



## What is my Responsibility When It Comes to Safeguarding Children in my Programme?

Sport plays an important role in the lives of children. Being in a sporting environment can have an enormous positive effect on children of all ages. Participating in sports can increase a child's confidence and self-esteem, and encourage both mental and physical development.

## What is Child Abuse?

There are many ways in which a child may be abused or harmed. Child abuse may take any of the following forms:

- ==> **PHYSICAL ABUSE**
- ==> **SEXUAL ABUSE**
- ==> **EMOTIONAL ABUSE** and
- ==> **NEGLECT**

### As a Coach, You MUST:

- Treat all players and children with respect and dignity befitting of their age
- Watch your language, tone of voice and where you put your body.

### You must NOT:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay
- Allow or engage in inappropriate or intrusive touching of any kind
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child even in fun
- Let allegations a child makes go unrecorded
- Invade the privacy of children when they are changing, showering or going to the toilet
- Doing things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves. e.g. help with changing.
- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Take children alone on car journeys, however short.

## How can I Recognise Child Abuse?

In your role as a coach, you should be aware of some of the signs that indicate that a child in your care may be the victim of child abuse. Should you notice a child displaying any of the following signs that raise concern, it is not your responsibility to make the decision on whether or not it is abuse, but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns.

### Some signs of abuse are:

- Unexplained bruising or injuries
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- A child telling you, a colleague or a fellow participant that they have been abused
- Changes in the child that take place over a long period of time (e.g. extreme weight loss; a sudden lack of interest in the sport; marked changes in the child's appearance; changes in attitude)

## Responding to Concerns of Abuse

### What should I do if I have concerns that a child is being abused?

It is important you report any incidents of child abuse without hesitation or delay. Any delay in passing on the information may impede the course of justice in dealing with an abusive situation.

If a child chooses to confide in you that they have been abused, you must listen and record any significant observations or concerns. In your notes of the discussion be sure to include the time, the date, where the discussion took place and the name and address of the child.

The next step is to contact your Child Protection Officer or the relevant child protection authorities in your country immediately. A list of the agencies is provided at the end of this brochure. It then becomes the responsibility of the authorities to conduct a full investigation and contact the parents as appropriate.