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## Strategies for parents

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Parents often turn to sport as a safe place for children to build character, develop skills, learn valuable lessons and to have fun. While involvement in sport remains a positive experience for most participants, parents are now aware that children can face the risk of being harassed and abused in sport. In addition to clubs, organisations, community groups and government agencies, parents can also play a key role in creating a safe environment for children in sport.

- When you enrol your child in a sport, ask if the club has a harassment, abuse or member protection policy and procedures in place. If not, suggest implementation within the season.
- Ask if the club has screening procedures in place. As a minimum, coaches should have job descriptions that define and limit their authority. In higher risk positions, screening should include police records check.
- Ask if the club's coaches are accredited and have signed a coaches code of behaviour.
- Get involved and get to know your coach. Maintain open and frank communication. If things occur that disturb you, talk to the coach about them.
- Speak out when you hear language or attitudes that contribute to a negative or unsafe environment. You may wish to pursue your issues with the club executive.
- Be careful not to put coaches on pedestals. Tell your children it is okay to say 'no' if the coach is doing something that makes them feel 'creepy'.
- Make an effort to attend practices and games whenever you can.
- Be wary of private, closed practices. If they occur on a regular basis, ask the coach for an explanation.
- Be wary of any increase in the amount of time the coach spends with your children beyond the training session.
- If you volunteer in sport and are asked to take part in screening, accept this as a positive step to keeping children safe.
- Make sure you are not part of the problem. Don't sling verbal abuse at referees, coaches or others.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules.
- Never ridicule your child for making a mistake or losing.

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