Sport” is the most important chapter in the course. Our main priority as children’s coaches should be to keep children safe and out of harm’s way while they are doing sport.

For this reason, this chapter has given you vital knowledge about what child abuse is, how to recognise it, and what to do about it.

## The Need to Protect Children

We saw that child abuse in sport is much more prevalent than most people think and that there are four main categories of child abuse:

1. Neglect
2. Physical Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse and
4. Emotional Abuse

We also saw that teammates are typically the most common perpetrators of abuse, but that coaches and parents can also play a part.

**Child Abuse = Teammates + Parents + Coaches + Other Staff**

## Consequences of Child Abuse

The chapter also explained that the consequences of abuse are wide-ranging and long-lasting. These can go from mental disorders to substance addiction and, in extreme cases, even suicide.

## Child Abuse = Wide-Ranging and Long-Lasting Impact

### Indicators and Signs

We looked at indicators and signs of abuse to help us identify it early, but we emphasised that these indicators should be considered as part of a pattern, because by themselves, each of these indicators could have alternative explanations.

#### Be Vigilant and Look for Patterns

### Safeguarding

We then made a distinction between safeguarding and protecting based on UNICEF's definitions. In a nutshell, we said that **SAFEGUARDING** is about putting the measures in place to minimise the chances of harm to children; whereas **PROTECTION** is more about the actions we take once a risk has been identified or when abuse has already happened.

In terms of **SAFEGUARDING**, we highlighted four main strategies:

1. Education of coaches, participants, officials and parents
2. Appropriate Selection and Recruitment Procedures
3. Safeguarding policies, structures and protocols
4. And thorough risk assessments

### Child Protection

With regards to **PROTECTION** and how to take action the chapter highlighted three key elements:

1. That clubs and organisations should have a designated child protection officer
2. That appropriate reporting protocols should be in place and all at the club should be aware of them, and
3. That the job of the coach when facing a potential case of abuse is not to fix it nor to confront the alleged perpetrator, but to report it to the relevant person.

## Staying Safe as a Coach

Finally, we turned the focus on ourselves the coaches and looked at the things we can do to stay safe when coaching. The three major strategies include ensuring that:

1. Your practice is based on sound and age-appropriate scientific principles
2. You have covered all the safety-related basis before you even stand in front of the kids
3. You know how to minimise the risk of receiving an allegation against you and what to do if it does happen.

## Conclusion

And that was it! Please, please, bear in mind that this chapter is only an introduction to this very important topic. If you coach children regularly, you should seek out a specific course. Perhaps your federation or a sporting organisation in your area or country has a course aimed right at this area. Go check them out.

And remember, when it comes to children's safety in sport:

**Better Safe than Sorry  
And  
Prevention is Better than Cure**



## STUDY GUIDE TASK: QUIZ

### 1. Alleged perpetrators of child abuse are mainly:

- a) Strangers only
- b) Adults only
- c) Children only
- d) All of the above

### 2. Abuse Includes:

- a) Physical and sexual abuse
- b) Sexual only
- c) Neglect and emotional
- d) Neglect, physical, sexual and emotional

### 3. Signs of neglect are:

- a) Children are dirty
- b) Malnourished, unkempt, tired, few friends
- c) Smiling children but not from the eyes
- d) There are none

### 4. Signs of sexual abuse can be:

- a) Physical and emotional
- b) None
- c) Physical only
- d) Emotional only

### 5. Child abuse can be prevented by:

- a) Just paying attention
- b) Asking children
- c) Accusing people when you think you see it
- d) Providing education, having a vetting process, having policies and protocols, conducting a risk assessment

### 6. When responding to an accusation you should:

- a) Promise absolute confidentiality
- b) Stay calm, reassure, be honest, listen, record and report
- c) Investigate the situation

d) Confront the person who the allegation is about

**7. As a coach you will stay safe by:**

- a) Applying sound practice and safety-related basics; and by minimising the risk of allegations
- b) Having 1:1 meeting with children
- c) Being nice to people
- d) Driving children home in your car

**8. Keeping children safe in sport is:**

- a) Over-rated
- b) Too much paper work
- c) The most important thing that we do in sport
- d) The problem of parent's/guardians



Q1. d) Q2. d) Q3. b) Q4. a)

Q5. d) Q6. b) Q7. a) Q8. c)

## Chapter 6 Closing Tasks



### **CT1 - PERSONAL COACHING TASK / COACHING WITH OTHERS / COACHING IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT: Check Out Safeguarding and Child Protection in Your Club / School / Community; and Group Conduct a Risk Assessment of Your Own Coaching Environment**

Investigate existing protocols at your own club / school / community group. Conduct a Risk Assessment (see an example from **Sport Ireland Ethics** on the next page (with references in it to Irish legislation).

- a) Gather the CONTACTS, INFORMATION and RESOURCES and take some time to look over them. Assess what you find and see what is good and if there are gaps in what the club / school / community group does.
- b) Conduct a Risk Assessment (see next page).
- c) Discuss your finding with coaches you work with.
- d) Discuss your findings with the committee in your club / school / community group
- e) Identify any action that should be taken to ensure there is up-to-date and effective child protection in place.
- f) Ensure that training is offered to all people in the club who work with children.
- g) Ensure that incidents and the effectiveness of the procedures are reviewed annually

## Risk Assessment Document for (insert Club/School/Community Group)

This risk assessment considers the potential for harm to come to children whilst they are in *(insert Club/School/Community Group)*'s care. This risk assessment precedes the Child Safeguarding Statement (Section 11 (1b) Children First Act 2015) which is developed following this risk assessment process. In accordance with the requirements of *Section 11 (1) of the Children First Act 2015 the risk is of abuse and not general health and safety risk (covered under a separate H&S policy and risk assessment).*

*Section 11 (1) of the Children First Act 2015 states that where a person proposes to operate as a provider of a relevant service, he or she shall, within 3 months from the date on which he or she commences as such a provider —*

*Undertake an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of the service (in this section referred to as a “risk”).*

Potential risk of harm to children	Likelihood of harm happening L-M-H	Required Policy, Guidance & Procedure document	Responsibility Club/Region/National	Further action required
<b>CLUB &amp; COACHING PRACTICES</b>				
Lack of coaching qualification	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coach education policy</li> <li>▪ Recruitment policy</li> </ul>		
Supervision issues		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supervision policy</li> <li>▪ Coach education policy</li> </ul>		
Unauthorised photography & recording activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Photography and Use of Images policy</li> </ul>		
Behavioural Issues		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Code of Conduct</li> <li>▪ Safeguarding Level 1 (min)</li> </ul>		

Potential risk of harm to children	Likelihood of harm happening L-M-H	Required Policy, Guidance & Procedure document	Responsibility Club/Region/National	Further action required
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complaints &amp; Disciplinary policy</li> </ul>		
Lack of gender balance amongst coaches		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coach education policy</li> <li>▪ Supervision policy</li> </ul>		
No guidance for travelling and away trips		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Travel/Away trip policy</li> <li>▪ Child Safeguarding Training</li> </ul>		
Lack of adherence with misc procedures in Safeguarding policy (i.e. mobile, photography, transport)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safeguarding policy</li> <li>▪ Complaints &amp; disciplinary policy</li> </ul>		
<b>COMPLAINTS &amp; DISCIPLINE</b>				
Lack of awareness of a Complaints & Disciplinary policy	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complaints &amp; Disciplinary procedure/policy</li> <li>▪ Communications procedure</li> </ul>		
Difficulty in raising an issue by child & or parent Reason: Covered above		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complaints &amp; Disciplinary procedure/policy</li> <li>▪ Communications procedure</li> </ul>		
Complaints not being dealt with seriously		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complaints &amp; Disciplinary procedure/policy</li> </ul>		

Potential risk of harm to children	Likelihood of harm happening L-M-H	Required Policy, Guidance & Procedure document	Responsibility Club/Region/National	Further action required
<b>REPORTING PROCEDURES</b>				
Lack of knowledge of organisational and statutory reporting procedures	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reporting procedures/policy</li> <li>▪ Coach education policy</li> <li>▪ Code of Conduct /Behaviour</li> </ul>		
No Mandated Person appointed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reporting procedures/policy</li> </ul>		
No DLP Appointed		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reporting procedures/policy</li> </ul>		
Concerns of abuse or harm not reported		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reporting procedures/policy</li> <li>▪ Child Safeguarding Training – Level 1</li> </ul>		
Not clear who YP should talk to or report to		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Post the names of CCOs, DLPs and MP</li> </ul>		
<b>FACILITIES</b>				
Unauthorised access to designated children's play & practice areas and to changing rooms, showers, toilets etc.	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supervision policy</li> <li>▪ Coach education</li> </ul>		
Unauthorised exit from children's areas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supervision policy</li> <li>▪ Coach education</li> </ul>		
Photography, filming or		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Photography policy and use of</li> </ul>		

Potential risk of harm to children	Likelihood of harm happening L-M-H	Required Policy, Guidance & Procedure document	Responsibility Club/Region/National	Further action required
recording in prohibited areas		devices in private zones		
Missing or found child on site		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Missing or found child policy</li> </ul>		
Children sharing facilities with adults e.g. dressing room, showers etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safeguarding policy</li> </ul>		
<b>RECRUITMENT</b>				
Recruitment of inappropriate people	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruitment policy</li> </ul>		
Lack of clarity on roles		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruitment policy</li> </ul>		
Unqualified or untrained people in role		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruitment policy</li> </ul>		
<b>COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA</b>				
Lack of awareness of 'risk of harm' with members and visitors	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child Safeguarding Statement</li> <li>▪ Training policy</li> </ul>		
No communication of Child Safeguarding Statement or Code of Behaviour to		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child Safeguarding Statement – display</li> <li>▪ Code of Behaviour - distribute</li> </ul>		

Potential risk of harm to children	Likelihood of harm happening L-M-H	Required Policy, Guidance & Procedure document	Responsibility Club/Region/National	Further action required
members or visitors				
Unauthorised photography & recording of activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Photography and Use of Images policy</li> </ul>		
Inappropriate use of social media and communications by under 18's		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communications policy</li> <li>▪ Code of conduct</li> </ul>		
Inappropriate use of social media and communications with under 18's		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communications policy</li> <li>▪ Code of conduct.</li> </ul>		
<b>GENERAL RISK OF HARM</b>				
Harm not being recognised		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safeguarding policy</li> <li>▪ Child Safeguarding Training</li> </ul>		
Harm caused by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- child to child</li> <li>- coach to child</li> <li>- volunteer to child</li> <li>- member to child</li> <li>- visitor to child</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safeguarding policy</li> <li>▪ Child Safeguarding Training</li> </ul>		
General behavioural issues		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Code of Conduct</li> </ul>		

Explanation of terms used:

**Potential risk of harm to children** – these are identified risks of harm to children whilst accessing activities in the Club/Region/Province/NGB.

**Likelihood of harm happening** – the likelihood of the risk occurring in the club/region/NGB measured by you as Low/Medium or High.

**Required Policy, Guidance and Procedure document** – indication of the policy required to alleviate the risk.

**Responsibility** – provider should indicate where the responsibility for alleviating the risk lies.

**Further action...** - indicates further action that might be necessary to alleviate any risk ongoing.

This Risk Assessment document has been discussed and completed by *(insert Club/School/Community Group as provider)* on \_\_ /\_\_ /\_\_\_\_

Signed:

Signed:

Name:

Name:

Role: *(insert role on Committee)*

Role: Club Children's Officer

Date:

Date:



## FURTHER VIEWING/READING

The following are the links to safeguarding and child protection in sport for each of the project partners' countries:

**Note:**

If you are from another country, please check out the safeguarding and child protection in sport for it.

**Belgium**

Centre for Ethics in Sport: [www.sportmetgrenzen.be](http://www.sportmetgrenzen.be)

**Hungary**

**Hungarian Coaching Association:**

<https://magyaredzo.hu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Edz%C5%91k-Etikai-k%C3%B3dex-Magyar-Edz%C5%91k-T%C3%A1rsas%C3%A1ga.pdf>

**Ireland**

Sport Ireland Ethics: [https://www.sportireland.ie/Participation/Code\\_of\\_Ethics/](https://www.sportireland.ie/Participation/Code_of_Ethics/)

**Lithuania**

Institution of the Ombudsman for children rights of the Republic of Lithuania: <http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/vaikai?sakId=7890&kalbld=2>

**Netherlands**

National Olympics Committee National Sports Federation (NOCNSF): <https://www.nocnsf.nl/grensoverschrijdendgedrag>

**Spain**

**Ministry of Culture and Sport:**

[http://www.csd.gob.es/csd/promocion/abusofueradejuego?set\\_language=es](http://www.csd.gob.es/csd/promocion/abusofueradejuego?set_language=es)

**UK**

**NSPCC Child protection In Sport Unit:**

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/>